

## **Southern Trails Chapter News**

### **Chapter Meetings**

The Southern Trails Chapter held two meetings recently: one at the Avi Resort and Casino in Laughlin, Nevada, on November 13-15, 2009, and another at the Tubac Golf Resort and Spa in Tubac, Arizona, on February 12-14, 2010. The major emphasis for both meetings was the chapter's efforts, outlined further below, to attain National Historic Trail (NHT) status for the routes of southern emigrant trails. Talks by Albert Eddins, David Welch, and Reba Wells Grandrud focused on the effort needed to attain NHT status, and the progress being made by the chapter towards this goal. Lee Kreutzer from the National Park Service gave a presentation on the National Trail System Act. In addition, talks were given by the following individuals on the history of various branches of the southern emigrant trail network: David Miller on the trails east of the Rio Grande River, T. Michael Smith on the Salt Lake to Southern California Road, Dennis Casabier on the Mojave Road, Tom Jonas on the Kearney Pack route down the Gila River, Kevin Henson on the Mormon Battalion, and Jim Turner on the Pima Indian Villages. Tracy DeVault gave talks on the Trail Turtles' efforts to map the southern trails and also on the John Chaffin grave marker project. The guest speaker at Laughlin, Cliff Walker discussed Indian slavery on the western trails. At Tubac, the guest speaker was Don Garate, who impersonated Juan Bautista de Anza.

Both meetings included tours. At the first meeting, participants saw Camp Beale Springs, the town of Oatman, and other sites in the vicinity of Fort Mojave. As many as 15 people took all or part of a four-day 4x4 tour over the Mojave Road across the Mojave Desert. At the Tubac meeting, an all-day bus tour included such sites as Missions San Xavier del Bac and San José de Tumacácori, as well as the ruins of missions in the vicinity of Tumacácori. The latter sites are not open to the public and require special permission to visit.

A business meeting will be held from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. on August 13 at the OCTA convention in Elko, Nevada. A full chapter meeting is being planned for this fall in Silver City, New Mexico. A tour before or after the meeting is being considered to the headwaters of several historically important rivers to southern trails, including, the Colorado, the Arkansas, the Rio Grande, the Canadian, the Pecos and the Gila.

### **Southern National Historic Trail Proposal**

The effort to attain National Historic Trail designation for the southern emigrant trail received official sanction from the OCTA Board of Directors at OCTA's annual convention in August 2009. Once the proposal circulated through OCTA's legislative committee and was discussed with others, the recommendation was made to expand the proposal to include a larger number of trails through the Southwest, including trails through Texas and Oklahoma, the Salt Lake to Southern California Road, the Beale and Mojave Roads, and other segments in addition to the main southern emigrant trail from Santa Fe to Tucson to the Yuma Crossing and through the Southern California desert to Los Angeles. While there are disadvantages in trying to include too many trails, there is a tremendous benefit working with the full support of the national organization, including the Utah Crossroads Chapter, and in seeking federal support.

In late February of this year an OCTA delegation went to Washington, D.C., and helped work to obtain the support of key legislators for the Southern Trail proposal. They included Albert Eddins, Bill and Jeanne Watson, Bill Martin, Vern and Carol Osborn, Jere Krakow, Pat Hearty, and Reba Wells Grandrud. In total the delegation visited the offices of 62 congressmen, meeting with key congressional staff members and leaving an information packet describing the proposal and the various routes of southern emigrant trails. Based on these contacts, Eddins believes there is a possibility that a feasibility study could be authorized by the end of this year. Eddins stresses that the chapter needs to continue making contacts with federal and local legislators to convince them that the southern trails deserve NHT recognition. He thinks that a crucial factor will be to make a strong case for the economic benefits of NHT status, both to congressmen and to the communities that the trails traverse. He argues that the chapter needs to obtain the support of chambers of commerce, small businesses, social organizations, and government officials in towns along the trails. These groups are in the best position to convince their federal legislators to vote for the bill. Eddins is also attempting to engage relevant Southwestern Indian tribes in promoting their version of the history of the southern emigrant trails. Often the relationship between Indian Tribes and Emigrants along the southern trails was very different from that along the northern emigrant trails. In cases where the Native Americans lived in settled communities and practiced sophisticated, irrigated agriculture there was often a cooperative and positive relationship that benefited both sides. Eddins believes these positive situations need to be pointed out and history from Native American's perspective should be included. To further efforts in this regard meetings are being held with the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, which represents 19 Tribes in Arizona, to encourage them to participation in the process.

In another effort to seek support for the Southern National Historic Trail proposal Albert Eddins made a presentation at the mid-May National Historic Trails Workshop in San Antonio, Texas sponsored by The Partnership for the National Trails System.

If you are interested in contributing to this effort in any way, please contact Albert Eddins at [aseddins@msn.com](mailto:aseddins@msn.com) or call 480 575-2733.