

Wagons Ho! Trail Transportation through Time Bent's Fort Gathers Wagons on May 11-13

On May 11-13, six associations will join forces to hold a special weekend at Bent's Fort, Colorado, featuring displays, demonstrations, and presentations about wagons. Visitors will have the opportunity to see wagons in action on Saturday and walk the prairie beside the wagons on Sunday. Presentations and demonstrations about wagons will be held both days.

The event, "Wagons Ho! Trail Transportation through Time" is hosted by Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site and the Bent's Fort Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association. The cost for attending the event is the admission to the site, which is \$3.00 for adults, \$2.00 for ages 6-12 and under 6 is free. Admission is free for those who have the Senior or Annual Parks Pass. The Koshare Museum charges a \$10 adult, \$5 child fee for their dance exhibition Saturday evening. The Park will be open to visitors from 9 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday; 9:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Other organizations, and their members, that are participating include the Santa Fe Trail Association, Cherokee Trail Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, the National Stagecoach and Freight Wagon Association, the Smoky Hill Trail Association, the Comanche National Grasslands, and the National Park Service Intermountain Region staff, as well as local wagon enthusiasts.

"Planning for the event is still on-going", says Greg Holt, Bent's Old Fort employee and event coordinator, "for up-to-minute information, check our website at www.nps.gov/beol or call us at 719-383-5023." Greg continues, "If you would like to sign up for space to promote your books, artwork, or association, contact us at the park. We have limited indoor space and unlimited outdoor space. There is no charge to set up an exhibit, however, exhibitors may not sell items that are already sold by our Bookstore. Give us a call for exhibit details." When asked about bringing a wagon and/or livestock, Mr. Holt said, "There is no charge for bringing wagons and/or animals. Bent's Fort will provide corral space, hay and water or you can bring your own if so desired." Anyone who wants to participate must contact Ranger John Carson at john_carson@nps.gov or by calling 719-383-5026 for information about registration.

Friday, May 11, has been set aside for individual organization to hold meetings or get-togethers, as well as for attendees to set-up at the Fort. In addition, there will be self-guided auto tours to Lamar Big Timbers Transportation Museum or the Broadmoor's El Pomar Transportation Museum and other local attractions. Set-up for association booths, artists and authors all day Friday and early Saturday morning by 9:00 a.m. Wagons can be set up Friday and exhibited through the weekend outside the Fort, on the trail to the river. For more information on booths and set-up, see: www.nps.gov/beol or call 719-383-5023.

A welcome reception, dinner, and evening program for the associations attending will be held Friday evening, under the stars. Hosts for the event will be the Bent's Fort Chapter of the Santa Fe Trail Association and the staff of the Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site. This event will begin as soon as Bent's Fort closes to the general public. You will need reservations to

attend this opening event. To make those reservations, or to find out more information about it, call La Donna Hutton of the Bent's Fort Chapter at 719-254-7266.

At this time, the presentations scheduled for Saturday, May 12 include:

“Dearborn Wagon Reconstruction from Rumors, Writings and Recollections” by Greg Holt

“Time Line Wagon Walk – A Guided Tour and Formal Presentations of the Wagons and their Place and Time in History”

“Freighting Artifacts of the Santa Fe Trail” by David Clapsaddle and

“Harness and Yoke Talk and Demonstrations”

Living history demonstrations may include: Frontier cooking, Trade Vignettes, Blacksmithing, Trapping, Animal packing, Travois use, Cart/wagon hitching, driving and use and Aparejo packing and use. In addition, there will be many displays including: Bent's Fort Wagon Artifacts, Associations Displays and Information, Book Signings, Artists Display/Sale, information from the National Park Service, Santa Fe, about the National Historic Trails they administer and of course, there will be WAGONS! There will be a one mile demonstration trail for anyone who wants to show their wagons in action. After allowing participants to have dinner on their own, we will reconvene at the Koshare Indian Museum at 7:00 p.m. where the Koshare Indian Dancers will perform for us at the Kiva in La Junta. There is an admission charge for the Dance performance.

Sunday is “**Santa Fe Trail Caravan Day**”. This is an opportunity to follow the original Santa Fe Trail through Comanche National Grassland. The general public is invited. Plan to travel/walk the original Santa Fe Trail **for** up to 7 miles of the trail if conditions prevail and if not, 3 ½ miles starting from Sierra Vista. The area is virtually unchanged from the time when caravans rolled by. Wagons that possess original qualities are desired. Greg Holt says, “We will not be able to give rides to visitors due to liability reasons--they will walk alongside or behind. (A chance to have a true Trail experience.) Shuttle service, restroom facilities, and a water station will be provided. The trip will provide some wonderful photo opportunities. We plan to have wagons of same time periods travel together. We will travel slowly and stop every 15 minutes to allow participants to rest, visit, and ask questions about the wagons and livestock.” If you are unable to walk with the caravan, there will be some places for some fantastic photo opportunities. You will also be able to view some of the action from a modern road. We will begin with a “Yoking and Harness Demonstration.” Learn what the Trail travelers had to do before they could begin their journey. Bring a lunch to enjoy as we rest on the Trail. Upon the arrival of the caravan at Timpas, Mark Gardner will present a program of “Music of the Santa Fe Trail”. When available, times and places for the trip will be posted at www.nps.gov/beol.

For more information, contact: Greg Holt, Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, 35110 Highway 194 E., La Junta, CO, 81050. Phone 719-383-5023. E-mail: greg_holt@nps.gov