

PRESS RELEASE

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Historic trails group chooses Yuma as site of national symposium planned for January 2009

Yuma, Arizona, will be the site of a historic trails symposium being planned by the Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) for January of 2009.

Billed as "All Roads to Lead to Yuma," the symposium will feature speakers and tours covering several of the pioneer and early routes that converged on the historic crossing point of the Colorado River, from the Juan Bautista de Anza expedition in the 1770s to the Gold Rush era of the 1840s and 1850s to the stage routes of the late 19th Century. The dates set for the Yuma event are January 16 – 18.

While members of the Southwest and California/Nevada chapters of OCTA will be key to the first-ever event, members of several other historic and trails organizations will be invited to participate. The members of the steering committee -- John Krizek and Patricia Etter, OCTA board members who live in Arizona; long-time Arizona trails advocate Reba Grandrud; CA/NV chapter veteran Dave Hollecker; and OCTA Association Manager Travis Boley -- are at work now lining up the details.

Registration information through OCTA will be available in the summer at OCTA's Web site (www.octa-trails.org <<http://www.octa-trails.org/>>), according to Boley. People interested in staying abreast of developing details can have themselves added to the mailing list by calling OCTA toll free at (888) 811-6282 or by dropping Boley an email at tboley@indepmo.org.

Yuma's unique history as the crossroads of the Southwest was recognized by the United States Congress in 2000 with the official designation of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area — the first entity west of the Mississippi River to be so recognized, according to city historian Tina Clark. Ms. Clark is assisting the committee with suggestions for tours and site visit locations. The Yuma Visitors Bureau also is helping to facilitate arrangements for the Yuma symposium.

"For 250 years, all roads in the southwestern U.S. have led to Yuma," reports Krizek. "What better time of year than January to explore this historic corner of the country."

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