

MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MPNHA)

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in partnership with



Mormon Pioneer Heritage Area named Best of State

The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area (MPNHA) has been chosen to receive a Best of State award for Utah in the Hospitality, Travel & Tourism: Historical/Heritage Site category.

The MPNHA was nominated for the award by Suzanne Dean, publisher of the *Sanpete Messenger* in Sanpete County, one of the six counties in the Heritage Area.

“As publisher of a community newspaper in the Heritage Area for the past 17 years, I’ve watched and reported on the long, arduous process of bringing together six counties, 42 cities and a host of travel-oriented businesses into a working partnership, and from there, achieving congressional designation as a heritage area,” Dean said.

“I’ve been impressed and moved at the perseverance that has gone into getting the MPNHA up and operating, and the way it has leveraged a small amount of federal money to help get millions of dollars of restoration work done.

“Most of all, and I say this as a descendant of Mormon pioneers on all sides of my family, the MPNHA has instilled a greater appreciation for the pioneers in people all over Utah.”

Monte Bona, long-time executive director of the MPNHA, said, “This award pays tribute to the amazing pioneers who planted seeds of greatness that future generations would harvest.”

Over the past 10 years, the MPNHA, and its government and business partners, have honored and highlighted the pioneers who colonized the Heritage Area in a multitude of ways, ranging from making grants to 33 structure restoration projects, to creating a TV series on Mormon pioneers, to sponsoring oral history preservation and an art exhibit.



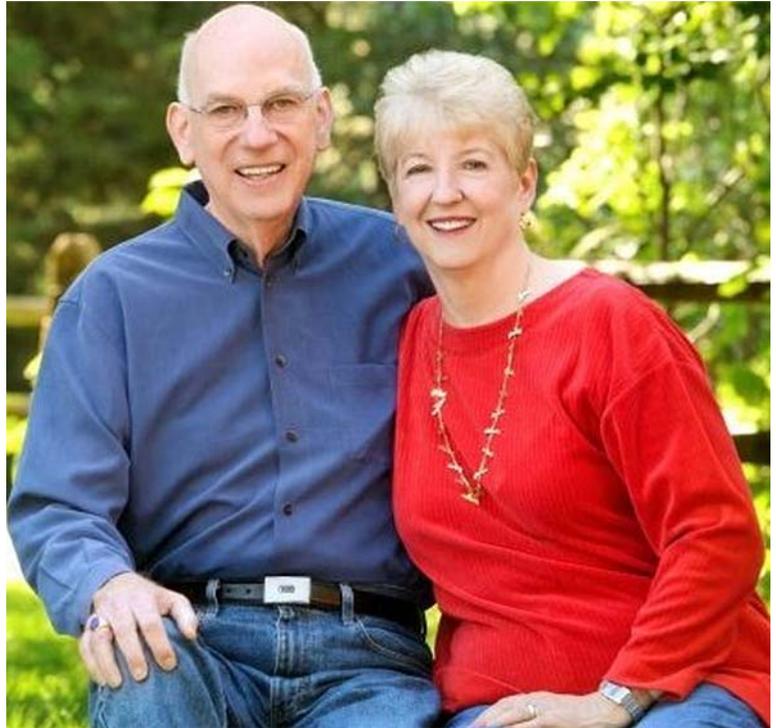
The Hole-in-the-Rock Interpretive Center in Escalante brings to life the desperate story of 250 snowed-in early pioneers who traveled up a red rock bluff at a 45-degree angle for 2,000 feet in order to pass through a hole in the rock to freedom and salvation. It is a prime example of the cooperative effort of the communities in the MPNHA working together to preserve their precious heritage.

Joyce Bennett, widow of the late Sen. Robert F. “Bob” Bennett will accept the award on behalf of the MPNHA on Wednesday, May 17 at the Best of State Gala in the Grand Ballroom of the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City.

Sen. Bennett was the main sponsor of the bill to designate the U.S. 89 corridor as a heritage area. MPNHA’s Discovery Road TV series recently completed a segment on Sen. Bennett and his contribution to the MPNHA.

This is not the first Best of State award for the U.S. 89 corridor. In 2003, before Congress designated the Heritage Area, the award went to the Heritage Highway 89 Alliance, a grassroots group of businesses and artisans promoting tourism and preservation along U. S. 89.

The Best of State Awards were created to recognize outstanding individuals, organizations and businesses in Utah. Entries are judged on achievement in the field of endeavor, innovation or creativity in approaches, techniques, methods, or processes and contribution to the quality of life in Utah.



Robert Bennett and his wife, Joyce, from their facebook page.

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The Mormon Pioneer Heritage Area is a federally designated area of central and southern Utah running along the beautiful and historic U.S. Highway 89 — including the All-American Road Utah State Route 12, and Capitol Reef Scenic Byway Utah State Route 24, which both intersect with U.S. 89 and together form the MPNHA’s Boulder Loop. The area includes the counties of Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Wayne, Garfield and Kane.