

49c.



DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

To: Delia Briones, County Clerk

From: Rosemary Neill

Date: September 5, 2007

Subject: Commissioners Court Agenda

Please place the following item under **Reports** for the Commissioners Court agenda of September 10, 2007:

Accept and take any other appropriate action related to the following quarterly report:

El Paso Mission Trail Association

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rosemary V. Neill", is written over a horizontal line.

Rosemary V. Neill
Director, Family and Community Services

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IN MY OFFICE
2007 SEP -5 AM 10:29
Delia Briones
COUNTY CLERK
EL PASO, TEXAS

El Paso Mission Trail Association, Inc.
Quarterly Report to the County Of El Paso
Report of Activities
For the period July, 1 2007-August, 2007

Executive Summary

The Mission Trail Association Inc. is dedicated to preserve, educate, and promote the historic resources of the El Paso County area. We have demonstrated our efforts by working in partnership with several entities to preserve historical buildings such as the Socorro and Ysleta missions and Presidio Chapel San Elceario. In addition, promotion of our rich history of the Mission Trail has been accomplished through videos, DVDs, pamphlets, presentations and by holding special events such as the First Thanksgiving pageant held in San Elizario, and the Luminaria Festival which involves the three communities. All of these events help promote the cultural history of the Mission Trail, and they serve as a cultural tool to increase tourism as well. To educate, we also provide tours of the Mission Trail to local organizations, schools, church groups, and tourists that come from all over the world.

Mission Statement:

To promote educational, preservation and tourism efforts along the Mission Trail and other historical areas, buildings, sites, and associated historic routes to include its people and its culture in El Paso County.

Historical Overview (1986-2007)

The El Paso Mission Trail Association, Inc., a 501©3 non-profit corporation is in its twenty-second year of operation. It is comprised of community volunteers who make up its board and has staffed its operations. Membership dues, volunteer fundraising initiatives, book sales, and funding from El Paso County's Hotel/Motel tax have been its primary source of funding. Its primary focus has been educating people from all walks of life of the rich history in El Paso County. This is accomplished by guiding tourists through tours of the Mission Valley, explaining the history as it was established in each individual community. The organization has also hosted and is in charge of presenting the 1st Thanksgiving Re-enactment in San Elizario since 1989. This takes place on the last weekend in the month of April.

Mission Trail Association, also known as MTA, operates a tourist information center and serves as tour guides to visiting tourists and travelers from all over the world. MTA is also involved in numerous other activities aimed at enhancing not only local appreciation of the Mission Valley history but inclusive of the preservation of historical sites.

MTA has a 2006-2007 interlocal agreement with El Paso County to receive funding in the amount of \$83,000.00 from both the Hotel/Motel tax revenue fund and the General fund to be used for advertising and tour presentations to local and out of town tourists. With this financial assistance the organization continues to operate with a higher level of confidence in fulfilling our Mission Statement.

Tours Conducted-The following organization was the only one that scheduled a tour due to the fact that most students were out on vacation and no districts scheduled any tours:

	Date	Organization	Total Tourists
1.	July 18, 2007	U.S. Army Sargeant Majors Academy & Families	129
		Total tourists	129

Detail of services to be rendered to El Paso residents-El Paso Mission Trail Association continues to be the only organization in El Paso whose services include giving historical information about the three communities of Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario through tours, pamphlets, videos and DVDs. Our organization also continues to attend meetings with other organizations in El Paso County in order to collaborate promotional and marketing efforts of the Mission Valley, which is becoming one of the most visited venues in El Paso by tourists.

Why fund El Paso Mission Trail Association, Inc.?

Because it is the only organization with a proven record that involves the Mission Valley in the promotion of its historical value with limited or no funding.

Because San Elizario, Socorro, and Ysleta, have become one of the leading venues to visit in the city and county of El Paso for tourists, educators, students, and the general public. At the same time the Mission Valley has been one of the most underserved, impoverished, historically valuable communities of El Paso, studied by sociologists, archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, tourists and others. Volunteers organize activities that offer the visiting public a set of options that foster pride among our residents by helping others understand that these old dilapidated historical ruins and routes also had live and proud descendents of the roots of El Paso.

El Paso Mission Trail Association, Inc. has proven that it can use its funding wisely and do things in a most cost-effective manner. **This funding has brought local, state, and national recognition to a new standard, which we believe add tourism value to our county.** We seek funding to continue polishing our program since it also increases our ability to draw funding from other sources.

Impact on Hotel/Motel expenses and services?

Communities that understand their history and take pride in it, are healthy communities. We believe that students and adults are learning by involving themselves with El Paso Mission Trail Association tours. Moreover we have fostered a spirit of cooperation among different groups, which directs communities' energy in a constructive manner. Today, new homes and improvements to our communities are visible reminders that something is happening.

We are convinced community pride and constructive activities in the Mission Valley directly impact educational attainment, drug use eradication, and family harmony. Tourists have a sense of understanding these values once they meet El Paso Mission Trail tour representatives that guide them through the Mission Valley communities of Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario.

Relation of services to County's Mission, goals and objectives.

El Paso Mission Trail Association provides the County of El Paso with the only place where tourists can get some idea of the historical significance of the ruins they see or of our historic missions and chapel.

Graffiti eradication, Juvenile crime prevention.

Reduce family violence, Housing improvements.

Quality of life that may attract industry.

A proud community costs less and become visibly attractive.

What alternatives to the request for funds have you pursued (Grants, Partnerships, etc.)?

We have secured a small grant from the city of El Paso's Museum and Cultural Arts Department to continue presenting the annual First Thanksgiving Pageant in San Elizario.

We will continue to submit funding proposals to the city of El Paso, the city of Socorro and obtained grant funding from other foundations.

We are currently examining other target areas that would benefit from grant applications.

We are members of the Nonprofit Enterprise Center which provides workshops and training for board protocol, operations, and organization.

If the request involves additional personnel, what alternatives have you considered?

Currently, we are not seeking additional personnel, but looking into establishing a permanent information center for the organization.

Consequences of not funding.

We will suffer serious setbacks since we will rely solely on our volunteers.

Future improvements to historical structures will be delayed and without understanding their value will probably be destroyed. A good example would be the inability of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, an international highway, whose path went through the Mission Valley and to this day continues to be ignored.

We will continue doing whatever we can but it will limit our ability to tap local and outside funding.

Activities:

1. To continue offering tours for visiting tourists and the general public
2. To foster community and youth volunteerism as deemed necessary to accomplish its mission.
3. To conduct the First Thanksgiving Pageant.
4. To encourage and involve community in activities that will foster pride and foster culturally appropriate activities such as posadas, Christmas pageants.
5. To assist and complement activities sponsored by other entities that will lead to improved cultural and historical understanding.
6. To conduct fundraising initiatives and identify other sources aimed at improving the projected activities.
7. We are working with the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, the National Park Service, the County of El Paso and New Mexico in order to get historical sites certified under the National Trails Act of America.

8. To submit proposals for grants to host theatrical and other programs associated with the historical arts at the Adobe Horseshoe/Dinner Theatre which will increase tourism and cover operational costs.
9. We have received and are in store at the CVB office warehouse an estimated 15,000 brochures detailing the El Paso Mission Valley. We continue to attend meetings with El Paso County Historical Commission, the city of El Paso's tourism cabinet and other entities in order to continue promoting and marketing the much neglected mission trail historical district.

Cesar O. Nava

From: Irene G. Valenzuela
Sent: Wednesday, September 05, 2007 10:22 AM
To: Patricia Pietzyk
Subject: Back up for Sept. 10 meeting
Attachments: Memorandum for Placement of Reports.pdf; El Paso Mission Trail 8-2007.pdf

Pat, Cesar:

Attached is backup for the Quarterly Report item for the El Paso Mission Trail. Thanks!

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