

# Chapter 12

## HISTORIC & CULTURAL

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The City of Las Cruces is at the center of Doña Ana County, which is a multicultural community with a vibrant history. The city, like the rest of the region, is steeped in Native American, Spanish and Mexican influences, and today's residents carry on many traits and traditions from these cultures. As urbanization and modernization occur, many area residents have dedicated themselves to preserving the region's existing historic resources, and preserving the stories about the community's roots.

This chapter describes the framework for historic preservation planning at the federal, state and local levels, lists the existing historic and cultural resources in the City of Las Cruces, and identifies available preservation tools such as awards, funding sources and regulations. The chapter provides information about historic and cultural resources in other parts of Doña Ana County in order to identify common issues, opportunities and potential for collaboration. Comparing city-specific and countywide resources, preservation and cultural initiatives will help to define a regional role for the City.

### 12.1 Framework for Historic Resources Planning

#### 12.1.1 *Federal*

The federal government recognizes that historic and cultural resource planning is important for the nation, states and local communities. In 1966, the federal government enacted the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which states that "...the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people..."<sup>222</sup> Since then, the federal government became the leader of the nation's preservation efforts, providing support through policy, legislation and financial assistance.

One of the major establishments was that "Section 106 of the NHPA granted legal status to historic preservation in Federal planning, decision-making and project execution."<sup>223</sup> As a result, federal projects must consider the effect of their actions on historic properties. This legislation also set up technical and funding assistance programs through the National Parks Service (NPS) and State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs).<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, As Amended, Section I (b)(2)

<sup>223</sup> The National Historic Preservation Program: Overview. Retrieved from: <http://www.achp.gov/overview.html>

<sup>224</sup> Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, The National Historic Preservation Program: Overview. <http://www.achp.gov/overview.html>

### 12.1.2 *State*

Established in 1969, the Cultural Properties Act of the State of New Mexico was the first of four state statutes to address historic and cultural preservation. This Act, similar to the NHPA, set up principles of historic preservation in New Mexico. The Cultural Properties Act states, "...that the historical and cultural heritage of the state is one of the state's most valued and important assets [and] that the public has an interest in the preservation of all antiquities, historic and prehistoric ruins, sites, structures [and] objects of historical significance."<sup>225</sup>

Recently, the NM Department of Cultural Affairs affirmed the economic impact of cultural activities in New Mexico. The report stated "Throughout the Land of Enchantment, research shows that cultural activities are an economically sound investment. ...As an industry, cultural activities in New Mexico generated more than \$2.8 billion in direct economic impact in 2005, including a \$1.3 billion in industry spending outside tourism, and \$1.5 billion in spending by cultural tourists."<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, Gordon R. Owen, Professor Emeritus at New Mexico State University, has explained that historic and cultural heritage is not only an important asset in and of itself, but also a catalyst for future activities. Prof. Owen said, "More important, for the citizens of this city to learn from past successes and failures, visualize the Las Cruces of the future and actively contribute to the actualization of that vision, we must know who and what have shaped our city and how it has happened."<sup>227</sup>

#### **New Mexico Historic Preservation Division (HPD)**

The Cultural Properties Act designated the SHPO as the director of the Historic Preservation Division within the Department of Cultural Affairs. The New Mexico Historic Preservation

Division provides technical knowledge and funding tools to communities in New Mexico. Programs offered by the Division include several funding programs, historic and cultural resource listings, outreach programs and review and compliance programs. The following is a brief description of these resources. More information about these programs is available at the HPD website:  
<http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/>

#### **Funding Programs**

- Federal Investment Tax Credit Program - For income producing properties listed on the National Register of Historic Properties, applicants may receive up to 20% of the eligible costs of rehabilitation work that can be credited against Federal income taxes.
- Certified Local Governments (CLG) - One of the provisions of the HPF is that 10% of the grant be set aside for Certified Local Governments. Communities interested in making historic preservation a priority in local planning and zoning may apply to become a CLG; applications are available on the HPD website.
- Preservation Easements Tax Credits - Archaeological sites, buildings or structures listed on the National Register of Historic Resources may also benefit from property easements through federal preservation easement tax credits. Easements allow for the preservation of cultural properties; they limit the type and amount of ground disturbance, alteration or development that could take place on a property held under easement. Private property owner retains the title to the property under easement; preservation easements do not mean the property is open to the public.

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<sup>225</sup> Review and Compliance, New Mexico Historic Preservation Division.

[http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/OUTREACH/outreach\\_review.html](http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/OUTREACH/outreach_review.html)

<sup>226</sup> *On Fertile Ground, 2006 Report to the Community*. New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. p. 3.

<sup>227</sup> Owen, Gordon. *Las Cruces New Mexico Multicultural Crossroads*. Revised Edition. 1999. xiii.

- Historic Preservation Fund Grants - A portion of the grant the HPD receives from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) each year is used for small grants of \$2,000 or less for various preservation projects. Projects include, but are not limited to, development of preservation plans, surveys of historic districts, public events to promote historic preservation, historic preservation education programs and curriculum development, preparation of nominations to the State Register of Cultural Properties and National Register of Historic Places, surveys to identify historic and prehistoric sites and recording and/or monitoring of endangered archaeological sites.
- State of New Mexico Income Tax Incentive Program - For personal residences, income producing properties and archaeological sites listed on the State Register of Cultural Properties, owners may receive a state income credit for a maximum 50% of eligible costs of the approved rehabilitation or \$25,000 (50% of project maximum) or five years of tax liability, whichever is least.
- Preservation Loan Fund - For properties listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties and/or the National Register of Historic Places, the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division makes available below-market-rate loans for the purpose of restoration and rehabilitation. Low-interest loans can be made for a maximum of \$200,000 for a term of five years or less.

#### **Historic and Cultural Resource Listings**

- Archaeological Records Management Section (ARMS) - As described on the HPD website, ARMS inventories all archaeological sites and projects in New Mexico and maintains the largest automated archaeological record database in the United States. ARMS is a subscription website.
- National and State Register Programs - Lists historic properties deemed worthy of preservation.

#### **Outreach Programs**

- Preservation Programs Information - The New Mexico Historic Preservation Division provides information to communities about preservation programs and techniques. Information can be found on the Division's website, [www.nmhistoricpreservation.org](http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org) or by calling the representative in the local Preservation Service Zone. Las Cruces and Doña Ana County are in the South Central Preservation Service Zone.
- Historic Preservation Month - An annual program to highlight community preservation efforts in New Mexico.
- Archaeological Fair - An annual two-day event to educate the public on ancient practices and current archaeological techniques.

#### **Review and Compliance Programs**

- Section 106 - Section 106 requires that federal projects take into account the effects on prehistoric and historic properties. HPD provides Section 106 consultation.
- Archaeological Permit Program - A permit from the Cultural Properties Review Committee (part of HPD) is required to conduct archaeological investigations on state land.<sup>228</sup>
- SiteWatch - A partnership of public land-management agencies, nonprofit preservation organizations and private landowners, SiteWatch is a network of trained individuals who provide observations of archaeological and historic resources for signs of erosion, deterioration, vandalism and looting.

According to the 2007 Annual Report of the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 10 different types of Historic Preservation Division Programs were initiated in the 2006 fiscal year. This includes: seventy five Section 106 Project Reviews; five Archaeological Permits issued by the Cultural Properties Review Committee; ten tax credits; six State and/or National Register nominations; two Site Watch alerts; one Historic Highway Marker; 198 Archaeological Records Management Section Electronic Database Projects; four Loan Fund inquiries and/or loans; two Certified Local Government designations; and four communities participating in Heritage Preservation Month.

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<sup>228</sup> New Mexico Historic Preservation Division. [www.nmhistoricpreservation.org](http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org)

### **12.1.3 City of Las Cruces**

The City of Las Cruces has established specific goals, objectives and policies regarding historic and cultural resources as part of their local planning initiatives. The community recognizes preservation of historic and cultural resources as an important initiative. The City's Comprehensive Plan lists urban design goals to preserve and enhance its natural, visual and historical/cultural resources. This includes fostering unique and attractive character, preserving and enhancing natural, visual, historical and cultural resources and maintaining sensitivity to city image through aesthetic and environmental guidelines.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, the City has three area plans that involve some level of historic preservation: Las Cruces Downtown Revitalization Plan, the Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Plan and the Alameda Depot Neighborhood Plan. Below is a brief discussion of these initiatives.

#### **Las Cruces Downtown Revitalization Plan**

The Las Cruces Downtown Revitalization Plan is a pivotal document for historic resources because the plan study area encompasses two nationally registered historic districts Alameda-Depot Historic District and Mesquite Street Original Townsite Historic District. With historic resources playing a feature role in the character of the study area, one of the revitalization strategies of the Plan is preserving and enhancing the historic buildings. Project implementation has included rehabilitation of the Rio Grande Theater, demolition of the walls that enclosed Main Street in August 2006, and re-opening the section of Main Street in front of the Rio Grande Theatre in April 2007.

#### **Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Plan**

As part of the Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Plan, Weisiger and Associates conducted a Reconnaissance Survey for the Mesquite Street - Original Townsite Historic District in 2004. Using the 2004 Reconnaissance Survey the following are some of the recommendations made by the Neighborhood Plan:

- Revise historic district documentation and amend the boundaries of the National Register Historic District to include areas with a large number of historically "contributing" buildings and the boundaries of the State Register Historic District to exclude areas on the fringe with a high number of "non-contributing" buildings.
- Encourage neighborhood awareness of and pride in the historic character of the district with public events.
- Encourage property owners to preserve the historic character of the buildings.
- Develop programs through the City of Las Cruces to promote the preservation of historic adobe buildings.
- Acquire funding to purchase one or more buildings in "poor condition" and rehabilitate them for resale as a demonstration project, outdoor laboratory, and fund-raising project.

The Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Plan directly relates to the South Mesquite Overlay Zone District. Adopted on May 24, 2005, the Neighborhood District Plan deals with issues that are unique to Las Cruces' Original Townsite and its surrounding area. The regulations provided in the Overlay District support the implementation of the Mesquite Historic District Neighborhood Design Plan. The purpose of the overlay district is to deal with issues such as setbacks and zoning designations that are better suited to this older part of the City. Also, neighborhood design standards were added to the general area to enhance and preserve the unique character of Las Cruces' first neighborhood.

Additional overlay districts have been adopted to deal with neighborhood specific issues and retaining existing or established development patterns, including the North Mesquite Neighborhood Overlay Zone District, but there is no specific historic zoning in Las Cruces or Doña Ana County beyond the review standards of the South Mesquite Design Review Board that are part of the Overlay District.

## **Alameda Depot Neighborhood Plan**

The Alameda Depot Neighborhood Plan, was adopted on April 27, 2009. The plan includes a goal to “preserve and enhance the unique character of the neighborhood” with policies to update the Historic Building Inventory, establish a 60-day delay on demolition of designated contributing historic structures, as well as a list of all historic properties in the neighborhood.

### **12.1.4 Doña Ana County**

Doña Ana County also established specific goals, objectives and policies regarding historic and cultural resources as part of its local planning initiatives. The County Comprehensive Plan for 1995 - 2015 states that a primary goal is to maintain and protect the county’s resources including the protection and preservation of historic districts, buildings and archaeological sites. The Plan lists several actions to provide historic preservation in the County:

- Study the possible designation of NM State Highway 28 as a Scenic By-way to help preserve the historic nature of rural communities.
- Develop a county historic preservation plan.
- Provide technical assistance to property owners seeking to list their properties or buildings on state and national registers of historic cultural sites.

### **12.1.5 ETZ**

Las Cruces and Doña Ana County have established specific goals, objectives and policies regarding historic and cultural resources in the ETZ. An objective of the ETZ is to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through preservation, maintenance, and protection of structures and districts of significant historic, architectural, archaeological or farmland interest.

The ETZ Comprehensive Plan 2000 - 2020 lists several programs to provide historic preservation in the County:

- Create Historic Zoning Districts that recognize State, Federal and Local Historic Sites.
- Establish a Historic Zoning Advisory Committee that would assist and report to the ETZ Commission to develop appropriate design standards for redevelopment and new development in historic areas.
- Develop guidelines and criteria for identifying properties and resources of significance.
- Identify and recommend districts, sites, properties and resources requiring protection and methods for their preservation consistent with the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Programs and the National Register of Historical Places.

In April 2008, a plan was produced for the Doña Ana Village to utilize heritage tourism-focused economic development as a means to address poverty in rural areas. The plan, “A Plan for Heritage Preservation and Tourism,” was funded through a USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant and prepared by Elmo Baca, a Special Projects coordinator for Main Street, New Mexico and Mary Deschene, a graduate student at the University of New Mexico (UNM). The planning process provided historic preservation strategies and economic development strategies as well as established a relationship between Doña Ana Village and the National Park Service Historic Trails program for El Camino Real.

## **12.2 Historic Resources**

In the 1980s, the Doña Ana County Historical Society, along with many other local contributors, documented the existing historic buildings in Las Cruces and the surrounding five-mile area to provide the community with *The Las Cruces Historic Buildings Survey*. The Survey consists of a historic overview of the region, a description of the local architectural styles and a review of the communities in the study area with depictions of the historic buildings in each community.

According to *The Las Cruces Historic Buildings Survey*, the 1980s document was intended to be one of many historic surveys of the area. While there has not been a complete update of the Historic Building Survey, there have been several historic surveys completed for various neighborhoods in the region. These surveys include one for the Alameda-Depot neighborhood in 1984; an architectural survey for the Mesquite – Original Townsite District as part of the Mesquite Historic District Plan in 2004; and several historic surveys completed by New Mexico State University.

### 12.2.1 National, State and Local Historic Registered Properties

There are 13 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places within Doña Ana County, excluding Las Cruces, and 11 properties within the City of Las Cruces. The National Register of Historic Places lists properties that are significant to our nation because of their documented importance to our history, architectural history, engineering or cultural heritage. States also provide a listing of properties deemed significant to the community, state or nation; but not all properties listed in the State Register meet the criteria for the National Register. The New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties includes all City and County properties listed on the National Register and an additional 13 properties within Doña Ana County, excluding Las Cruces, and 13 within the City of Las Cruces. Municipalities also create local registers to identify properties that reflect significant elements of their history, but neither the City nor the County currently have local historic registers.

Several resources listed on the National and State Registers are categorized as historic districts. (See Tables 18-1 and 18-2) The boundary for the Mesquite St. Historic District varies between National and State Registers: in the State Register, the boundary encompasses and extends beyond that of the National Register. Historic districts possess a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

| Table 12-1. Historic Properties in the City of Las Cruces   |   |          |       |   |
|---|---|----------|-------|---|
| Resource Name   | Address   | National | State |   |
| <b>Historic District</b>                                    |   |          |       |   |
| Alameda-Depot Historic District                             | Incl. props. around Pioneer Park.<br>Extends up Alameda Blvd. | X        | X     | X |
| Mesquite St. Original Townsite Historic District            | E. Texas Ave., Campo St., Tornillo St. & E. Court St.         | X        | X     | X |
| <b>Historic Location</b>                                    |   |          |       |   |
| Air Science   | N. Horseshoe & Espina St., NMSU                               | X        | X     | X |
| Amador Building   | Amador Ave. & Water St.                                       |          |       | X |
| Armijo, Nestor, House                                       | Lohman Ave. & Church St.                                      | X        | X     | X |
| Branigan Cultural Center (Former Branigan Memorial Library) | 106 W. Hadley St.   | X        | X     | X |
| Cade Property   | 169 W. Greening Ave.  |          |       | X |
| Civilian Conservation Corps Camp BR-                        | 39 N. Schoolhouse   |          |       | X |
| Court Junior High School                                    | 400 Block, W. Court St.                                       |          |       | X |
| (Former) Doña Ana County Courthouse                         | 251 W. Amador   |          |       | X |
| Doña Ana County Courts Building (Old Post Office)           | Griggs Ave.   |          |       | X |
| Foster Hall   | S. Horseshoe & Sweet, NMSU                                    | X        | X     | X |
| Goddard Hall  | S. Horseshoe, NMSU  | X        | X     | X |
| Guerra, Albino, House                                       | Union Ave. & Laguna Lat.                                      |          |       | X |
| Hadley--Ludwick House                                       | 2640 El Paseo   | X        | X     | X |
| Hayner House  | -   |          |       | X |
| Luceros, 167 West   | 167 W. Luceros  |          |       | X |
| Mason Ranch Site  | -   |          |       | X |
| Phillips Chapel CME Church                                  | 638 N. Tornillo St.   | X        | X     | X |
| Rhodes-Garrett-Hamiel Dormitory                             | NMSU  |          |       | X |
| Rio Grande Theatre  | 211 N. Downtown Mall  | X        | X     | X |
| University President's House                                | NMSU  | X        | X     | X |

Source: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places. Retrieved from: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/>; and New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, Dec. 2007.

**Table 12-2. Historic Properties in Doña Ana County, excluding Las Cruces**

| Resource Name  | Address   | National | State |
|--|---|----------|-------|
|  | <b>Historic District</b>  |          |       |
| Doña Ana Village Historic District                   | Roughly bounded by the Doña Ana lateral irrigation ditch, I-25, NM 320, and Doña Ana School Rd. | X        | X     |
| Elephant Butte Irrigation District                   | Includes the irrigation distribution system (canals/drains) and the structures along them       | X        | X     |
| La Mesilla Historic District                         | Roughly bounded by Calle del Norte, Calle del El Paso, Calle del Cura and Callejón Guerro       | X        | X     |
|  | <b>Historic Location</b>  |          |       |
| American Diversion Dam                               | El Paso   |          | X     |
| Appelzoller, Jacob, House                            | 1806 San José Road, La Mesa   |          | X     |
| Barela-Reynolds House                                | Off NM 292, Mesilla   | X        | X     |
| Bentley, L.B., General Merchandise                   | 16125 Old Organ Main St., Organ   | X        | X     |
| Doña Ana County Courthouse (Former) in Mesilla       | Calle de Parian, Mesilla  |          | X     |
| Fort Fillmore  | Address Restricted  | X        | X     |
| Fort Selden  | 18 mi. N of Las Cruces  | X        | X     |
| Gadsden High School (Valley High School)             | State Road 28, Anthony  |          | X     |
| International Boundary Marker No. 1, U.S. and Mexico | W of El Paso off I-10, El Paso  | X        | X     |
| LA 854   | -   |          | X     |
| Launch Complex 33                                    | White Sands Missile Range   | X        | X     |
| Leasburg Dam   | Radium Springs  |          | X     |
| Mesilla Plaza  | 2 mi. S of Las Cruces on NM 28  | X        | X     |
| Newberry Farm  | 1815 Shalem County Trail, Fairacres   |          | X     |
| Our Lady of Purification Catholic Church             | Camino Real and 2nd St., Doña Ana   | X        | X     |
| Picacho Lodge  | Bamert Drive & US 70-80, Fairacres  |          | X     |
| Pelham House   | US Highway 85, Hatch  |          | X     |
| Rio Grande Bridge at Radium Springs                  | NM 185 over Rio Grande, Radium Springs  | X        | X     |
| Rio Grande Bridge, El Paso & Southwestern Rwy.       | Doña Ana  |          | X     |
| Saint Francis de Sales Church (Old Rodey Church)     | Town Plaza, Rodey   |          | X     |
| San Jose Church                                      | 317 Josephine St., La Mesa  | X        | X     |
| Summerford Mountain Archaeological District          | -   |          | X     |
| Valley Grove Baptist Church                          | 221 Holguin Road, Vado  |          | X     |

Source: National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places. Retrieved from: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/>; and New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, Dec. 2007.

### 12.2.2 National Historic Landmarks

In addition to being listed on the national and state historic register, two resources in Doña Ana County have such historic significance that they are designated as National Historic Landmarks. The Secretary of the Interior designates National Historic Landmarks for their exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Mesilla Plaza and White Sands V-2 Launching Site are both designated as National Historic Landmarks. Descriptions of these Landmarks are provided below.

### Mesilla Plaza

On July 4 of 1961, Mesilla Plaza was listed as a National Historic Landmark. Currently an historic district, the Plaza retains “the flavor of a Mexican village”.<sup>229</sup> Mesilla’s historic significance is in the establishment of this distinctly Mexican village in 1848. After lands east of the Rio Grande were ceded to the United States in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, a group of settlers who preferred the Mexican government moved west of the river to found a new community.<sup>230</sup> Although the village only remained under Mexican control for a few years until it too became United States territory, the historic Plaza is reminiscent of its early beginnings.

According to the National Historic Landmarks Program as of 2004, the buildings in Mesilla Plaza are generally in excellent condition. Improvements made by the Town of Mesilla to preserve the Plaza include the replacement of approximately 40 percent of the brick pavers in the parking lot area and the replacement of five of the overgrown trees that had caused damage to the sidewalk and concrete areas. The National Historic Landmarks Program recommends continued replacement of brick pavers in the parking lot area to alleviate water ponding and to encourage proper drainage.

### White Sands V-2 Launching Site

On October 3, 1985, the White Sands V-2 Launching Site was listed as a National Historic Landmark. Currently listed as an educational/research facility, the property also remains an active missile site. The historic significance of the V-2 Launching Site is its association with U.S. testing of the German V-2 rocket, the origins of the American rocket program and the leadership of Dr. Werner von Braun. The V-2 Gantry Crane and Army Blockhouse here represent the first generation of rocket testing facilities that would lead to U.S. exploration of space.

According the National Landmarks Program, as of 2006 there were no threats to the White Sands V-2 Launching Site.<sup>231</sup>

## **12.2.3 National Historic Trail**

In October 2000, the U.S. Congress added El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Royal Road of the Interior) to the National Trails System. The National Historic Trail identifies the primary route between the colonial Spanish capital of Mexico City and the northern frontier, in today’s New Mexico.<sup>232</sup> The designated National Historic Trail extends 404 miles from El Paso, Texas, to Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo (San Juan Pueblo), New Mexico, traveling through Las Cruces.<sup>233</sup>

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Parks Services (NPS) jointly administer the Trail. The trail is one of 17 national historic trails in the National Trails System (a network of scenic, historic, and recreation trails created by the National Trails System Act of 1968). A Comprehensive Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement for the trail was completed in April 2004, followed by a Record of Decision in September 2004.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> National Historic Landmarks Program, Mesilla Plaza.

[Http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=336&ResourceType=District](http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=336&ResourceType=District)

<sup>230</sup> Owen, Gordon. Las Cruces New Mexico Multicultural Crossroads. Revised Edition. 1999. p. 26.

<sup>231</sup> National Historic Landmarks Program, White Sands V-2 Launching Site.

<http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceId=1939&ResourceType=Site>

<sup>232</sup> El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Management

<http://www.nps.gov/elca/parkmgmt/index.htm>

<sup>233</sup> El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail (brochure)

<http://www.nps.gov/elca/planyourvisit/brochures.htm>

<sup>234</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/elca/parkmgmt/>

The primary nonfederal partner with the NPS and BLM for the trail is El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association (CARTA). According to the Association, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, measured by the antiquity of human traffic, the migrations of populations, the flow of cultural currents and ideology, its early role in Spain's Southwestern colonization and the drama of the human theater, ranks as one of the most historic trails in North America.<sup>235</sup> According to the National Park Service, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is recognized throughout the United States of America and Los Estados Unidos de México as a timeless route of trade and cultural exchange and interaction among Spaniards and other Europeans, American Indians, Mexicans, and Americans.

### **Recent Accomplishments**

Trail representatives are in the process of site signage development. On June 30, 2007, the first trail sign was installed marking Tomé Hill and Puerta del Sol sculpture. Furthermore, NPS and BLM representatives have begun work to certify the first high-potential historic sites and interpretive facilities for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail (NHT). Certified sites are recognized as an official component of the NHT and are permitted to use the Camino Real trail logo. They are also able to request guidance or assistance from NHT officials and experts in interpretation of the trail and are eligible to apply for Challenge Cost Share (matching funds to help protect a trail property, make it accessible, research its history, or tell its story to visitors).<sup>236</sup> Other accomplishments in the 2007 Fiscal Year include:

- Interpretive signage development, Las Golondrinas and El Paso Riverwalk (NPS Challenge Cost Share [CCS])
- Conference (Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association [CARTA])
- Historic marker inventory and assessment (BLM CCS, CARTA)
- Trail corridor project consultations (BLM, NPS, CARTA)
- Conceptual development plan, Jornada del Muerto (NPS & BLM)<sup>237</sup>

Priority issues identified for the future of the trail as identified by the BLM and NPS include National Register Nominations for some of the most critical trail segments, World Heritage Nomination for the trail, site protection and preservation and data sharing and outreach coordination.

Currently available visitor amenities for the trail include:

- An audio tour of El Camino Real called “Portrait in Sound of an Ancient Road,” narrated by Jack Loeffler and produced by the Bureau of Land Management, which can be purchased through the Public Lands Information Center ([www.publiclands.org](http://www.publiclands.org))
- A brochure that highlights the audio tour provided by El Camino Real International Heritage Center
- A virtual tour provided on the BLM website
- “Five Days on the Trail,” a description of places to see and visit along the trail provided on the BLM website ([http://www.blm.gov/heritage/adventures/menu/nm\\_fivedays.html](http://www.blm.gov/heritage/adventures/menu/nm_fivedays.html))
- Educational Opportunities through “The Grand Adventure,” a curriculum guide developed as part of the BLM’s “intrigue of the Past: Adventures in Archaeology” (series of lessons appropriate for 5th and 8th graders)
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro International Heritage Center, an interpretive learning center containing exhibits, period artifacts, displays, and traveling exhibits about El Camino Real trail and the colonization of New Mexico
- “Following the Royal Road: A guide to the Historic Camino Real de Tierra Adentro” by Hal Jackson

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<sup>235</sup> El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association. <http://www.caminorealcarta.org/>

<sup>236</sup> TRAIL CERTIFICATION AND SIGNAGE DISCUSSIONS UNDERWAY, Cameron Saffell, Board Member and CARTA Site Certification Committee. [http://www.caminorealcarta.org/carta\\_news8.html](http://www.caminorealcarta.org/carta_news8.html)

<sup>237</sup> FY07 Trail Accomplishments, FY08 and Out-year Priorities. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail. Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

Also, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail was listed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places of 2007. According to National Trust for Historic Preservation the Spaceport operations, which involve the construction of multiple structures, access roads, parking lots, runways, launch pads, chemical tanks, fencing and viewing areas, will pose a serious threat to the area's historic resources.<sup>238</sup>

Additional resources relative to El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro are:

- El Camino Real De Tierra Adentro Trail Association (CARTA) <http://www.caminorealcarta.org/>
- El Camino Real International Heritage Center <http://www.nmmonuments.org/inst.php?inst=9>
- The National Park Service (NPS) <http://www.nps.gov/elca/index.htm>
- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) [http://www.blm.gov/heritage/adventures/menu/featured\\_site\\_nm.html](http://www.blm.gov/heritage/adventures/menu/featured_site_nm.html)

### **12.2.4 National Scenic Byways**

#### **El Camino Real**

In September 2005, El Camino Real was designated as a National Scenic Byway. The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States.<sup>239</sup> The El Camino Real National Scenic Byway is 299 miles of road that travels through New Mexico from the United States/Mexican border to Santa Fe. While the National Scenic Byways Online highlights the history of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in its overview of the Byway, the El Camino Real National Scenic Byway, though roughly parallel, does not follow the historic El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. According to a CARTA representative, CARTA and NHT officials have discussed the possibility of working with NM DOT to realign the scenic byway to the historic route, but have not pursued it.

### **12.2.5 State Monuments**

There are three State Monuments in Doña Ana County: Fort Selden; Mesilla Plaza; and the Barela-Reynolds House and Property. A division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, the New Mexico State Monument System was established on March 14, 1931 by an Act for the Preservation of the Scientific Resources of New Mexico, H.R. No. 124. The State Monument System designates State-owned or controlled lands as State monuments for the proper care and management of historic and prehistoric structures and other objects of scientific interest.

#### **Fort Selden State Monument**

Fort Selden State Monument is one of six State monuments active and open to the public. The Fort Selden is historically significant for its role in the protection of settlers and travelers in the Mesilla Valley from desperados and Apache Indians. Established in 1865, the Fort was abandoned in 1891 as the threat of attack waned. Of the troops stationed at Fort Selden, several were black troopers known as Buffalo Soldiers. Today a visitor center is located at Fort Selden, which hosts frontier and military life exhibits. Occasionally, the Fort offers living history demonstrations.

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<sup>238</sup> 2007 11 Most Endangered Places, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail. <http://www2.preservationnation.org/11most/02.html>

<sup>239</sup> <http://www.byways.org/learn/>

### **Mesilla Plaza**

Mesilla Plaza is one of five state monuments considered “inactive” by the State Monuments System.<sup>240</sup> While the State Monuments System does not provide programs at Mesilla Plaza, as a National Historic Landmark and a central focus in the Town of Mesilla, the Plaza remains lively. The Town of Mesilla has been working with the Certified Local Government Program with the NM HPD to try to join the program.<sup>241</sup>

### **Barela-Reynolds House**

In 2004, the Barela-Reynolds House and Property was designated as a State monument after the John Paul Taylor family donated it to the State. According to the New Mexico State Monuments website, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor will retain a life estate on the property that will not be open to the public until their death.

## **12.2.6 Other Preservation Organizations and Efforts**

State and federal governments are the main providers of preservation programs in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County, but other entities conduct historic preservation activities in the region.

- Doña Ana County Historical Society- Formed in 1963, the mission of the Doña Ana County Historical Society is to encourage and preserve the historical and cultural heritage of Southern New Mexico. Recent efforts include the preservation of the County Courthouse and the Amador Hotel in Las Cruces. The Historical Society also publishes annually the Southern New Mexico Historical Review, a collection of articles related to the local history. Furthermore, each year the Society presents awards for local historic restoration.
- Amador Museum Foundation- The Amador Hotel is a 114-year-old hotel in the City of Las Cruces. The Amador Museum Foundation, a non-profit organization, has been raising funds to revitalize the building and turn it into a public museum. The Foundation president said the goal is to complete the hotel’s revitalization by the State Centennial on January 12, 2012. The project will cost several million dollars. Among other ongoing preservation efforts, there is a Draft Conditions Assessment being conducted.
- National Preservation Organizations- Preserve America and the National Trust for Historic Preservation have supported preservation efforts in New Mexico according to “Preserving the Enchantment, A Plan for New Mexico, 2007 – 2011”.
- Fountain Theatre Restoration- In late December 2007, a couple from Las Cruces purchased the Fountain Theatre, the second oldest movie house in the state and the oldest adobe movie house in the state. According to the Las Cruces Sun News, the couple planned to create a nonprofit organization to seek grants to restore and preserve the Theatre. The couple also planned to renovate the vacant building adjacent to the theatre and make it available for lease in the future. A Preservation Plan was completed for the Fountain Theatre as a collaborative effort of NMSU and Cornerstones Community Partnerships, a non-profit organization based in Santa Fe.

## **12.3 Educational Resources**

Education is critical to preserve a community’s heritage and its remaining historic resources. There are several educational resources about the history of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County listed below:

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<sup>240</sup> New Mexico State Monuments. About New Mexico State Monuments.  
<http://www.nmmonuments.org/about.php>

<sup>241</sup> New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, New Mexico Dept. of Cultural Affairs. “Preserving the Enchantment: A Plan for New Mexico, 2007-2011”. Pg. 11

### **12.3.1 *Branigan Cultural Center Exhibit***

The Branigan Cultural Center in Las Cruces has an exhibit about the history of the region called “Las Cruces: Crossroads of History”. The exhibit highlights the major events that shaped the region. In support of the exhibit, the Center’s website provides a brief sequential description of the exhibit:

- “Along the Camino Real: Pre-history to 1820”
- “Settling the Valley 1821 – 1848”
- “The City Begins 1849 – 1860”
- “Soldiers, Ranchers, & Outlaws 1881 – 1912”
- “Water & Hard Times 1913 – 1940”
- “War, Rockets & Renewal 1941 to Present”

### **12.3.2 *Published Historic Overviews***

Several books provide historic reviews of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. Below are some of these resources:

- “Las Cruces New Mexico, Multicultural Crossroads” by Gordon Owen
- “A Place as Wild as the West Ever Was, Mesilla, New Mexico: 1848-1872” by Mary Daniels Taylor with major contributions by Nona Barrick
- “Las Cruces, An Illustrated History” by Linda G. Harris

## **12.4 Cultural Resources**

This section is an inventory of cultural resources that exist in the City of Las Cruces and other communities in Doña Ana County. Many cultural resources in Doña Ana County are administered by various government agencies at the local, state and federal levels; but other organizations also play a significant role in preserving and promoting arts and culture.

### **12.4.1 *The City of Las Cruces***

In the City of Las Cruces, three departments share responsibility for the City’s cultural institutions. At least two of these departments are dedicated to integrating culture into the City’s economic development strategies.

- The City of Las Cruces Economic Development and Revitalization Section, which is part of the Community Development Department, is involved in planning the downtown revitalization, which will affect several cultural institutions located in the downtown mall. The department also organizes the Farmers and Crafts Market, which promotes local produce and crafts and takes place in the downtown area.
- The City of Las Cruces Facilities Department is responsible for all public cultural institutions owned and operated by the City. The Department’s Project Management section manages all capital projects that affect city-owned cultural institutions, while the Building Maintenance section provides custodial and repair services to all of the City’s public buildings, including its cultural institutions.
- The Las Cruces Convention and Visitors Bureau, a section of the City’s Public Services Department has the mission of marketing the City’s cultural resources. The Bureau delivers marketing services aimed at attracting visitors to the City, for either business or tourism purposes, as a way to stimulate the local economy. The Convention and Visitors Bureau maintains a website with up-to-date information about public and private cultural venues that exist in the City.

- The Museum System is also under the umbrella of the Public Services Department. The Museum System administrates the four museums owned by the City. Although each museum has its own director, they are all under the Director of Museums. Museum Administration includes one curator that oversees all museum collections, one curator of exhibitions that coordinates exhibits throughout the system, and one coordinator that manages volunteer recruitment and training for all four museums. In 2007, there were 100 regular volunteers registered with the Museum System. In 2008, there were 128 regular volunteers who contributed 5,760 hours of service.

In addition to the culture and arts programs offered through the museums, the City provides art, music and dance classes and events through its recreation program. Please refer to the Park, Recreation and Open Space chapter for further information on recreation programs.

The following is a description of the City's cultural resources:

#### **The Branigan Cultural Center**

The Cultural Center was established in 1981, and it is located at 500 N. Water Street in a building constructed during the Great Depression. This building is on the State and National Register of Historic Places. Community organizations use it regularly, including the Alameda Neighborhood Association, Doña Ana County Historical Society, Las Cruces Downtown, Las Cruces Friends of Chamber Music, the Knitters' Guild, and the Open Spaces Network. It is the permanent home of the José Tenas' Ballet Folklórico. The Center hosts a series of brown bag lunches throughout the year, and during the summer, it offers traditional New Mexican crafts workshops. The Center also conducts walking tours of the downtown area to teach people about architectural styles and the history of particular buildings. It also conducts tours of local cemeteries. Admission to the museum is free. Attendance in 2006 was 65,504. Renovations are being planned.

#### **Las Cruces Museum of Art**

The Museum of Art, located at 490 N. Water Street, focuses mostly on contemporary art and offers new exhibitions throughout the year. The museum offers affordable, high quality art classes taught by professional artists and residents of all ages may take classes in drawing, painting, ceramics, weaving, photography, and mixed media. A new program allows 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders to explore the relationship between art and science. A Digital Lab for photography students was recently completed with the assistance of City agencies and a private donation. There is also a Studio program that "offers instruction for future artists, continuing education for practicing artists and provides a sense of community for artists living and working in Las Cruces."<sup>242</sup> Admission to the museum is free. Attendance has nearly doubled in the past two years. It has gone from 50,965 in 2006 to 82,856 in 2007. As of April 2008, the attendance this year was 15,511.<sup>243</sup> The arts education program had over 800 children and 400 adults, and the Studio Program had 1,200 participants. Non-profits groups also used the Museum's classroom space in 2007 and roughly 1,700 persons participated in 2007. The Museum's total budget has increased from \$280,906 in 2006 to \$348,246 in 2008.<sup>244</sup>

The most critical issue facing the museum administration is adequate staffing. Currently, the museum has 3 full-time positions, 1 part-time position, and 2 temporary part-time positions. Additional full-time positions are needed to increase the number of public hours the museum is open. Increasing the number of full-time staff would also allow the museum to increase the number of studio programs offerings, the amount of other public programs, and to address building security issues. Reclassifying part-time and temporary positions into regular positions would allow the Museum of Art to address these issues effectively.

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<sup>242</sup> City of Las Cruces Museums. Annual Report, 2007. Pg.12

<sup>243</sup> Source: City of Las Cruces Museums. 2006 Annual Report; and personal communication with Lisa Pugh, Museum Manager, Las Cruces Museum of Art. April 2008.

<sup>244</sup> Source: Personal communication with Lisa Pugh, Museum Manager, Las Cruces Museum of Art. April 2008.

### **Las Cruces Museum of Natural History**

The Museum of Natural History focuses on natural history, science and the environment of the Chihuahuan Desert. It is located at 700 S. Telshor Boulevard in the Mesilla Valley Mall. This museum often features traveling exhibitions from well-known science and nature centers in the United States. Various classes and programs are offered throughout the year, including opportunities for Girl Scouts to earn merit badge credits. A partnership was recently established to support a new permanent NASA exhibit. The museum also runs programs outside the museum, like themed 'nature treks' and a summer Nature Camp with various activities and field trips. The museum is also the home of the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center, which allows visitors to see about 40 living animals from the region. Admission to the museum is free. In 2006, attendance was 130,696. In 2007, attendance was 144,231.

The museum is in the process of moving to a downtown location: the City acquired the former Bank of the Rio Grande building in the Downtown Mall, next to the Las Cruces Museum of Art. The building is valued at \$545,000 and occupies 0.195 acres. The museum will have a new mission and name when it opens downtown as the Museum of Nature & Science (MoNaS). Improvements are estimated at \$4.2 million dollars. A formal planning process has begun and the estimated date of completion is 2012. The new museum is slated to become the official Las Cruces visitor center for both the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument and Spaceport America, tying together its new theme of "Trackways to Space."<sup>245</sup>

### **Las Cruces Railroad Museum**

The Las Cruces Railroad Museum exhibits model trains and railroad memorabilia. It is located at 351 Mesilla Street in the Santa Fe Depot, a building listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The museum offers tours of the historic depot and interprets the impact of the railroad on the surrounding Mesilla Valley and Las Cruces communities. There are programs to teach students about trains and railroad crossing safety, year-round brown bag lunches and an annual Old Fashioned Holiday Lights Display (which is held as part of the City's "Trail of Lights" celebration). Admission to the museum is free. In 2006, attendance was 1,102. In 2007, the Museum closed from March to December for renovations. The DOT funded the work to improve the museum's ADA accessibility, functionality and security.<sup>246</sup>

In addition to these four existing museums, the City of Las Cruces Museum System is in the process of turning the Amador Hotel into a museum. The City of Las Cruces acquired Amador Hotel from Doña Ana County, and it is temporarily using it as a transfer station by Roadrunner Transit.<sup>247</sup> The City has been reluctant to invest in the project because the renovations required are extensive. The Amador Museum Foundation is raising funds on behalf of the City. Cornerstones Community Partnerships is conducting a conditions assessment and preservation plan for the Amador Museum Foundation.<sup>248</sup>

### **Rio Grande Theatre**

The Rio Grande Theatre, located at 211 N. Downtown Mall, is a 422-seat adobe theater. It is owned by the City of Las Cruces and is under the museum system. It is operated through a public/private partnership with the Doña Ana Arts Council. It includes a conference room, the El Paso Electric Visual Arts Gallery and the Carolene de Mesilla Center. The Doña Ana Arts Council acquired the building in 1998 and deeded it to the City in 2004 to facilitate the use of state funds for renovations. Originally a movie theater, the building is now a state-of-the-art performing arts facility. Free programs are offered in the theatre, including story time readings for elementary school children, live Tuesday performances and visual art shows throughout the year. To recover operational costs, the facility is available for lease for a wide variety of events.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Personal communication with William Ticknor, Museum Administrator. April 2009.

<sup>246</sup> City of Las Cruces Museums. 2006 Annual Report.

<sup>247</sup> Ramírez, Steve. "City officials deny claims that the Amador Hotel could be replaced with bus station (4pm)" Las Cruces Sun-News. [http://www.lcsun-news.com/news/cj\\_8985607](http://www.lcsun-news.com/news/cj_8985607)

<sup>248</sup> Current Projects: Amador Hotel, Las Cruces, NM. Cornerstones Community Partnerships. [http://cstones.org/projects/Las\\_Cruces\\_\\_New\\_Mexico/](http://cstones.org/projects/Las_Cruces__New_Mexico/)

<sup>249</sup> City of Las Cruces Museums. 2006 Annual Report.

### **Farmers' and Crafts Market**

The Farmers' and Crafts Market is located at the 300-500 block of the Las Cruces Downtown Mall. This open-air market was established in 1971 by produce growers and runs every Wednesday and Saturday morning. Arts, crafts, farm herbs, produce and eggs are available. The grower or crafter must be present as the seller and items sold must be produced or hand assembled within Doña Ana or El Paso counties. Only residents of these counties and their immediate family members may be vendors. Special events are scheduled on Saturdays. The market is administered by the City's Economic Development and Revitalization Section and maintained by the City's Parks Section.

## **12.4.2 *Doña Ana County***

The County government does not directly administer any cultural activities within the county. Instead, the Doña Ana Arts Council (DACC), an independent, non-profit arts council serves to promote arts and culture within the county. (See Section 7.4.5) The following is a list of cultural institutions in Doña Ana County (excluding Las Cruces).

### **J. Paul Taylor Visitor Center**

J. Paul Taylor Visitor Center is located at 2231 Avenida de Mesilla. The Town of Mesilla owns and operates this center, which houses a collection of photos from the late 1800s. Operation relies on volunteer help.

### **Gadsden Museum**

Gadsden Museum, located at 1875 Boutz, is owned and operated by the Town of Mesilla, and it is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history of Colonel Albert Jennings and his family.

### **Farmers' Markets**

The Town of Mesilla organizes the Arts, Crafts and Seasonal Produce market, which is also known as the Mesilla Mercado and Farmers Market. The market is located in the historic Mesilla Plaza. Locally grown produce and homemade crafts are sold here every Thursday and Sunday. There are two additional farmers' markets in Doña Ana County: one in the Village of Doña Ana and another in Chaparral.

## **12.4.3 *State of New Mexico***

### **New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs**

At the state level, the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs offers a framework for preserving the state's cultural heritage and developing the arts industry locally. The department Secretary, who is appointed by the Governor, oversees the work of the various commissions created to assist local governments, businesses and community organizations involved in culture and arts. The department administrates several state museums, including the Fort Selden State Monument and the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces.

### **New Mexico Music Commission**

The New Mexico Music Commission is an agency created in 2005 by executive order. Its mission is to protect and preserve the rich musical heritage of New Mexico and to promote local artists and music venues. The commission works with the New Mexico Film Office, the Tourism Department and the Folk Arts Coordinator to improve the state's growing film and tourism industries. The commission maintains a clearinghouse of music opportunities for children and students, companies and performances.

### **New Mexico Film Office**

The New Mexico Film Office is dedicated to promoting the state in the film industry for its scenic resources and industry incentives.

### **New Mexico Arts**

New Mexico Arts is the State's arts commission. It consists of 15 commissioners appointed by the Governor, including one representative for the area of Las Cruces. New Mexico Arts' mission is to provide financial support to local governments and community organizations that administrate public arts programs and facilities, make artistic presentations, art education activities, or are involved in cultural planning, community development and cultural tourism. Financial support is also available to entities that provide advocacy services for the arts, information services to the public, or services to artists and local arts organizations. The funds provided to local agencies and community organizations are obtained from federal sources like the National Endowment for the Arts; a state capital outlays program that requires that a portion of the budget for state-funded public construction projects be used towards public arts projects; and partnerships with private enterprises. According to the New Mexico Arts Strategic Plan for 2005-2008, the commission strives to professionalize the arts in New Mexico, serves as the main liaison or networking resource for artists across the state, and improves the integration of the arts in public education and social services.

In addition to general grant programs, New Mexico Arts administrates the following programs, which have had positive impacts in Doña Ana County and the City of Las Cruces:

- Folk Art Apprenticeships - Made possible by the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, it matches young artists with master artisans for instruction in traditional craftmaking.
- Art in Public Places - Encourages the integration of arts in public buildings and sites. It includes a Cultural Corridors program that uses federal, state and local funds to make monuments or landmarks along the State's most culturally important highways or scenic byways. Phase 1 of the Cultural Corridors program included efforts in the City of Las Cruces.
- New Mexico Fiber Arts Trail - An arts and cultural tourism program that promotes fiber making, weaving, knitting, quilting and other fiber-based southwestern crafts throughout the State. Along the trail, there are 71 destinations, including shops, studios, galleries and museums that feature traditional or modern fiber arts and crafts designed and produced by local artists. The trail features stops in the City of Las Cruces and the Town of Mesilla.
- The Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts - The highest recognition the State of New Mexico may give to individuals involved in the arts. Las Cruces have been recognized in the past for their contributions.

New Mexico Arts has also published a study about the impact of cultural tourism and arts in the state economy. The Arts Enterprise Partnerships Program is mentioned as a key effort that has helped small and rural communities create or strengthen markets for their arts and crafts through retail and e-commerce site development, and professional training.

### **State Cultural Resources**

The State of New Mexico provides three museums to residents of Doña Ana County through various entities. In addition, there is a proposal to develop the State's Veterans Museum in Las Cruces. Discussion at the legislative level has been ongoing since January of 2008.<sup>250</sup>

### **University Art Gallery**

The New Mexico State University Art Gallery in Las Cruces is dedicated to traditional New Mexican religious art. It is open to the students and the public. Volunteers help with gallery tours, and the Gallery's staff organizes summer art workshops for students and regional invitational art exhibitions annually.

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<sup>250</sup> "Veterans museum proposed for Las Cruces." Las Cruces Sun News. [http://www.lcsun-news.com/legislature2008/ci\\_8104919](http://www.lcsun-news.com/legislature2008/ci_8104919)

### The Zuhl Geological Collection

The New Mexico State University houses the Zuhl Geological Collection at two locations: the University Library at 2911 McFie Circle and the Alumni and Visitors' Center on 775 College Drive. The Zuhl Geological Collection is an exhibit of petrified wood, fossils, minerals and rocks from the United States and abroad that belongs to the private collection of Herb and Joan Zuhl, residents of Las Cruces. The collection is accessible to local citizens, school groups and visitors to the University and southern New Mexico. Large specimens of petrified wood and fossils are the main attractions of this collection.

### New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum

The New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, located at 4100 Dripping Springs Road, opened in 1998. It is dedicated to the history of farming and ranching in New Mexico. The Museum occupies 47 acres, has indoor and outdoor exhibits about the dairy industry, cowboy life, and livestock production in New Mexico, as well as gardens and orchards. It has the largest collection of cattle, horse and sheep brand records from 1899. In addition to these exhibits, the Museum also hosts lectures, cooking classes and living history events throughout the year. The museum conducts or supports research programs in collaboration with other institutions, such as the New Mexico State University, the Smithsonian Institute and the University of Texas in the following topics: oral histories (in cooperation with the NMSU Libraries), Native American pottery; Founders; POWs in New Mexico Agriculture; Spanish Heritage Horses; and the Bracero Program.

### Performing Arts

The State is also a significant contributor to the performing arts in the County through programs offered at NMSU. NMSU is the state's main provider of performing arts training and events in Doña Ana County. The University provides training, rehearsal and performance space for several independent/non-profit performing arts organizations under an agreement with them to offer quality experiences for students and the public. Table 7-3 lists several performing arts organizations associated to NMSU.

| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Location</b>  |
|---|--|
| Choral Ensembles at New Mexico State University:<br>University Singers<br>Masterworks Chorus<br>Concert Choir<br>Gospel Choir<br>Doña Ana Lyric Opera | NMSU, Dept. of Music   |
| Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra<br>Mesilla Valley Concert Band  | 1075 N. Horseshoe Dr.<br>NMSU Concert Hall                           |
| NMSU Contemporary Dance Theatre<br>NMSU DanceSport Company<br>Sol Y Arena   | NMSU, Dept. of Dance<br>NMSU, Dept. of Dance<br>NMSU, Dept. of Dance |

Source: [www.nmsu.edu](http://www.nmsu.edu)

## 12.4.4 *Federal Government*

### **BLM**

The BLM manages cultural resources in Doña Ana County. These include archaeological and paleontological sites, petroglyphs and historic trails.

#### **Archaeological sites**

There are many archaeological sites on BLM land. All Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) contain archaeological resources: Doña Ana Mountains, Los Tules, Organ/Franklin Mountains, “Rincon”, Robledo Mountains and San Diego Mountains. Under ACEC designation, sites are managed to preserve public, socio-cultural and research uses of the sites, their historic value and physical integrity.

These sites have remnants of early Native American settlements. Some are from the Jornada-Mogollón period. The Jornada Mogollón culture may have begun in 250 A.D. and lasted about 1,000 years. Most settlements from this period appear to have been abandoned around 1400 A.D. Pit House and Pueblo settlements are characteristic of this culture, which practiced agriculture, hunting and gathering.

- La Cueva- prehistoric site within the Organ-Franklin Mountains. It has potential for listing in the National Register
- Robledo Mountains prehistoric habitation sites- some of the earliest settlements in New Mexico
- Peña Blanca rock shelters and midden rings- sites with the earliest cultivated corn
- Los Tules- large pit house village that became the type site for defining the characteristics of the Jornada Mogollón culture. According to the Mimbres RMP, there were plans to purchase private property to fully protect the site (Half the site is within private property)
- “Rincon” petroglyphs- petroglyphs scattered through an area of 840 acres. Many are actually located on State Trust lands. Construction of communication sites, mining and treasure hunting has damaged numerous petroglyphs
- San Diego Mountains petroglyphs- petroglyphs on the north face of the mountains. According to the Mimbres RMP, archaeo-astronomical features were documented at the site
- Dripping Springs Natural Area Resort, mining camps and military forts- historic site with potential for listing in National Register
- Fort Filmore- permanent settlement near Mesilla that was established after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1846. It was used to protect settlers from Apache attacks. It was abandoned after 1861

#### **Paleontological sites**

The Prehistoric Trackways National Monument is a key paleontological resource. There are fossils of amphibian, reptiles, insects, plants and petrified wood dating back to 280 million years. The site has the world’s earliest Permian track sites known today. Hiking, horseback riding, and off-highway vehicle driving. Fossils and trackways, however, are not visible on site because they are excavated and taken to the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science in Albuquerque. There are currently no public access facilities at the site roughly off Shalem Colony Road and NM-185.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Bureau of Land Management website. Retrieved on July 8, 2009 from:  
[http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/recreation/las\\_cruces/trackways.html](http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/recreation/las_cruces/trackways.html)

### **Natural History Interest Sites**

The Potrillo Volcanic Field is a large desert area in southwest Doña Ana County. It has more than 150 cinder cones, 5 maar volcanoes and their lava flows.<sup>252</sup> Kilbourne Hole National Natural Landmark (NNL) is part of the Potrillo Volcanic Field. Kilbourne Hole is a volcanic crater created when an ancient volcano exploded between 24,000 and 100,000 years ago. The site is located in southern Doña Ana County, amidst mounds of rock and sand. The northern rim of the crater is formed by basalt cliffs. Layers of ashes and sediment are visible, and green olivine is commonly found in the rocks.<sup>253</sup> A playa lake is found at the bottom of the crater, which is mostly private property used for cattle grazing.<sup>254</sup> Hiking is allowed on public property, but visitors must have adequate skills since the site is very isolated and there are no facilities or phone service in the area. Off-road driving is not permitted.<sup>255</sup> Geologic interpretation and studies have taken place on the site, including training exercises for several Apollo missions.<sup>256</sup> Other well-preserved geological features in the Potrillo Volcanic Field include Aden Crater, Hunt's Hole and Mount Riley. The Aden Lava Flow is a Research Natural Area (RNA).

### **Trails**

#### **Butterfield Trail**

The Butterfield Trail was the route used by the Butterfield Overland Mail and Stage Line to transport mail across the US. The trail dates from 1857; it began in St. Louis, Missouri and ended in San Diego/San Francisco, California. There are adobe and rock masonry stage stations with watering points along the way.

#### **El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail**

The Camino Real is a project between the BLM, the NPS and various community organizations. The agencies and organizations are working to develop a route, access points, signage system and interpretive exhibits along the historic trail. As a result of these activities, visitor numbers to all sites along the trail are expected to increase. Estimates predict increases of 900 to 5,500 visitors each year. The level of management of those sites is expected to increase as well to ensure that the physical integrity of the sites is preserved and to prevent illegal collection. The views from the trail also need to be preserved to maintain the historic integrity of the landscape.

The main attractions along the trail are established historic and cultural sites in Las Cruces or other parts of Doña Ana County; however, there are three opportunities to develop additional sites. The BLM's San Diego Mountain site has potential for an interpretive pull-off from I-25 along the Camino Real.<sup>257</sup> There are also two potential parajes, one in the Village of Doña Ana, and the other in the Robledo Mountains. Parajes were stopping points for travelers during the 1760s up to the 1840s, which –in this region– appear to have been located between the river and the mountains. The Doña Ana Paraje was said to be popular with travelers because it had a bridge that gave people access to the river without having to go into the floodplain. However, the sites have yet to be selected because there are no remnants in place and historical records about their location are imprecise.

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<sup>252</sup> Retrieved on September 2, 2008 from:

[http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/Volcanoes/NewMexico/description\\_new\\_mexico\\_volcanics.html](http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/Volcanoes/NewMexico/description_new_mexico_volcanics.html)

<sup>253</sup> Retrieved on September 2, 2008 from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilbourne\\_Hole](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilbourne_Hole)

<sup>254</sup> Retrieved on September 2, 2008 from: <http://www.mtlilygems.com/mineinfo/KHinfo.html>

<sup>255</sup> Retrieved on September 2, 2008 from:

[http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/recreation/las\\_cruces/kilbourne\\_hole.html](http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/recreation/las_cruces/kilbourne_hole.html)

<sup>256</sup> Retrieved on September 2, 2008 from: <http://history.nasa.gov/alsj/ap-geotrips.pdf>

<sup>257</sup> El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement. 2004. Pg. 94

### 12.4.5 *Non-profit Organizations*

There are 12 non-profit arts organizations located within Doña Ana County. Eight organizations are dedicated to the performing arts, while three are dedicated to the visual arts and one is dedicated to traditional arts and crafts.

#### **Doña Ana Arts Council**

The Doña Ana Arts Council (DAAC) is a non-profit organization that promotes culture and arts in Doña Ana County through the financial support of individuals, businesses and grants. Founded in 1974, it operates independently from the county government, and is one of the largest arts councils in the State of New Mexico. Offices are located in the Rio Grande Theatre in the Las Cruces Downtown Mall.

The DAAC provides financial aid for the arts and organizes or co-sponsors visual, performing and literary arts programs and events in the cultural institutions throughout the County. The DAAC organizes the annual Renaissance CraftFaire, which has been held for the past 10 years, draws 25,000 visitors each year and was recognized in 2003 as one of the top 100 events in North America by the American Bus Association.<sup>258</sup> They estimate that this fair contributes \$1.25 million to the local economy.

The DAAC also participates in partnerships with out-of-state and national arts organizations. These partnerships bring high quality youth education and professional development programs to Doña Ana County each year.

- The Kennedy Center Partners in Education Program provides arts teachers with the opportunities and workshops to develop professionally and increase students' access to the arts using integrating techniques and new instructional ideas for the classroom. The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts collaborates with Theatre Works USA to bring visiting artists to perform for students and the public.
- The LCPS Technical Theatre Training Program is a partnership between the DAAC, the Las Cruces Public Schools and the Oñate High School Performing Arts Center. The program allows students interested in working backstage to get additional technical training in this aspect of the performing arts.
- The Career Art Path Program- offers middle school students the opportunity to spend two weeks with professional artists exploring various arts media and how they relate to career opportunities. Students exhibit their work at the end of the program. Funds for this program come from a participation fee, scholarships and the Annual ArtsHop event organized by the DAAC.
- Youth at Risk- weekly visual, performing and literary arts workshops for Hispanic children and youth up to 8th grade who are living at the La Casa Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence.
- The Missoula Children's Theatre conducts a tour through the country each year to offer children between the ages of 6 to 18 the chance to organize in a week a whole presentation while they learn various life skills. The DAAC supplies the space for the event, as well as musicians, publicity and ticket sales.

In the past, the DAAC partnered with the City of Las Cruces for the establishment of the Branigan Cultural Center. Currently, the organization is highly involved in the Las Cruces Downtown Revitalization efforts. The organization also offers networking opportunities for individuals in the arts community.

#### **Rio Grande Theater**

The Rio Grande Theatre, located at 211 N. Downtown Mall is owned and operated by the Doña Ana Arts Council (DAAC). It includes a conference room, the El Paso Electric Visual Arts Gallery and the Carolene de Mesilla Center. Originally a movie theater, the DAAC has renovated it and converted it into a state-of-the-art performing arts facility. Free programs are offered in the theatre, including story time readings for elementary school children, live Tuesday performances and visual art shows throughout the year.

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<sup>258</sup> American Bus Association. "Archived Top 100 Events – United States - 1982-2008." <http://www.buses.org/node/760>

## Other non-profit organizations

There are a number of non-profit arts organizations in Doña Ana County. Several are oriented to the performing arts as shown on Table 4. Many non-profits have acquired buildings in the City of Las Cruces, preserving, restoring and/or reopening them to the public.

### The Fountain Theatre

The Fountain Theatre, located at 2469 Calle de Guadalupe was built in 1905. It is the oldest adobe movie theatre in New Mexico. The Mesilla Valley Film Society owns it and shows independent and foreign films. (See Section 7.3 Private Preservation Efforts for additional details)

**Table 12-4. Non-Profit Performing Arts Organizations - Doña Ana County**

| Name  | Location                          |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| American Southwest Theatre Company                  | 3014 McFie Circle                 |
| Black Box Theatre                                   | 430 N. Downtown Mall              |
| Black Box Theatre Annex (BBToo)                     | 715 N. Mesquite                   |
| Las Cruces Community Theatre                        | 313 N. Downtown Mall              |
| Las Cruces Friends of Chamber Music                 |                                   |
| Rio Grande Chapter of the American Recorder Society | Doña Ana Branch Community College |

Source: Doña Ana Arts Council @ [www.daac.org](http://www.daac.org)

### 12.4.6 *Private Organizations*

Private art entities are major contributors to the county's cultural resources; they reflect the population's interest in preserving traditions, exploring new media and topics, and defining the county's identity as a center for the arts. They are also indicators that there is a market for southwestern and Mexican arts that can make the arts a vital part of the county's economy.

Twenty-five private galleries and shops in Doña Ana County display and sell fine and folk art. There are thirteen art galleries or studios, many dedicated to promoting the work of local artists, and often featuring work inspired by southwestern or Mexican heritage themes. Twelve shops or galleries feature traditional arts and crafts. Many offer hand-made jewelry, crafts and foods of southwestern, Hispanic or Native American heritage.

Farmers' markets are traditional components of the culture of the region, and they have been growing in popularity. Two private businesses in Doña Ana County organize local farmers' markets outside their establishments: the Mountain View Market in Las Cruces and Ardivino's Desert Crossing Farmers' Market in Sunland Park. Mountain View Market, a food co-op located in 1300 El Paseo, organizes an outdoor Sunday Grower's Market that features local produce, food, baked goods, plants and music.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Retrieved on September 2, 2008 from:  
[http://www.lascrucescvb.org/html/ongoing\\_events\\_in\\_las\\_cruces\\_\\_.html](http://www.lascrucescvb.org/html/ongoing_events_in_las_cruces__.html)

**Table 12-5. Private Arts and Crafts Establishments in Doña Ana County**

| Name                           | Location                        |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| El Platero Gift Shop           | 2350 Calle de Principal         |
| Galería Azul                   | 2337 Calle de Guadalupe         |
| Galleria on the Plaza          | 2310 Calle de Principal         |
| Jo Ott Designs Gallery & Gifts | Calle de Albino and Santiago    |
| La Morena Gallery              | 2487 Calle Principal            |
| La Tienda Gift Shop            | 2030 Calle Parian               |
| Las Colcheras Quilt Guild      | 3000 Elks Drive (meeting place) |
| Potteries                      | 2260 Calle de Santiago          |
| St. Clair Winery & Bistro      | 1800 Avenida de Mesilla         |
| Tres Manos Boutique            | 1910 Calle de Parian            |
| Unravel Yarn Shop and Gallery  | 300 N. Downtown Mall            |
| William Bonney Gallery         | 2960 Calle Parian               |

Source: The Shops of Old Mesilla @ [www.mesilla.com](http://www.mesilla.com), [www.daac.org](http://www.daac.org) and [www.oldmesilla.org](http://www.oldmesilla.org)

**Table 12-6. Private Art Galleries in Doña Ana County**

| Name   | Location                       |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Blue Gate Studio                                 | 4901 Chagar Court              |
| Fine Arts Connection                             | 1701 Calle de Mercado, Mesilla |
| Griggs at Reymond Arts & Antiques                | 504 W. Griggs                  |
| Helix Projects Contemporary Arts, Craft & Design | 232 Campo St.                  |
| Laughing in the Sun                              | 1910 Calle de Parian, Mesilla  |
| Linda Lundeen Galleries                          | 490 N. Water St.               |
| M. Phillip's Gallery                             | 300 N. Downtown Mall           |
| Main Street Gallery                              | 311 N. Downtown Mall           |
| Mesilla Valley Fine Arts Gallery                 | 2470 Calle de Guadalupe        |
| Nash Gallery                                     | 1701 Calle de Mercado, Mesilla |
| Patio Art Gallery                                | 665 East University Avenue     |
| Studio 309                                       | 309 E. Organ St.               |
| White Raven Studios                              | 425 West Griggs Avenue         |

Source: Doña Ana Arts Council @ [www.daac.org](http://www.daac.org)

## 12.5 Findings

- Approximately half of all recognized historic resources in Doña Ana County are located in the City of Las Cruces. The city has 2 nationally recognized historic districts, 9 nationally recognized historic properties and 11 state-recognized historic properties; while 2 National Historic Landmarks, 3 nationally-recognized historic districts, 10 nationally recognized historic properties, 3 State Monuments and 13 state-recognized historic properties are found throughout the rest of Doña Ana County.
- Las Cruces is one of the major cities traversed by El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, which is one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places of 2007.
- Las Cruces is also one of the major cities along the El Camino Real National Scenic Byway, a marketing program of the Federal Highway Administration. However, tourism attractions, historic sites, recreational opportunities, cultural events, and food and lodging venues that exist in Las Cruces are not listed in the program website.

- Despite similar names, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail and El Camino Real National Scenic Byway are roughly parallel to each other, are managed by different agencies, and are advertised through separate media. While there is a great opportunity to create synergy between the two, there are also issues to address with local preservation advocates that have expressed strong dissatisfaction when one is confused with the other.
- Policy established for the nation, the State of New Mexico, the City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County and the ETZ consistently emphasizes the importance of historic resources. Regardless of this, up-to-date and comprehensive historic preservation plans or surveys have not been created for Las Cruces or Doña Ana County. Only neighborhood-specific historic preservation plans have been created, and in some cases, corresponding zoning tools have not been developed either. The City of Las Cruces and other municipalities have, however, several individual preservation projects that are ongoing. In Las Cruces, a new exhibit at the Branigan Cultural Center, Las Cruces: Crossroads of History, will increase awareness of the city's past and cultural roots. The multi-million dollar Amador Hotel Rehabilitation project will restore this significant building to its former glory.
- The visual arts have a strong presence in Doña Ana and they have become an integral part of the local economy.
- Las Cruces has become a regional cultural center that attracts local, regional and international interest. A number of private art galleries, studios and craft shops are clustered in Downtown Las Cruces and in the neighboring Town of Mesilla. There appears to be a demand for locally made, heritage-inspired goods; outdoor farmers' and crafts markets; and traditional, family-oriented festivals. Area residents have demonstrated great leadership in meeting this demand, creating local markets and events year-round.
- Downtown Las Cruces is becoming known for art museums, theaters and shops that sell fine arts and traditional crafts. In other parts of the city, there are budding cultural areas, such as that near the New Mexico State University, where there is an emphasis on modern art. The Town of Mesilla appears to focus more on traditional or folk art from New Mexico, other parts of the American Southwest, and Mexico.
- The City of Las Cruces manages an extensive cultural program that is accessible to participants of a wide range of ages, skills and incomes. The City works with an array of public, non-profit and private institutions that strive to integrate the arts into all aspects of the community –recreation, therapeutic services, and development of individual life and professional skills. However, the Public Service Department finds that many citizens are reluctant to pay to keep these services available to all and to maintain their high level of quality.
- The City's Museums System is experiencing significant increases in attendance due to the appeal of its high quality, interactive and diverse exhibits and activities. Community and membership organizations' use of museum facilities for meetings and cultural events has also been important in increasing attendance and promoting these institutions regionally.
- The City of Las Cruces is actively leading development activities within the Downtown Area, where an Arts, Culture and Entertainment District will create a "critical mass" of museums, galleries, theaters and cinemas, outdoor exhibition and performance areas, tourist attractions and other commercial opportunities. Other major redevelopment efforts are focused on the University Avenue Corridor, the Alameda Depot and Mesquite Historic Neighborhood Districts, and the Avenida de Mesilla Gateway Corridor.
- The State of New Mexico is committed to promoting its unique cultural identity and supporting cultural activities. The various state arts commissions offer various kinds of funding opportunities that are available to local governments and arts organizations. Many organizations in Doña Ana County and the City of Las Cruces seek these opportunities, but support for the visual arts appears to be stronger than for the performing arts at both the state and local level. Efforts to develop a local music and film industry or to promote outside industries' use of local resources are weak.