



EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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www.empireranchfoundation.org

President's Message

It's been a whirlwind summer with more exciting activities planned for the rest of the year! The outdoor (almost) showing of Red River and the National Day of the Cowboy celebration were a resounding success! We promoted the Empire Ranch and ERF to over 400 people at our outreach events since May.

Our new Administrator, Mr René Blatté, has hit the ground running! I hope you'll soon have a chance to meet him. I am so grateful for the efforts of Christine Haaksma, Marti Conroy, and Alison Bunting, who helped cover the Administrator's duties until we filled the position.

I hope to see you at the Loft Cinema Movie Event in Tucson on September 15th for the showing of *Oklahoma!* This year it's a Sunday matinée. Special thanks to the Tucson Rodeo Parade Museum which will have the actual surrey that was used in the movie on display!

Next up is National Public Lands Day at the Empire Ranch on October 12th; our BLM partner has a variety of volunteer activities planned for the day.

Of course, don't forget to attend the 19th Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival on November 2nd. We'll have many new and lots of favorite activities, performers, demonstrators, and speakers.

The key to our success is our volunteer and member support. Consider becoming a Cowboy Festival sponsor or volunteer. If you are not a member, please join; or renew your membership if it is due. You can volunteer, or become a member, or sponsor donor using the inserts in this issue or via the ERF website: www.empireranchfoundation.org.

Faith Boice, President



(photos: F. Boice, C. Rogos)

National Day of the Cowboy

ERF welcomed over 460 enthusiastic participants in its celebration of National Day of the Cowboy on Saturday July 27th. The morning started off with an informative presentation on "*George Bascom, Cochise, and the Start of the Apache Wars*" by author Doug Hocking.

Regina Richter, Arizona Horseman's Challenge Participant, demonstrated groundwork horse training, and Horse'n Around Rescue provided an opportunity for close-up interaction with some of their rescue horses.

Western skills demonstrations included blacksmithing by Casey Abbs; leatherworking by Phil Parks; saddle making by Brad Faulkner, reata making by Dick Schorr; and ranching tools by Bill and Kathie Schock. The Vera Earl Ranch cowboys and cowgirls and the Sonoita Royalty provided roping demonstrations and lessons.

The children delighted in visiting the petting zoo, and 27 riders took advantage of short trail rides, all provided by All Around Trail Horses.

Everyone enjoyed the docent-led tours, shopping in the ERF gift shop, and the vendor booths which featured leather products, rustic signs, photography, cookies, jewelry and household products. Balladeer Bruce Andre provided roving music throughout the day. Over \$200 was raised from the silent auction and raffle.

This fun day was made possible by the outstanding contributions of all the ERF volunteers, the Sonoita Rodeo Royalty, the Turquoise Circuit, and the demonstrators.

Published by the Empire Ranch Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management. The purpose of the Foundation is to protect, restore, and sustain the Empire Ranch historical buildings and landscape as an outstanding western heritage and education center. Donations to the Foundation may be sent to: P.O. Box 842, Sonoita, AZ 85637-0842.

Local Movie Club Hosts Special Screening

Members of the Tucson Desert Hollywood local chapter of TCM Backlot, a membership club for fans of Turner Classic Movies, spent April 27th exploring the Empire Ranch's movie history.

ERF Docent, Mark Murphy gave the group of 27 a movie-focused tour of the ranch house, while Marty Freese, Historian for Old Tucson Studios, and retired Stuntman, Steve "Bunker" de France pointed out hallowed spots where actors such as John Wayne and Walter Brennan shot their scenes. Marty and Bunker also shared some behind the scenes stories about *Red River* and other movies filmed in the area, while testing the audience with movie trivia questions.



Participants learn about Red River filming details from Bunker de France and Marty Freese (above), and take a look at the Mustang Mountains featured in the film. (photos: K. Patterson)

Participants then enjoyed box lunches delivered from The Café in Sonoita before settling in to watch *Red River* in the Adobe Hay Barn. The group enjoyed the day so much they plan to make it an annual event. To join the group visit www.facebook.com/TCMTucsonDesertHollywood

Chris Schrager Wins Governor's Award



Chris Schrager shown with his lifetime achievement award (photo: D. Drobka)

Those familiar with the stabilization and preservation of the Empire Ranch House and surrounding buildings know that BLM archaeologist Chris Schrager has been instrumental to that success. Whether it's securing much-needed grants or turning mud into adobe bricks, Chris has played a critical role in ensuring the long-term stability of these BLM structures.

The Empire Ranch was one of many projects cited as Chris received a lifetime achievement award, the Governor's Heritage Preservation Honor Award, on June 13. The Awards Ceremony was the signature event of the 17th Annual Arizona Historic Preservation Conference in Prescott.

Historic Preservation Officer Kathryn Leonard and Policy Advisor Kaitlin Harrier from the Governor's Office presented the award to Chris, who, for more than 25 years, has shared his talents as an archaeologist, teacher, and brick mason with the BLM Tucson Field Office and Coronado National Forest (CNF).

He was instrumental in the preservation of many significant properties on public lands in southeastern Arizona. These include the BLM's Fairbank Mercantile and Schoolhouse, Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate, and the CNF's Kentucky Camp and Brown Canyon Ranch. His projects benefit communi-

Welcome René



We are excited to introduce René Blatté who assumed the position of ERF Administrator on August 12. René recently retired from a fifteen-year career as General Manager of MCTV & Media Services at Maricopa Community Colleges. He has a Master's in public administration from Oakland University and a Bachelor of Science in Radio, Television and Film, from the University of Maryland. Prior to moving to Arizona René taught at Central Michigan University and worked for various media organizations in Michigan and Arkansas.

In his application cover letter René noted that for his next endeavor he wanted to pursue "...things that I have a passion for; working with people, teaching, being part of nature, history and helping preserve something of value for future generations." A perfect match for this key Empire Ranch Foundation position.

Dedicated Gifts

The Empire Ranch Foundation gratefully acknowledges gifts recently received

In Memory of:

Dr. Harwood P. Hinton,
Dusty Vail Ingram, David Allen Ladd,
Alfred Harry Lewis,
George & Nina Masek,
My Four Big Brothers,
Ed & Mary (Brownie) Vail

In Honor of:

ERF Volunteers,
Chris Schrager

ties through the adaptive reuse of historic buildings to host activities and events.

An educator at heart, Chris is known for using his projects to develop school programs that meet standards for math and science. Congratulations and a big "thank you" to Chris for this latest award and for his dedication to the history of southeastern Arizona and his commitment to educating youth.

Interpretation Update



Donated Victorian-era furnishings now enliven Room 12 (photo: A. Bunting)

Next time you're out at the Empire Ranch House be sure to stop by Room 12 (shown above), which was used as the Bookkeeper's Quarters in the Vail era, and a guest room in the Boice and Vail eras. The room is now furnished with Victorian-era parlor furniture.

Interpretation of Room 11, used as an office by the Vails and the Boices, is expected to be completed in time for the Cowboy Festival.

We are still looking for a few items from 1890 to 1910 to finish off Room 12. Some examples include busts of famous people (politicians, composers, scientists); art glass; candle sticks; crystal plates, bowls, or vases; and glass display domes. Please contact Sally Pyne at 520-319-8142 if you are able to help.

National Public Lands Day at Empire Ranch

Join us again this year to help observe National Public Lands Day (NPLD) at the Empire Ranch by working on important projects to preserve resources and improve conditions for visitors. On Saturday October 12, 9am-1pm, BLM and ERF will host three volunteer projects:

—Decommission the frog head-start facility, a completed project to help recover the endangered Chiricahua leopard frog population. We'll disassemble and remove construction materials employed in the enclosure and salvage any materials for future projects.

—Repair erosion at the base of the historic adobe Hired Man's House structure. Volunteers will learn how to assess the damage and use adobe bricks and mud mortar to repair the structure.

—Maintain the Heritage Discovery Trail. Our activities will include trimming vegetation, tread work, raking, sign maintenance, and removal of two adobe seating benches.

Return of *Red River*

Over 200 Western movie fans turned out for the planned outdoor showing of the classic film *Red River* at the Empire Ranch on July 13th despite the dark clouds threatening rain. Fortunately, the Adobe Haybarn provided a sheltered location to view the movie. Ray Patrone, ERF Vice President, welcomed everyone and introduced retired stuntman Bunker DeFrance who regaled the audience with a few insider filming stories. David Spiceland, a *Red River* expert from Appalachian State University, North Carolina, provided additional insights.

Prior to the movie many of the guests enjoyed the chuckwagon dinner served up by the EZ Cattle Co. Cow Camp Café and Chuckwagon, the free popcorn provided by ERF, and toured the Empire Ranch House. After the movie a number of viewers took a closer look at the Empire Ranch corral area featured in the film.

The free showing was part of The Loft Film Fest on the Road, made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts with support from Desert Diamond Casinos & Entertainment. Special thanks are due to The Loft Cinema, the dedicated ERF volunteers, and to Tucson Sunbelt Rentals for donating the use of light towers for parking.



Adobe Haybarn gives shelter from stormy weather (Photos: A. Bunting, C. Rogos)

**Coming November 2 -
Don't Miss It!**



19th Annual Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival

Saturday, November 2nd,
10am to 4pm,
at Empire Ranch Headquarters

An exciting, educational, and
fun family event.

Western Music & Entertainment
History & Culture Demonstrations
Ranch Life Exhibits
Kids Activities
Skilled Artisans & Speakers

Free and open to all!

For more information, please see
enclosed flyer or visit
www.empireranchfoundation.org



Cowboy Festival Volunteers Needed

Interested in becoming one of the more than 100 volunteers needed during the Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival? We need volunteers for a minimum four-hour shift, to help to set-up for the Festival on Thursday & Friday, October 31st and November 1st, on Festival Day, Saturday, November 2nd, and Festival clean-up day on Sunday, November 3rd.

To sign up, visit the ERF website www.empireranchfoundation.org to complete our cowboy festival volunteer form, or contact Marti Conroy by email at Wrangler4504@gmail.com or phone: (520) 247-6097. Hope you can help us!

Working Calendar

Note: Please check our website to confirm event details (empireranchfoundation.org). Location: Meet at Visitor Contact Station, Empire Ranch Headquarters, unless otherwise noted. To volunteer, make reservations, or get more information, email admin@empireranchfoundation.org or call (888) 364-2829.

September

- 7 Volunteer Work Day**, 8am-12pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org
- 14&28 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, no reservations req.
- 15 "Oklahoma!" Western Movie at the Loft Cinema**. See details at right.

October

- 5 Volunteer Work Day**, 8am-12pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org
- 12 National Public Lands Day**, 9am-1pm. Free. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org

October, cont.

- 12&26 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all. No Reservations req.
- 18 ERF Board Meeting**, 9am-11am. All welcome! Visitor Contact Station.
- 31 Cowboy Festival SetUp**, 8-5pm. **Volunteers Needed!** To volunteer call 888-364-2829.

November

- 1 Cowboy Festival SetUp**, 8-5pm. **Volunteers Needed!** To volunteer call 888-364-2829.
- 2 19th Annual Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival**, Empire Ranch Headquarters, 10am-4pm, Free, Open to all.
- 3 Cowboy Festival Tear Down**, 10am-2pm, **Volunteers Needed!** To volunteer call 888-364-2829.

- 10&24 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all no reservations req.

December

- 14 Christmas at the Empire Ranch**. 10am-2pm. Plan to celebrate Western holiday fun with us. Free, open to all.

Don't Miss *Oklahoma!* on September 15



ERF is proud to present Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones in "Oklahoma!" our 2019 Western Movie at the Loft Cinema, in Tucson (3233 E. Speedway Blvd) on Sunday, September 15th, doors opening at 2pm. A panel discussion at 2:30pm precedes the 3pm show time.

Tickets are still available: \$15 for ERF members, \$20 for non-members. Purchase at the door or on our website: www.empireranchfoundation.org.