

# MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MPNHA)

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## MPNHA receives Best of State award

The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area (MPNHA) was recognized with a Best of State award in heritage tourism at a May 17 gala at the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City.

Joyce Bennett, widow of the late Sen. Robert Bennett, accepted the award on behalf of the MPNHA. Sen. Bennett played a major role in helping the MPNHA achieve national heritage area status through his bill, the National Mormon Pioneer Heritage Act.

"It was an honor to have Mrs. Bennett accept this award in recognition of the role Sen. Robert F. Bennett played in the creation of the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area," MPNHA Executive Director Monte Bona said.

The statement nominating MPNHA said development of the heritage area over 30 years represented a singular achievement in heritage tourism in Utah.

"Beginning in the early 1900s as a loosely organized coalition of energetic citizens called the Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance, the operation has developed a remarkable network of partners, marketed a 250-mile historic corridor of the state, and above all, helped preserve or restore 33 significant Mormon pioneer historical sites," the nomination said.

According to the nominating statement, in the 10 years since Congress designated the U.S. 89 corridor as a national historic area, the MPNHA has received \$2.2 million in federal funds but has leveraged that money to support \$44.3 million in local, heritage-related projects.

Wasatch Academy, a private boarding school in Mt. Pleasant, received eight individual Best of State awards. With the help of the MPNHA, charitable foundations and others, the school has engaged in a major rehabilitation of several of its historic structures in recent years.



*Joyce Bennett, widow of the late Sen. Bob Bennett displays a best-of-state medallion awarded to the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area. Accompanying her is her son, Rob Bennett.*

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.

MPNHA's Discovery Road TV show has recently completed a show on Sen. Bennett and his contribution to the MPNHA.

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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.*