



Doña Ana County Historical Society

JANUARY 2026 EVENTS

DACHS Presents the 59th Annual Awards Banquet

For almost 60 years, the Doña Ana County Historical Society has gathered to honor some of the “best-of” in local history - the people who’ve made an impact on preserving and telling the history of our region, as well as the many buildings, sites and structures of historical significance.

If you’ve never done so, take a look at the previous award winners – it’s quite the list!

Among the honorees this year will be the Noteworthy Restoration or Renovation Award for the recently opened Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site and the three groups that led the multiyear project to its fruition, as well at least one Hall of Fame induction and several awards for articles featured in the 2026 *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*.

The 59th annual DACHS Awards Banquet takes place Saturday, January 31 at noon at La Posta in Mesilla. Reservations are required – cost is \$30 if prepaid or \$35 at the door (you still must register for the event, as we and La Posta need to know how many plates to plan for!). See our website for details. You can register and pay using our “Register via Paypal” link on the website. Make sure to include the names of all those attending – you can email that to 19dachs63@gmail.com

While you’re on the website, if you have not done so already (and thanks to all who have!), it is time to renew your membership in DACHS

The easiest way to renew or join is through the DACHS website. Just go to the home page, click on the “membership” link in the top menu or scroll down to “quick links” where there are buttons for membership and donations.

Once “membership” is selected you’ll go to a Paypal page where you can select your membership level, enter your contact information (a good email address, physical address and phone number are essential), and then pay using your regular credit card or your Paypal account, if you have one. Or you can also print out the full membership form available as a PDF, fill it out and mail it with your check to the DACHS P.O. Box shown on the header of this form.

THANKS for your support.

Feelin’ Judgey? New Mexico’s National History Day Needs You!

The 2026 National History Day contest season has begun with the recruiting of volunteer judges from around the state.

This year’s theme “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History” reflects the focus this year across the nation and in New Mexico on the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which is expected to bring much celebration and reflection.

Volunteer judges from around the state are needed to assess students’ work – that generally includes current or retired educators, historians or really anyone interested in helping students.

If interested, you can register on the National History Day website at the zFairs NHD Registration Portal. Judges are expected to be at the contest from approximately 8 am - 2 pm on the day of the event. They will receive training in the morning before events begin, as well as meals.

National History Day gathers high school students and groups from around New Mexico – and in every state in the U.S. – to create a variety of projects about U.S. history, from posters and essays to web sites and documentaries. Winners of regional and state contests ultimately move on to the national contest.

NHD in NM officially transferred to the Historical Society of New Mexico this month. According to news reports, the National Endowment for the Humanities eliminated grant funding for the NHD last year, with some fearing the end of the National History Day event nationwide. Though in past years, the event did have a small support staff, the annual event has always functioned because of volunteers, particularly judges.

See the NHD website for the details – there will likely be an online training session. Register online at least two weeks before a particular contest:

2026 NHD in NM Contest Schedule

2/9/26 - NW Regional at San Juan College Library, Farmington, NM
2/17/26 - SE Regional at Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, NM
2/20/26 - Las Cruces Public Schools Senior District Contest, Las Cruces, NM
2/24/26 - Southern Regional at Western New Mexico University, Silver City, NM
3/5/26 - Northern Regional at the NM History Museum and Main Public Library, Santa Fe, NM
3/13/26 - Central Regional at CNM Smith-Brasher Hall, Albuquerque, NM.
4/17/26 - State contest at CNM Smith-Brasher Hall, Albuquerque, NM

For more information, contact NHD in New Mexico state coordinator Stephanie Wilson at swilson@historyday-nm.com or Kathryn Karl, assistant coordinator, at kkarl@historydaynm.com.

Tortugas Pueblo Featured in Ongoing Exhibit

It is now the turn of the Tortugas Pueblo to take center stage in the Branigan Cultural Center's Land of the People exhibit.

The Tierra Sagrada exhibit explores the pueblo with perhaps the closest ties to Las Cruces. Well before the incorporation of the Tortugas Pueblo in the early 1900s, people from the small village south of Las Cruces performed dances and ceremonies in front of the old St. Genevieve's Church downtown, and many of us have joined the pueblo's annual pilgrimage up Tortugas Mountain as part of the 3-day Our Lady of Guadalupe Fiesta every December.

The new Tortugas exhibit is part of the larger Land of the People exhibit which tells the story of six Indigenous groups with historic roots in the Borderland region: Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Tortugas Pueblo, the Mescalero Apache Tribe, the Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe, the Chiricahua Apache Nation, and the Chihene Nde Nation of New Mexico.

A secondary gallery changes every 12 weeks which allows each Indigenous group to go deeper into their own unique stories, traditions, and perspectives. The Land of the People exhibit will run through May 2027.

New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum Debuts New Short Film Contest Jan. 14

The New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum is inviting filmmakers to create short films rooted in agriculture, ranching, and rural history for the New Mexico Heritage Short Film Contest in collaboration with the Las Cruces International Film Festival (LCIFF).

Participants and their crew must attend (in-person or virtually) the kickoff event on Wednesday, Jan. 14 from 4-6 p.m. at the Museum at 4100 Dripping Springs Road.

“This short film contest is truly important because it preserves and elevates stories of agriculture, ranching, and rural heritage through film, ensuring these lived experiences remain visible and relevant to future generations,” Eric Kirker, contest director and New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum exhibit designer, said in a news release.

Genres will be assigned and the mandatory cultural phrase to be used in the films will be unveiled at the event Wednesday.

Feb. 2 is the early bird deadline to pay the \$10 participation fee for standard entries and students, with the regular deadline on Feb. 27 for a \$15 fee.

Official rules and more information can be found at: <https://filmfreeway.com/NMFarmandRanchHeritageFilm-Contest>.

The films will be judged for award categories including Best Director, Cinematographer, Use of Phrase, Story, Originality, and Sound. Films can be up to 10 minutes in length and any music used must be licensed or original. Selected films will be revealed and trophies for first, second, and third place will be awarded at the LCIFF Poster Reveal Party on March 6 at the Museum. Contact contest director Eric Kirker at eric.kirker@dca.nm.gov for more information.

New Mexico Museum Opens 1776 Semi-Quincentennial Anniversary Exhibit

In honor of America’s 250th birthday, the New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe is celebrating with a special exhibit, *Americana at 250: Eagles, Flags, and Uncle Sam*, opening on February 20.

According to a news release from N.M. Cultural Affairs, the exhibit will showcase symbols of Americana that evoke national identity and pride, such as eagles, flags, and Uncle Sam. While New Mexico was far from statehood when the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, the exhibit provides an opportunity for people to think about who we are as Americans and Nuevo Mexicanos, or New Mexicans.

“Even though New Mexico was one of the last states to join the union, our people played a vital role in shaping the nation, and America continues to be better for it,” said Mark Dodge, Curator of Southwest Memories at the History Museum.

The exhibit will be on display in the New Mexico Showcase on the second floor of the museum. Drawing from five different state museums, the exhibit will showcase 17 symbols of Americana that speak to a spirit of freedom and opportunity.

Favorites include a rare souvenir ribbon from Teddy Roosevelt’s 1903 Santa Fe visit, a bronze titled “Unfinished Liberty” by Fritz Scholder, and a huge wood carving titled, “Bald Eagles” by Leroy Ortega. A special highlight includes regular screenings of “Rio Grande,” a short movie sponsored by the New Mexico American Revolution Bicentennial Commission in 1976.

Americana at 250: Eagles, Flags, and Uncle Sam runs through January 20, 2027.

A public reception will be hosted during Palace Avenue First Friday Art Walk on Friday, March 6 from 5-7 p.m. The museum plans to screen the film, “Rio Grande” at the opening.

The New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs is planning a variety of exhibits and programs in celebration of this anniversary and is part of the New Mexico Semi-Quincentennial Commission. Visit www.newmexicospirit.org to learn more about how the state is joining the nation in commemorating 250 years of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.