

MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MPNHA)

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in partnership with

Editor's Note: We discovered several errors in yesterday's press release. Please discard and use this one instead. Apologies.

Discovery Road episode honoring Sen. Bob Bennett to air

The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area's newest Discovery Road episode, "A Gift for the Road," which airs July 8 and 12 on the Utah Education Network (UEN), pays tribute to the late Sen. Bob Bennett who pioneered the legislation that created the heritage area.

Bennett, a Republican who served three terms in the Senate, first learned to love the area surrounding U.S. 89 when his father Wallace Bennett, who also served in the U.S. Senate, took him along on campaign trips. Because of the trips, Robert Bennett formed a lifelong love for the communities up and down the corridor.

After I-15 came through, Bennett was concerned that the development of the interstate had left not just the U.S. 89 communities behind but also the unique history of the area, which was settled by Mormon pioneers.

"It's important that that history not be lost," Bennett said.

Bennett's family history is as rich as the history of the MPNHA. Bennett came from a line of prominent Utahans. His grandfather, Heber J. Grant, was the president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and his father served four terms in the Senate.

Through interviews with Bennett's wife Joyce, two sons Jim and Rob, and daughter Julie, we learn about the man who helped to forever change the face of Central Utah and his love for history, art and music.

"What he contributed will resonate in the success of what was created here," says Roger Roper of the Utah State Historic Preservation Office. "He knew how to bring it on home ... he was the one single champion who could have pulled it off."

The episode explores not just Bennett's association with the area later to become the MPNHA but also



Members of the late Utah Senator Bob Bennett family display an historic document during taping of a segment for Discovery Road. Pictured left to right is Rob Bennett, Joyce Bennett and Jim Bennett.

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the history of the Bennett family home, which was first built for Wallace and Francis Bennett but sold shortly after Wallace Bennett started his U.S. Senate service.

Many years later, after passing through other owners, the house came on the market, was purchased by Robert and Joyce Bennett, and again become the family home.

Along with telling Bennett's story, the episode showcases the Mormon pioneer experience while following a group of local, state and National Park Service officials on a tour of the heritage area, including native American sites and museums. The visitors are clearly impressed and touched by the experience.

"The MPNHA is of huge significance to local people, but sharing that with the broader nation is something we are really proud to be a part of," says Alexandra Hernandez of the National Park Service. "It's a great partnership type of model."

The episode also explores the development of an institution that became the forerunner to Southern Utah University and an old sorrel horse that helped make it happen.

And it introduces viewers to Civil War-era official government photographer Timothy O' Sullivan, who captured the images of the great uncharted American West as he traveled throughout the area in his mule-driven photo wagon.

Finally, the episode returns to the present as it visits the Friday, May 26 dedication of the restored Spring City School in Sanpete County. Spearheaded by Friends of Historic Spring City, a local nonprofit organization, the project was one of the most ambitious restorations in several years along U.S. 89. The MPNHA played a big role in bringing it to fruition.

"All this couldn't have happened without the vision, foresight and tenacity of Sen. Bennett," says Lt. Gov. Spencer J. Cox, who was the keynote speaker at the dedication

"A Gift for the Road," will air on UEN at 6 p.m. on July 8 and again at 12 a.m. on Wednesday, July 12.

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About the MPNHA:

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.

About UEN:

The Utah Education Network was established more than 20 years ago by the Utah State Legislature to coordinate telecommunications technology for public and higher education. UEN infrastructure serves public education, higher education, applied technology colleges, libraries, government, and other public entities by providing networking, application and support services, serving a vital role in anticipating and meeting the educational needs of our state.



National Park Service historian Alexandra Hernandez gets a horseback tour of equine facilities near Mount Pleasant, Utah. Historians, local, state and national officials traveled along historic Highway 89 to better understand the many projects and programs sponsored by the MPNHA.