

SOUTHEAST COLORADO REGIONAL TOURISM GROUP

Crowley County Otero County Bent County Prowers County Kiowa County Baca
County

1840 W. Amb. Thompson Blvd., Las Animas, CO 81054

For Immediate Release

Contact: Kathryn S. Finau

Project Manager

KSF Strategic Services

719-469-8818

ksfinau@rural-com.com



Six Counties to Benefit from Development of a Southeast Colorado Heritage
Tourism Marketing & Capacity Building Campaign

Las Animas, Colo., August 28, 2006 – The Southeast Colorado Regional Tourism Group (SECORTG) initiated the Southeast Colorado Heritage Tourism Marketing & Capacity Building Campaign (the “Campaign”) at a contract signing event on August 23, 2006 at the Crowley Heritage Center in Crowley, Colorado. SECORTG has been awarded \$356,900 in grants to develop and launch the Campaign.

The purpose of the Campaign is to establish a heritage tourism program in Southeast Colorado to enhance and promote heritage tourism opportunities throughout Crowley, Otero, Bent, Kiowa, Prowers, and Baca counties. The goal of this public-private partnership is to increase visitation and revenues to both historic sites and to local tourism supported businesses that include restaurants, lodging, retail, and outfitters. It will also serve as an economic development model to rural communities throughout America that have the opportunity to expand established nature-based and recreation-based tourism to include the lucrative sector of the heritage traveler.

SECORTG has been meeting since 2003 to position Southeast Colorado as a tourism destination and encourage a lengthier stay in the region. Community members, local businesses, and elected officials came together with the understanding that by combining tourism assets, Southeast Colorado has a great deal to offer the heritage, nature-based, and recreation oriented traveler, and established a need for a targeted marketing campaign geared at capturing this market.

Grants totaling \$356,900 have been awarded from the following organizations to develop the Campaign: \$130,000 from Preserve America; \$130,000 from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs - Energy Impact Funds; \$50,000 from the Colorado Tourism Office, Heritage Tourism Pilot Project; \$25,000 from the Anschutz Family Foundation; \$15,000 from the El Pomar Foundation; \$2,500 from the Southern Colorado Economic Development District; \$2,500 from Baca County; \$1,800 in in-kind financial management services from Crowley County; and \$100 from Otero County.

At the August 23 event, Crowley County Commissioner Dwight Gardner welcomed the commissioners, city council members, and community members that attended from the region, and introduced speakers from state and federal agencies and private organizations involved in the partnership. Speakers

included Colorado Senator Ken Kester; Ms. Georgianna Contiguglia, President & CEO, Colorado Historical Society and State Historic Preservation Officer; Mr. Scott Campbell, Heritage Tourism Program Manager, Colorado Tourism Office; Mr. Mark Wolfe, Projects Manager, State Historical Fund; Ms. Cindy Ott-Jones, Superintendent, Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, National Park Service; Mr. Lee Merkel, Southeast Colorado Regional Manager, Department of Local Affairs; and Ms. Ann Pritzlaff, Colorado Preservation, Inc., Member, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

- more -

SE CO Heritage Tourism Marketing & Capacity Building Campaign Contract Signing Event (page 2)

The new Campaign will be overseen by SECORTG. Over the next 18 months, SECORTG and its partners will develop a strategic plan that addresses visitor readiness and collaborative marketing opportunities for heritage sites throughout the six-county region; support infrastructure development related to visitor services and travel related businesses within gateway communities in the six county region, including the designation of eligible communities as official Preserve America Communities; establish SECORTG as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization to represent the six county region; launch a regional branding and marketing effort through SECORTG including collateral materials, directional signage, and interactive media; a survey and inventory of historic sites; and a tourism market analysis for the region. This public-private partnership will result in increased visitation and revenues to both historic sites and to local tourism supported businesses that include restaurants, lodging, retail, and outfitters.

SECORTG thanks the Private Caterer, Dwight and Margie Gardner for donating catering services for the contract signing event and Valley Floral Flowers & Gifts of La Junta for donating the flower arrangement.

For additional information, Contact: Kathryn S. Finau, Project Manager, KSF
Strategic Services, 1840 W. Amb. Thompson Blvd., Las Animas, CO 81054, 719-
469-8818, kfinau@rural-com.com.