

NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM

Spiritual Blessings and Pilgrimage Kick Off Museum's Second Day of Grand Opening Events

Thousands of visitors continue to line up after first day's blockbuster attendance

Santa Fe, NM, May 25, 2009 – The pealing bells of St. Francis Cathedral heralded Monday's opening events for the New Mexico History Museum, as visitors continued to stream into the building at 113 Lincoln Avenue, north of the historic Santa Fe Plaza. An interfaith service at the Cathedral marked Monday's festivities, with leaders from various religions and cultures coming together to commemorate the museum and the state's rich and lengthy history.



Nearly 10,700 people visited the Museum on its opening day, creating lines that sometimes stretched several blocks, even during an hour-long thunderstorm. Attendance Monday was on a par to match that, with an estimated 6,000 visitors at 2 p.m., and lines once again reaching along the length of the building and beyond. Besides free admission, visitors enjoyed entertainment and a vintage car show on the Santa Fe Plaza, a period fashion show in the Museum and an ice cream social in the Palace of the Governors Courtyard.

More than 400 people attended the interfaith service, where Monsignor Jerome J. Martínez y Alire, rector of the Cathedral, recalled how his first job as a pastor involved rebuilding an 1827 adobe church in the small town of El Rito. As parishioners tore down the remnants of the original church, they uncovered large adobe bricks that revealed how a previous community worked together: Women mixed the mud; men poured it into brick forms; and children tamped it down with their feet, leaving the memory of their footprints.

"It was one generation speaking to us, another generation, of the values they had and the hope for the future," he said.

Noting that the Museum does not gloss over “the wrinkles and warts” of New Mexico’s past, Martínez concluded: “The very fact that it stands is an honor to those who went before us. We stand on their shoulders.”

Other blessings and spiritual readings were offered by Tesuque Pueblo Gov. Mark Mitchell, Rabbi Marvin Schwab of Temple Beth Shalom, Rev. David Wiseman of the First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe, and Rev. Kenneth J. Semon of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Faith. Following the service, the congregants – including Chinese lion dancers and many people in period dress – formed a processional to the Museum, where Martínez sprinkled holy water on the entrance as the aroma of incense wafted into the building.



Chautauqua performers then mingled on the Plaza as performers ranging from Native American flutist Andrew Tomás to the Barbershop Sounds, from the Alamogordo Ballet Folklorica Dancers to Not-So-Andrews Sisters entertained crowds that easily topped 300 – with the music a clear favorite among a collection of whirling preschoolers.

The day wound down with a panel of speakers who contributed to the book accompanying the Museum’s core exhibit. *Telling New Mexico* features essays and articles by fifty prominent historians and scholars representing various disciplines including history, anthropology, Native American and Chicano studies. The book stands as a valuable new addition to the history of New Mexico and the Southwest and appeals to students, scholars and armchair historians.

With Downtown Santa Fe parking at a premium, many visitors took advantage of the New Mexico Rail Runner’s special weekend service. A Rail Runner spokesman said an early check showed an uptick in weekend usage, but that final figures were yet to be calculated.

Video of the ribbon-cutting and opening-weekend events:

www.youtube.com/NMHistoryMuseum

Photographs of the events: www.flickr.com/groups/nmhm/.

Live Twitter updates: <http://twitter.com/nmhm>.

All are free for publication and Web posting.

New Mexico History Museum at 113 Lincoln Avenue, just behind the Palace of the Governors on the Santa Fe Plaza. A media room is available across the street in the

Museum of New Mexico Foundation office, with free wifi, past media releases and staff to assist journalists.

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.

Previous releases:

[Historic scissors to cut the ribbon at NMHM](#)

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

[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](#)

[NM History Museum on Youtube](#)

[NM History Museum on Flickr](#)

Media Contacts:

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

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