

New Mexico Historic Sites Invests in Old Lincoln

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MEDIA CONTACT

Patrick Rodriguez

505-629-2257

patrick.rodriquez@state.nm.us

New Mexico Historic Sites announces the launch of a major preservation project at Lincoln Historic Site. Once the stomping grounds of Pat Garrett, John Chisum, and Billy the Kid, Lincoln is home to some of the most significant Territorial Period structures in the state, many of which are under the protection of New Mexico Historic Sites. The New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and New Mexico Historic Sites are dedicated to preserving the cultural resources under their collective stewardship and this project represents a significant commitment of state resources towards the protection of the historic community of Lincoln.

This broad preservation initiative includes work on six historic structures maintained by DCA as part of the Lincoln Historic Site, including the historic John Tunstall Store and the Lincoln County Courthouse. Work is being conducted through consultation with the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office and preservation specialists from Crocker Architectural Conservation (recipients of both the National Trust for Historic Preservation Honor Award and New Mexico Heritage Preservation Award for Architectural Heritage).

Constructed in 1877, the John Tunstall Store literally stood at the center of the Lincoln County War, ignited by its namesake's murder. Expert adobe specialists are working to stabilize the foundations of the building to ensure the more than 30,000 annual visitors to the site can safely walk in the footsteps of the young John Tunstall and the Regulators committed to avenging his death. Just a few hundred yards to the west of the Tunstall Store, preservationists are restoring the interior of the historic Lincoln County Courthouse, best known as the location of Billy the Kid's violent final escape in April 1881.

Work is also underway at the Montañño Store, San Juan Mission Church, Watson House, and Brent House, all contributing structures to the Lincoln National Historic Landmark District. The total cost of the preservation projects is \$395,000, funded through the Public Project Revolving Fund.

“The community of Lincoln is arguably one of the most well-preserved frontier towns in the Western United States and provides a tangible link between New Mexico’s unique history and those who visit the site today,” said Tim Roberts, Deputy Director of Facilities and Interpretation for New Mexico Historic Sites. “This critical preservation work will guarantee these one-of-a-kind treasures survive to help educate future generations about New Mexico’s past and sustain the community of Lincoln’s historic integrity.

“Preserving heritage treasures like those in Lincoln, to enrich the lives of New Mexicans through culture, is at the heart of what we do at New Mexico Historic Sites, and we could not be more excited about the valuable work being conducted,” said New Mexico Historic Sites Executive Director Dr. Patrick Moore. “New Mexico’s deep cultural and historical roots are spread throughout the entire state, and DCA is one-hundred percent committed to working within the communities we serve, like Lincoln, to ensure our state’s cultural resources are protected.”

Lincoln Historic Site is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Monday, closed Tuesday and Wednesday. Admission is \$5, free for New Mexico residents on the first Sunday of each month. Children 16 and younger are always admitted free. Wednesday admission is free to New Mexico Seniors with ID. New Mexico foster families are admitted free.

About New Mexico Historic Sites

New Mexico Historic Sites is a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, under the leadership of the Board of Regents for the Museum of New Mexico. Programs and exhibits are generously supported by the Museum of New Mexico Foundation and its donors. The New Mexico Historic Sites system was established in 1931 by an Act for the Preservation of the Scientific Resources of New Mexico. The eight Historic Sites include Coronado, Fort Selden, Fort Stanton, Fort Sumner Historic Site/Bosque Redondo Memorial, Jemez, Lincoln, and Los Luceros.

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