Mount Taylor Designated a Traditional Cultural Property

Soaring to 11,301 feet and visible for hundreds of miles, Mount Taylor became the focus of international attention when the Cultural Properties Review Committee listed the mountain and its guardian peaks in the State Register of Cultural Properties on June 5.

The unanimous decision—reported in state, national and international media—designated Mount Taylor a Traditional Cultural Property in recognition of the spiritual qualities it has held for five New Mexico tribes for thousands of years, and set a precedent for the way the state looks at sacred lands. It also balanced concerns raised by private landowners that their property rights could be curtailed by the TCP designation. The Register nomination brought forth by the pueblos of Acoma, Laguna and Zuni, the Hopi Tribe and Navajo Nation found private property generally was fenced off and inaccessible physically and spiritually by the tribes, and did not contribute to the mountain’s sacred qualities. Private landholdings were excluded from the listing.

“I would like to thank the tribes for bringing the nomination forward, for sharing their closely held spiritual beliefs and making all of us more aware of the importance of Mount Taylor,” said CPRC Chairman Alan “Mac” Watson. “In the same regard, the private property owners and others with rights to Mount Taylor who expressed their concerns deserve thanks for helping us achieve a balance that lets this committee help preserve the varied—and sometimes perceived as conflicting—interests of all the parties involved.”

The Historic Preservation Division worked with the tribes in developing the nomination over a 15-month period. They provided statements of significance, individually and collectively, often revealing deeply held spiritual beliefs never before shared out-
What's Happening

HPD’s New E-Newsletter

HPD has published a newsletter for 30 years with the first edition, “The Newsletter,” a typed, legal sheet mimeographed with no photographs, appearing in 1979. It was replaced by Frontera, and by 1984 published under the masthead Preservation New Mexico complete with photographs and a real layout. Today, 3,000 people receive the print edition of our newsletter.

HPD is joining numerous other State Historic Preservation Offices around the country in turning to electronic media to keep its constituents informed of preservation strides in New Mexico and beyond.

With our Summer edition, HPD begins publishing the summer and fall editions electronically. Our Annual Report and Calendar of Events will remain as print editions for winter and spring.

We are excited to join the electronic age of publishing and look forward to your continued readership. If our newsletter was forwarded to you, and you would be like to placed permanently on the e-distribution list, please send an e-mail to tom.drake@state.nm.us. Contact him, also, if you would like to contribute a story, idea or photograph to Preservation New Mexico.

Our goal is to circulate as much information from as many sources as possible to the greatest number of readers. Your participation is appreciated.

HPD–MainStreet Partnership

New Mexico MainStreet managers and board members attended special sessions on preservation planning, law and protecting community character hosted by New Mexico MainStreet and HPD. Meeting in Las Cruces at the rehabilitated Court Junior High School in July, participants attended sessions by Deputy SHPO Jan Biella, Preservation Specialist Dorothy Victor, consultant and former HPD reviewer Elizabeth Oster and former SHPO and current MainStreet program associate Elmo Baca. There was an emphasis on planning for reviews of publicly funded projects, licensing, permitting and preservation success stories that build on the historic character of MainStreet districts.

Court is located in the Alameda Depot Historic District. HPD reviewed rehabilitation of the WPA school, which now is home to the Alma d’Arte Learning Center, a charter high school for the arts. The City of Las Cruces is commended for providing educational programs in a building once perceived by the community as an eyesore. And a bit of trivia, former SHPO Mike Taylor attended Court Junior High during his school days in Las Cruces.

CPRC Kudos and Transitions

Former CPRC chairman and state historian, Estevan Rael-Gálvez, is the new director of the Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque. He served on the committee for eight years, seven of them as chairman. He replaces former cultural center executive director Eduardo Díaz, who resigned last December to become director of the Smithsonian Latino Center in Washington, D.C.

CPRC member Clarence Fielder received an NAACP Lifetime Award. He and two other individuals were honored as part of the Juneteenth celebration, which commemorates the June 19, 1865, Emancipation Proclamation signed by President Lincoln. It coincided with the centennial of the NAACP, the nation’s oldest civil rights organization, which formed in response to racially motivated lynchings and the 1908 race riot in Springfield, the Illinois capital and birthplace of President Abraham Lincoln.

CPRC Vice-Chairwoman Beth O’Leary’s The Handbook of Space Engineering, Archaeology and Heritage was published in June. Co-written with Ann Garrison Darrin, the book puts forth that a better explanation of space exploration can be had from examining what remains in space from the 27,000 tons of material that has been launched into orbit. Just as archaeologists excavate and document objects on Earth, space archaeologists understand the value of investigating and preserving material culture left behind during space exploration. The authors illustrate how archaeology offers novel historical and technological perspectives on humankind’s vast, recent, and ongoing experience in space.
Preservation Grants Available

Apply for a Small Grant in August

Persons interested in writing Register nominations, holding local workshops on the International Building Code and the Adobe Code adopted by the state in 2006, or developing education and outreach programs in celebration of New Mexico’s Centennial in 2012 are encouraged to apply for grants through HPD that are available in beginning in August. These are only some of the areas emphasized for funding in the current grant cycle.

Due to current budget demands, funds available for the annual Small Grants are about half that in 2008, or $25,000. Grant awards generally range from $2,000 to $7,500 and have funded conditions assessments, community preservation events and workshops, and archaeological surveys.

Many of New Mexico’s eight Certified Local Government municipalities met a July 31 deadline to apply for $71,600 in grants reserved for communities that have adopted preservation ordinances and committed to inventorying their historic resources. The grants can fund cultural resource surveys, Register nominations, compiling and printing walking tour booklets, feasibility studies and construction drawings for historic property improvements, and assistance with preservation outreach, education and conferences.

Silver City, Deming, Columbus, Lincoln County, Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Las Vegas and Taos are CLGs. Los Alamos is applying to be certified. HPD encourages other communities to seek HPD and the National Park Service certification.

Grant Helps Document Forgotten Plains Settlement

Editor’s Note: The history of Taiban and its Presbyterian church were documented in 2008 by architectural historian Diane Williams through an HPD Historic Preservation Fund Small Grant, and with support from property owner Susanne Eldridge. Research, oral histories and large format film photography documented the community and church, and were used in a State Register nomination that will be considered by the CPRC in August.

Ms. Williams, with the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum and New Mexico State University, collected oral histories from Taiban residents. The resulting information provides a framework to preserve the church through written and visual documentation of the building and the town. Ms. Williams’ article is presented as part of her grant research.

The drive between Fort Sumner and Clovis almost looks almost uninhabited. Weathered caprock cliffs, rolling plains, and endless sky are timeless features disturbed only by a few small towns and scattered colonies of wind turbines. Freight trains and highway traffic speed toward destinations beyond the dry llano.

But in the early twentieth century, towns along this stretch of U.S. 60/84—St. Vrain, Melrose, Tolar, Taiban and LaLande—were occupied by hundreds of residents, farmers and ranchers, and boasted many more buildings than seen today. All but Melrose are home to fewer than 20 residents, and LaLande is uninhabited. Most towns lack buildings, and farms and ranches are gone. The church at Taiban is one of the few survivors of the area’s earliest settlement.

Eight people live in Taiban, but in 1909 the town thrived as an agricultural service center, home to as many as 400 people. One of its few surviving buildings is the 1908 Taiban Presbyterian Church, now surrounded by a lost community of vacant lots where once stood a two-story stone and masonry high school and a mix of commercial and residential buildings. Visible from a distance and set back from the road, the church built in a style widely used in rural New England with Greek revival pedimented windows and Neo-Classical details, sometimes seems a mirage. But it still has much to tell of an early twentieth-century settlement on New Mexico’s eastern plains, and is a remnant of the one-thriving Anglo-American settlement of the area. While the story of the rise and decline of Taiban is similar to many of its sister communities on the eastern plains, the church is unlike any other surviving building along this route.

Taiban is at the western edge of the llano estacado, where sunshine is abundant, and water is not. The community was established in 1906 on the Belen Cut-off, a new line built across the eastern plains by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad. It was one of many new towns settled between 1905 and 1915 on the eastern plains.

Promoters and their advertisements brought hopeful and hardy homesteaders into the Taiban area with the promise of free land suitable to dry land farming. Wheat, corn and other crops did well for the first few years, but repeating dry and wet cycles played havoc with farmers’ crops and their dreams. Within a few years some farmers switched to livestock, while others sold out and moved to greener lands.

Both the railroad and the highway shaped Taiban, and its sister communities to the east and west, but neither could sustain the community in the face of drought, diminishing groundwater reserves, the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl and two world wars. Today, no trains stop at Taiban, either for passengers or freight, and no businesses operate to make it worth their while. Only the
Lifetime Achievement
Chamiza Foundation founders Gifford and Joann Phillips, of Santa Fe, have awarded 339 grants totaling $2.4 million toward sustaining pueblo culture in New Mexico over the last 20 years. Language revitalization, education and youth programs, traditional arts instruction, and preserving tribal traditions have benefited greatly from the Phillips’s generosity. The foundation focuses on preserving living traditions as model lifeways rather than as antiquities for study by historians and scholars.

Individual Achievement
John R. Roney has been an archaeologist for 30 years. Now retired, he made numerous contributions to preserving and protecting cultural resources in a career highlighted by outstanding achievements in research and public outreach. He was district archaeologist for BLM’s Albuquerque office. Mr. Roney keeps his hand in the field by volunteering with HPD to digitize cultural resource surveys for our New Mexico Cultural Resources Information System database of 160,000 cultural sites.

Phillip A. Young almost single-handedly resurrected HPD’s volunteer SiteWatch program, increasing the number of volunteer site stewards monitoring cultural resources statewide from 20 to 200 inside of a year. One of his first jobs was as a roadie to the psychedelic rock group Strawberry Alarm Clock. In his 20s he became an archaeologist with the National Park Service, and later worked as a law enforcement specialist and fire management officer. He retired from HPD in 2008.

Heritage Organization
Eighteen youths in the Town of Bernalillo Youth Conservation Corps learned some of their community’s history when they manufactured adobe blocks and restored the historic Sena Mortuary, now established as the New Mexico Wine Museum in Bernalillo. The YCC helped save the 1920 mortuary which nearly was destroyed in a 1989 fire and faced demolition. It was expertly restored down to its original dirt floors and a ghost sign denoting the building’s original use.

The partnership between the Center for Desert Archaeology in Tucson and the Salmon Ruins Museum, in Bloomfield, N.M., led to the curation of important artifacts, insightful research and scholarly publications that provided new insights into Chaco culture. The museum and the center interpreted 35 years of archaeology, made their findings available to the public and curated 1.5 million artifacts and photographs at a new facility made possible through a Save America’s Treasure’s grant. Larry Baker, of the museum and Bill Doelle, of the center, accepted the awards.

Heritage Publication
Sunstone Press and its president, James Clois Smith, Jr. for 35 years have published out-of-print and new books about individuals and events that shaped New Mexico’s history. Based in Santa Fe, Sunstone in 2007 launched the Southwest Heritage Series with publication of The Death of Billy the Kid, by John William Poe, originally published in 1933. More than 300 books are included in the series, including works by Oliver La Farge, Mary Austin, Nina Otero-Warren, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Edgar Lee Hewett and Fray Angelico Chavez.

The colorful history told in Tularosa Basin & the Coe Ranch is available to the public because of a mitigation project by Fort Bliss. The base needed to straighten a curve in War Road used for tank maneuvers, which required altering some of the historic features of the Coe Ranch. Feisty Mary Mayhill Coe Blevins (1863-1953) story is told in the resulting publication, which won awards for Fort Bliss and HNTB Corporation employees Melissa Widenfeld and Sally Victor; and the MIRATEK Corporation, of El Paso, which produced the attractive booklet.
The City of Hobbs and Van Citters Historic Preservation, LLC were recognized for “Keep ‘Em Flying: The Story of Hobbs Army Air Field.” Decommissioned in 1948, much of the physical history of the abandoned airfield was erased when the city located the Hobbs Industrial Air Park there. Preservation-minded city officials decided to fund the well-illustrated “Keep ‘Em Flying” publication to document the early twentieth-century history, and made it available to the public. Mayor Gary Don Reagan, Bill Dodge, of Van Citters; and Hobbs planner Joe Dearing accepted awards.

State Historian’s Award for Excellence in New Mexico Heritage Scholarship
Pasó Por Aquí is a series of publications devoted to the Neuvomexicano literary heritage published by the University of New Mexico Press since 1991. The series has featured out-of-print Hispanic literature dating back 400 years that otherwise was lost to future generations. New fiction and poetry inspired by the literary tradition has become a part of the series, which was launched with publication of the Historia de la Nueva Mexico written by Gaspar Perez de Villagra in 1610. Pasó Por Aquí would not have been possible without editors Dr. A. Gabriel Mélendez and Dr. Genaro Padilla (pictured) and the backing of UNM Press Editor-in-Chief Clark Whitehorn.

Community Preservation Planning
The Santa Fe Plaza Cultural Landscape Report is about two-inches thick. It records the history of a beloved gathering place from its Pre-Columbian origins through the ca. 1600 arrival of the Spanish, the Territorial period, early statehood and up to today’s music performances and art fairs. The City of Santa Fe; National Park Service; Dr. Kurt Anschuetz, of Albuquerque; landscape architect Judy Kowalski, of Morrow Reardon Wilkinson Miller Ltd Landscape Architects, of Albuquerque; and University of New Mexico Preservation and Regionalism Professor Chris Wilson received awards for contributions to what is the premier reference guide for preserving this National Historic Landmark. Mayor David Coss accepted for the city with Charlie Haekcer, NPS; Baker Morrow and Wilson.

Citizen Advocacy “Rita Hill”
“Rita Hill drew sympathetic national attention when in the name of preserving open space and downtown Lordsburg’s once-thriving business center, she temporarily blocked construction of a massive Interstate exchange in 1973. She moved a shack onto ranchland she’d owned that had been condemned to complete the project. Equipped with a transistor radio, cot, rifle and a Porta Potti, she didn't budge for months until the sheriff removed her by force and put her in jail. The CPRC presented the award named in her honor for the first time in 2009 to Santa Fe attorney Richard Ellenberg and architect Rad Acton for their diligence in working with the state, Santa Fe County and private developers to redesign buildings that threatened the historic streetscape of Santa Fe.
New in the Registers

Downtown Clayton is New Mexico’s Newest Historic District

Downtown Clayton owes much of its look and its economic roots as a trade center to the railroad. Most of the buildings that line its downtown streets were built before 1930 and trace their architectural influences from the East and Midwest more so than from the regional styles of New Mexico.

Forty-four of those buildings now comprise the Clayton Commercial Historic District, listed in the State Register in April and recommended for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places by the Cultural Properties Review Committee in June. Listing properties in the State or National registers often draws welcomed attention and can be a catalyst for change and renewed economic activity stimulated by state and federal tax credits and low-interest loans, which are available through HPD.

Properties listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties are eligible for rehabilitation tax credits of up to $25,000 and 3-percent interest loans through HPD, while commercial properties listed in the National Register can benefit from additional federal tax credits that can offset 20 percent of associated expenses. Tax credit projects on the average have a positive return of $3 for every dollar invested, according to state figures. A decision on National Register status is expected this summer.

Partnerships Resulted in Nomination

Initial survey work that eventually determined 80 percent of the district’s buildings were eligible for the Registers was funded by New Mexico MainStreet and the Economic Development Department. Clayton MainStreet hired consultants Heather Barrett and Shannon Papin, who received a $6,000 grant from HPD, to research the area’s history, expand survey work, draft and complete the nomination. They worked with Clayton MainStreet Board President Nancy Leighton, former owner of the historic Luna Movie Theater, who polled property owners in the district and helped establish strong support from 24 of the 26 owners with buildings in the district.

“We thought it would be a good thing for Clayton,” Ms. Leighton said in regards to establishing the district.

Historic Clayton

Clayton is divided into four quadrants by established transportation routes. Because more recent commercial activity developed along U.S. 87, most of the district’s historic architecture is largely unaltered, and many of the types of businesses—a barber shop, fine clothing, hardware and drug stores—operate to this day. Much of the town’s economic activity still centers on ranching, the railroad and the courthouse.

All but seven of the buildings found in the six-block area that comprises the district retain the look and feel associated with a late nineteenth and early twentieth century small western town. The buildings range from one to four stories, including the B & H Feed Supply warehouse and its rare wooden grain elevator at the western edge of the district along the former Fort Worth and Denver Railroad tracks laid in 1888. The arrival of train service led to Clayton—selected because it is halfway between Trinidad, Colorado, and Amarillo, Texas—establishing itself as the banking and trade center for northeastern New Mexico and the Texas Panhandle, and eventually as the Union County seat.

The oldest building in the district is the Eklund Hotel, which closed in April after re-opening five years ago. In May, Governor Bill Richardson and Lt. Governor Diane Denish visited the town landmark, and asked First National Bank of New Mexico President Craig Reeves how the state could help in re-opening the hotel, and its bar and restaurant.

Contributing storefronts on Main Street date from 1915. Though some are vacant, Sam’s Trading Post and the Shrine of the Testaments are open for business. Clayton’s Old West Days is held August 22.

Luna Theater with B&H Feedstore as a backdrop.

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Luna Theater with B&H Feedstore as a backdrop.
The Acoma Curio Shop is an adobe with a rare, mining town false-front built ca. 1916 by Lebanese immigrant Abdoo H. Fidel. He worked with nearby Acoma Pueblo to sell authentic crafts to motorists traveling Route 66. Fidel’s unique business—it was neither a trading post nor a tourist trap—was shortlived, yet the building has weathered change well and is the only intact rural curio in New Mexico. Retaining a high degree of integrity with its original window openings and interior finishes, the single-room building is currently a gallery and is one of the last active business in San Fidel, a small community in Cibola County. It was listed in the State Register by the CPRC in December 2008 and forwarded to the National Park Service for inclusion in the National Register.

Built in the Commercial style in phases beginning in 1888, it was fully rehabilitated using a $200,000 preservation loan from HPD and state and federal tax credits. It re-opened to great fanfare in 2003, but the economic downturn resulted in foreclosure and the loss of 41 jobs associated with the hotel. It was the first default in the 20-year history of HPD’s loan program.

Three of the district’s buildings, including the hotel, previously were listed in the National Register. The Luna with its eye-catching, moon-faced marquee stops travelers who often pull over to photograph it. The theater recently was purchased by Clayton MainStreet with a $180,000 New Mexico MainStreet Special Appropriation grant made possible by the State Legislature this year. Funds were set aside for initial rehabilitation of the theater and its sign, which has been damaged by large trucks.

Encino School

Built low to ground and in durable brick, Encino School was constructed in 1923 to consolidate students attending far-flung schools in eastern Torrance County. Still the dominant structure of the town’s landscape of adobe homes and fading businesses, the school served the area for 60 years before succumbing to a 1983 consolidation that transferred students to a new school in Guadalupe County. It was listed in the State Register in December 2008 for representing early school consolidation trends and for its architecture by E.R. Berry.

Tillotson House

Built between ca. 1882 and 1889 as a sequence of three log cribs on a rubble stone foundation, the five-room Thomas C. Tillotson house illustrates early Anglo-European settlement along Rio Penasco. It began as a chosa, or dugout for protection at the height of the Lincoln County War in 1878 and was later converted into log cribs.
Mount Taylor, from Page 1

The nomination demonstrates that the mountain and its surrounding mesas—344,729 acres with 316,456 contributing resources such as shrines, pilgrimage trails, springs, mineral-and-plant gathering sites, burial sites, view sheds and structures—fulfills federal TCP guidelines that it be rooted in traditions and history, and important to maintaining cultural identity in the modern world.

“The nomination clearly establishes this landscape as a Traditional Cultural Property worthy of protection and preservation,” said Katherine Slick, State Historic Preservation Officer and director of HPD. “At the same time, the tribes have established in their nomination that private landholdings on the mountain no longer contribute to the elements that give Mount Taylor its cultural significance, and that the private property does not need to be afforded the protections provided by a State Register listing.”

The TCP boundaries were decided by the location of six “guardian peaks,” the mesas of San Mateo, Jesus, la Jara, Horace, Chivato and Bibo, which surround the mass of Mount Taylor. The boundaries roughly follow those of the Cibola National Forest Mount Taylor Ranger District, an area determined by the U.S. Forest Service as eligible for the National Register, and therefore protection under the National Historic Preservation Act. The TCP is 434,767 acres, but 89,938 acres of private lands within the boundary are noncontributing, establishing a 344,729-acre cultural property.

Different guardian peaks hold more significance for certain tribes, while others ascribe more value to the mountain as a whole. Acoma Pueblo, for example gives great importance to Mount Taylor’s San Mateo Mesa from where their ancestors chose 35-foot ponderosa pine timbers to build the nearly 360-year-old San Esteban del Rey Mission, and carried them 30 miles, seeking to impart a spiritual quality to the mission whose construction resulted in the deaths of many of their people. The Hopi view the mountain as a community cultural site. They have demonstrated that 28 of their deities, 26 Hopi and 10 Tewa clans have close cultural connections to Mount Taylor. They view the shrines and archaeological sites on the mountain as the footprints of their ancestors.

Establishing the TCP

The CPRC took an innovative step by asking private property owners whose land was not already excluded from the TCP to come forward within 14 days after the meeting with notarized legal descriptions of their land so a semi-permanent map of the resource could be established. Several landowners provided them in the days following the June 5 meeting. The map will be modified periodically over time if additional private property is identified. The provision reflects common preservation practices that allow the shape and scope of historic districts to be altered based on the changing conditions of a district’s contributing and non-contributing resources.

From March 2008 until the public comment period was closed on May 20, 2009, HPD and other state entities received approximately 2,000 letters and e-mails addressing the Mount Taylor nomination. By a 4-1 ratio, people expressed support for it. At a May 15 public hearing held by the CPRC, 64 people registered to speak in support of listing the mountain and 47 in opposition. The nomination incorporates concerns raised during the hearing and in correspondence HPD received during a 15-month period.

“This nomination has engendered strong emotions and thoughtful discussion among many New Mexicans as well as within the ranks of local, state and federal government staff members,” said Department of Cultural Affairs Secretary Stuart Ashman. “Certainly the value of Mt. Taylor as a Traditional Cultural Property has never been in question, but neither has been the importance of balancing the spiritual beliefs of our Indian tribes and the...
inherent rights of private property owners. I have great respect for all the groups and individuals who worked together to make this nomination successful.”

The nomination follows a year of investigation, collaboration and consultation among the tribes since an emergency listing was approved in June 2008. The revised nomination more fully develops how different elements of the landscape hold greater significance to one tribe than to another.

“The nomination achieves the tribes’ goal of finding common ground in their differing beliefs that includes their respective historic and cultural affiliation with the mountain,” said Slick. “The survival of the mountain, which they see as a living, breathing spiritual being, is what is essential for their traditional and cultural practices to continue.”

And ultimately, that was the goal of establishing the TCP. The tribes’ desire and need to be consulted over activities that could harm or destroy Mount Taylor’s cultural sites, which have provided meaning to their lives for more than a millennium was the driving force behind the nomination. The TCP designation protects culturally significant lands by giving the tribes the right to consult with state agencies over projects on the mountain that require state approval. It is a right that should be enjoyed by all who ascribe cultural, spiritual or emotional significance to a place, building or object.

Even if Taos weren’t a World Heritage Site, U.S./ICOMOS provides preservationists in this country with connections to the best practices worldwide.”

Ms. Slick began her new position as director of the U.S. National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites based in Washington, D.C., in July, while at the same time wrapping up duties as director of the state Historic Preservation Division. She said the Taos Pueblo visit with Pueblo Governor Ruben Romero and Tribal Secretary Luis Zamora illustrates how organizations at different levels can work together with a local entity to enhance a preservation cause. Taos Pueblo is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, one of only 20 U.S. sites on the list of nearly 900 worldwide.

ICOMOS, with its scientific committees of experts in architecture, cultural landscapes, archaeology and heritage tourism based in countries around the globe, advises the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and provides resources to enhance local preservation efforts and traditional means people use to maintain resources significant to their patrimony.

“Look at the structures of Taos Pueblo and the strong cultural traditions that have been used for perhaps 1,000 years to build and maintain them, and it’s a small, closed group that does this work,” Ms. Slick said of the 100 or so pueblo members who replaster the mud walls of the main structures each year, timing the process around New Mexico’s summer monsoons. “Now you share with them information on how Yemen or Tibet preserves similar sites and what’s in their experience that can be passed on to Taos Pueblo.”

Ms. Slick’s new job may not be so different from her old one. As New Mexico SHPO, she led the state’s senior preservation agency, which advises federal agencies, local and tribal governments, and the general public on historic preservation in New Mexico. She brought to the job a community-based preservation background sprinkled liberally with national endeavors including two terms as a board member on the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, 18 years as advisor and trustee to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and an appointment by President Bill Clinton to the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.
She’ll be taking that experience plus 6.5 years as New Mexico SHPO to US/ICO-MOS where she’ll apply it to a larger preservation playing field. Although, as in the case of Taos Pueblo, one that still involves HPD and keeps preservation local.

**HPD Memories**

Ms. Slick said reflecting on her tenure at HPD that broadening people’s approach and appreciation of preservation was one of the main goals she set after being appointed by Governor Bill Richardson in 2003. Although she’d taken a similar approach in earlier positions—she was co-founder and past president of the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance, board member of the New Mexico Community Foundation served on the Las Vegas Citizens Committee for Historic Preservation and as the town’s MainStreet president—she said holding the SHPO post provided an official platform to emphasize a more inclusive approach to preservation.

“When preservation happens right, it is one of the most democratic processes possible,” she said.

During her tenure, HPD has added more than 100 listings to the State and National Registers, involved communities statewide in the annual celebration of Heritage Preservation Month each May and increased the scope of the division’s granting activities. Its public profile is much higher than it was six years ago.

Register nominations focused equally on resources such as gas stations and sparingly preserved churches in forgotten and underserved communities as much as they did on landmark architecture and structures whose history related to international events. The concept of what should be preserved and why was challenged when the shack-like High Bay building at V-Site in Los Alamos was preserved with a Save America’s Treasures grant. Prior to the effort, many doubted the value or preserving the site where the atomic bomb credited with ending World War II was assembled and the atomic age began.

Ms. Slick actively found opportunities to expand knowledge and appreciation of our heritage by using archaeological surveys and scenic and historic markers for public interpretation and outreach by federal, state and local governments. She also initiated the first preservation law courses at the University of New Mexico for cultural resource professionals and attorneys.

The number of preservation tax credit projects increased and became more sophisticated, contributing to the economic diversity of towns and cities in the state. She has worked with the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service on world heritage and a nomination of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro currently being developed for the National Register.

“When leaving the Historic Preservation Division was one of the toughest decisions I’ve had to make in my career, which has been filled with addressing compelling situations that have required many difficult decisions,” said Slick. “I’m very proud of what’s been accomplished at HPD under my watch and am grateful to have worked with a diverse professional staff with expertise in many different areas. “It’s unfortunate that folks sometimes view the SHPO as making projects more difficult and time consuming. In my experience, staff in State Historic Preservation Offices across the country are some of the best problem solvers I’ve ever met.”

When asked to choose a highlight from her HPD years, she quickly responded that one of the most fascinating was the concurrent decisions by the Cultural Properties Review Committee to allow a road extension through Petroglyphs National Monument and Los Imagines Historic District in Albuquerque with conditions, and granting a permit to excavate the site of pueblo ruins in Santa Fe for the Santa Convention Center. In the case of the road, there was a decided lack of consultation between the City of Albuquerque and tribal interests while Santa Fe and Tesuque Pueblo openly embraced the process. She said the two incidents sharply contrasted with one another and proved the point that when parties enter consultation in good faith there are benefits to both sides. The pueblo and Santa Fe to this day enjoy a collaborative relationship.

As a parting thought, Ms. Slick chose to emphasize a recurring theme of her tenure which is that identifying and understanding the resources before a project is a “signed, sealed and delivered” to HPD is essential, not only to the preservation process but to making good decisions for stewarding cultural resources before the project is undertaken.

She hopes that even in a time of financial constraints there can be more opportunities to inventory the state’s vast culture so the Registers can be maintained and used as effective planning tools integral to New Mexico’s future.