



NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF  
**CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **FIRST GENTLEMAN CHUCK FRANCO GALLOPS INTO SANTA FE WITH THE MAIL NEW MEXICO CENTENNIAL PONY EXPRESS RIDE**

*Santa Fe, N.M.*— A group of Pony Express riders will convene at the Santa Fe Plaza at noon on Friday, June 8 to celebrate the Pony Express Ride, a 14-day long commemorative ride that traversed the 365 miles between Hobbs and Santa Fe in honor of the New Mexico Centennial and New Mexico's rich history.

“The two-week Pony Express Ride is what the New Mexico Centennial is all about as riders make their way through our great towns, villages and cities,” said Gov. Susana Martinez. “As with all of the New Mexico Centennial events, our communities have taken the lead in celebrating the history and traditions of our great state. We look forward to hearing more about their travels through New Mexico on Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at the Santa Fe Plaza. I invite all New Mexicans to join this festive ceremony.”

More than 100 riders have had their saddle bags filled with U.S. mail on their long journey from Hobbs to Santa Fe. First Gentleman Chuck Franco, Santa Fe County Sheriff's Posse members, and sixteen of the Pony Express riders will be escorted by City of Santa Fe Police down Washington Avenue from the Scottish Rite Center to the Plaza on Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 a.m. At 12 p.m., Ona Johnson, New Mexico Centennial director and representative for the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), will welcome the riders at the Santa Fe Bandstand.

“New Mexico's Centennial presents unique opportunities to travel to places to rediscover, honor and celebrate our state's rich heritage,” said DCA Secretary Veronica Gonzales. “The hundreds of riders who participated in the Pony Express Ride have traversed New Mexico and celebrated our Centennial in a colorful and meaningful way. I join the Governor and First Gentleman Franco in saluting these riders' enterprise, dedication and commitment to the state's history.”

The program includes a reading of the Pony Express Proclamation by Calvin Smith, executive director of the Western Heritage Museum Complex and Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame. Participants and speakers include Dr. Frances Levine, director of the New Mexico History Museum/Palace of the Governors, Don Bullis, official Centennial author and Yasmin Montano, Santa Fe postmaster. Local musician David Manzanares will perform his original song, “47<sup>th</sup> Star,” accompanied by Carlos Gilbert Elementary School students.

The ceremony will end with a hand off of the mail from First Gentleman Chuck Franco to Santa Fe Postmaster Yasmin Montaño. David Manzanares and the elementary school students will sing “O Fair New Mexico,” and invite the audience to sing along with them as the Centennial Pony Express Riders make their way back to the Scottish Rite Center to put their horses in trailers and head home. After the celebration, the mail will be delivered to its final destination via U.S. Mail. Today, mail is transported by air, truck or electronically across the country.

The New Mexico Centennial office and Department of Cultural Affairs have worked with communities throughout the state on local Centennial celebrations, making it an even more exciting time to get out and travel the state.

*The Pony Express Ride honors that time in U.S. history when brave riders mounted their horses and galloped across the country to deliver mail via the Pony Express, which operated from 1860-1862. The riders who participated gained first hand experience of this trying journey and simultaneously honored the New Mexico Centennial by bringing the past back into the present.*

**The Pony Express Route:**

May 26 Ride from Hobbs, camp in Tatum  
May 27 Ride from Tatum, camp in Milnes  
May 28 Ride from Milnes, camp in Elida  
May 29 Ride from Elida, camp in Melrose  
May 30 Ride from Melrose, camp in Ft. Sumner  
May 31 Camp in Ft. Sumner (2nd night)  
June 1 Ride from Ft. Sumner, camp at Sumner Lake  
June 2 Ride from Sumner Lake in Puerta de Luna  
June 3 Ride from Puerta de Luna, camp in Pintada  
June 4 Ride from Pintada, camp in Milagro  
June 5 Ride from Milagro, camp in Clines Corners  
June 6 Ride from Clines Corners, camp in Lamy  
June 7 Camp in Lamy (2nd night)  
June 8 To Santa Fe, Scottish Rite Center at 11:00 a.m.

WHO: First Gentleman Chuck Franco joins hundreds of Pony Express riders

WHAT: New Mexico Centennial Pony Express Ride

WHERE: Hobbs to Santa Fe. Ceremony at the Santa Fe Plaza, Santa Fe, NM

WHEN: Friday, June 8, 2012, 12 p.m.

*The N.M Centennial Pony Express Ride is an official NM Centennial event.*

**About The Centennial Children’s Legacy Fund**

Gov. Susana Martinez established The Centennial Children’s Legacy Fund to live beyond 2012 in service to children statewide. The Fund will be accessible to charitable organizations working to enhance the education and welfare of New Mexico’s children. While the Centennial is a commemoration of the last 100 years, the Centennial Children’s Legacy Fund is a gift for the next 100 years.



**About New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs**

The Department of Cultural Affairs is New Mexico’s cultural steward – charged with preserving and showcasing the state’s cultural riches. With its eight museums, eight historic monuments, arts, archaeology, historic preservation and library programs, the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs is the largest and most formidable state cultural agency in the nation. Together, the facilities, programs and services of the department support a \$3.3 billion cultural industry in New Mexico.

[www.nmcentennial.org](http://www.nmcentennial.org)  
[www.newmexicoculture.org](http://www.newmexicoculture.org)

**INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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