

NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM

The Art of the Exhibit *It Took a Village to Build These Stories*

Santa Fe, NM, May 21, 2009 – Deciding which stories among centuries of stories to tell in the New Mexico History Museum took years of discussions with staff and historians and statewide meetings with people from every corner of the state. Deciding *how* to tell them took the expertise of Gallagher & Associates.



Patrick Gallagher

Since 2004, the Bethesda, Md.-based design services firm has worked with Museum staff to create the exhibits that enhance the *Telling New Mexico: Stories From Then and Now* core exhibition. The Museum, at 113 Lincoln Avenue on the Santa Fe Plaza, opens at noon on Sunday, May 24. Blending treasured artifacts with archival photographs, manuscripts, audio, video, interactives, graphics and replica artifacts that visitors can actually touch, the firm aimed for an environment that sets people into various time periods, face to face with people both famous and everyday who lived the stories they tell.

"It's about the people, it's not about the stuff," said Patrick Gallagher, president. "We have interesting artifacts, but it's not about the collection, it's about the people. Without them, there's no history."

"Today, museums have to tell stories not just one way, but three or four different ways because people learn so differently. We asked ourselves, 'What can we employ to put people in the places we're talking about?' Sometimes it's theatrical. Sometimes, it's environmental. And, yes, people still do read in museums."

Telling New Mexico is designed as a timeline of the cultures that met – and sometimes clashed – from the 1500s into the present-day. Or, as Gallagher puts it: "You go into the exhibition with the voice of the past. You leave with the voice of the future."

Gallagher & Associates, known for its work on the Jamestown Settlement, the Smithsonian's Sant Ocean Hall, and the International Spy Museum, intends for History Museum visitors to slowly wend their way through the three floors of the exhibition, touching hand-troweled adobe walls, stopping to watch a short film, paging through a book, and hearing stories of yesterday. The immersive environment includes a variety of perspectives, revealing how different cultures viewed the events that shaped what New Mexico became.

"The opportunity to work with Patrick Gallagher and his team of designers, Sujit Tolat and Gretchen Coss, was a great opportunity to reach for the stars," said Dr. Frances Levine, director of the History Museum. "The Gallagher team and the Museum staff were able collaborators in the conceptualization and execution of the core exhibition."

"Gallagher's team taught us new ways to interpret our own past. They have such broad experience as designers of historical exhibitions and knew how to reach the multiple learning styles and intergenerational visitor groups that we want to reach in the New Mexico History Museum. Our team was strengthened by the experience of working with the Gallagher team. And visitors will be enriched by the experiences they find here."

The New Mexico History Museum, www.nmhistorymuseum.org, combines the nation's newest museum with the nation's oldest government building, the Palace of the

Governors. Add yourself to the mix. Join us for two free days of admission and family events on Sunday and Monday.

New Mexico History Museum

at 113 Lincoln Avenue, just behind the Palace of the Governors on the Santa Fe Plaza
Museum Front Desk: 505-476-5200

For more information about the New Mexico History Museum, including a selection of user-ready high-resolution photographs, log onto <http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/nmhm>. More than 8,000 additional, high-resolution photographs illustrating the history of New Mexico are available by keyword search at www.palaceofthegovernors.org (click on "Photo Archives" then on "Digitized Collections"). Most requests for scans from this site can be delivered the same day, and usage is free for publicity purposes only.

The New Mexico Rail Runner will operate its Saturday schedule (<http://www.nmrailrunner.com/schedule.asp>) on May 24 and 25 to accommodate opening-weekend visitors. In addition, all four of the state's Santa Fe-based museums will have free admission on both days: the Museum of Art (<http://www.nmartmuseum.org/>); the Museum of International Folk Art (<http://www.internationalfolkart.org/>); and the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (<http://www.indianartsandculture.org/>).

Previous releases:

[High-Tech Techniques Bring New Mexico's Past to Life](#)

[Join the Stampede! New Mexico History Museum's Grand Opening](#)

[Riding the Rails... in Style](#)

[Four Centuries of History: the Fiestas de Santa Fe](#)

[Duty, Sacrifice, Honor](#)

[Where ancient artifacts meet cutting-edge art](#)

[Fashioning New Mexico](#)

[The Tiffany Ties that Bind](#)

[The Railroad Wars](#)

[The New Face of History](#)

[The Tales that Made the American West](#)

[New Mexico History Museum's Core Exhibits](#)

[Telling the People's Stories: A Message from the Director](#)

[Creating a Place for Our Past](#), by Dr. Frances Levine, El Palacio, Summer 2006

Other Sites:

[NM History Museum on Twitter](#)

[NM History Museum on Facebook](#)

Media Contacts:

Kate Nelson
New Mexico History Museum
505 476 1141
Kate.Nelson@state.nm.us
www.nmhistorymuseum.org

Rachel Mason
Ballantines PR
Rachel@ballantinespr.com
505 216 0889
www.ballantinespr.com