



# Hands Across History



A joint newsletter for the White Sands Historical Foundation and the White Sands Pioneer Group.

Volume I, Letter II

June 2005

## Fete Set For White Sands 60th Anniversary

The schedule has been announced and it is going to be a multi-day celebration for the missile range's 60th anniversary next month. The White Sands Pioneer Group and the White Sands Historical Foundation are sponsoring major events along with the Range to look back and ahead.

As background, there were issues with trying to hold a celebration during the week before Saturday, July 9, the actual anniversary date. So, all parties agreed to commemorate the 60th during the following week. This has the advantage of leading right into a White Sands open house on July 16 for the 60th anniversary of the Trinity Site atomic test.

Current plans call for activities to begin on **July 13** with uprange bus tours of the missile range. This will be an all-day tour of areas and facilities north of U.S. Highway 70 to include the Space Harbor and Trinity Site. The White Sands Frontier Club will be selling hot dogs and hamburgers for lunch at the north end of the range. To get a seat on this tour Foundation and Pioneer Group members must make reservations by June 30. Seating is limited.

On **July 14** White Sands will hold its Hall of Fame induction. The inductees have not been announced yet but we are assured there will be some. Since this marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Hall of Fame, the ceremony will be conducted outdoors like the first one back in 1980. It will begin at 9 a.m. and be held at the post Museum. As part of the ceremonies, Austin Vick has agreed to talk about how the Hall of Fame was put together under BG Ball.

After the induction ceremonies there will be a reception in the museum and hors d'oeuvres will

be served. In addition, a tour will be available to look at some of the changes on post. This will include a stop at the new Professional Development Center (Ed Center for you old-timers).

**July 15** will be a full day specially built for Pioneer Group and Historical Foundation members. During the morning, the Foundation is sponsoring a series of history seminars to be held at the White Sands Frontier Club. These will include talks on the Army, Navy and Air Force history at White Sands by people who were there. There is a luncheon tied to the seminars that will feature John Hunner as guest speaker. Hunner is the Director of Public History at NMSU and just published a book on the development of Los Alamos entitled "Inventing Los Alamos." The cost is only \$10 for the whole package

After the seminars, attendees will be free to go on a tour of the new range control building - the Cox Building - and visit equipment displays outside the facility.

The day concludes with a Pioneer Group banquet in Las Cruces at the Hilton beginning at 6 p.m. This will be a great chance for everyone to get together for an evening of renewed friendship and finally telling the truth about the old days - or maybe not.

Finally, on Saturday, **July 16**, the missile range will host a Trinity Site open house that will run like the April and October events. For more info, visit the Public Affairs pages on the White Sands website at [www.wsmr.army.mil](http://www.wsmr.army.mil)

For more details and directions on how to make reservations for all events, go to page 3.

## A Note From The President

### **It Is Time To Get Together And Keep The Ball Rolling**

Well, it is finally arriving, the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of White Sands Proving Ground/White Sands Missile Range. First, I want to thank all those members of the White Sands Historical Foundation, and the WSPG who have been working so hard with WSMR Command to bring about this upcoming celebration. Without their efforts, this would have been just a footnote next month.

So now, let them know how much you appreciate their efforts and mark your calendars and plan to attend the events from July 13 through the 16th. As you pack to attend, take time to write your own story of your days at the range. Bring those memories with you to share with others, and to leave for inclusion in the WSMR Museum archives. If you've doing spring-cleaning and wondering what to do with all those old records, files, gyros, pictures and what have you, know that

there is a home for them in the Museum.

Note the article from Doyle Piland on this newsletter's back page about the employee database for White Sands. This could really be a super resource for the future.

Finally, let's keep things going for another 60 years. Support the efforts of the Pioneers with a donation. It's this funding that makes possible this newsletter and getting the efforts started for the celebration. While you're at it, remember you've personally made history and now document that history. Buy a brick in Signature Plaza to secure your name for generations to come and help out the museum at the same time. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the 60<sup>th</sup>!

*Tomas C. Chavez  
President, White Sands Pioneer Group and  
White Sands Historical Foundation*

### **Trinity Site Is Attracting News Media Again For Its 60th**

The White Sands Public Affairs Office reports that the approaching 60th anniversary of the first atomic bomb test at Trinity Site on July 16 is attracting reporters from all over the world.

The staff has already taken several television crews from Japan and Europe to the site with more in the offing. Also, reps from Minneapolis and San Francisco have called about attending the upcoming open house.

Back in 1995, during the observance of

Trinity Site's 50th anniversary, the news media were thick as flies on a sugared sopaipilla. In addition to most of the regional media, CNN was there broadcasting live.

The day also marked the only time there have been serious protestors at the site.

An estimated crowd of 5,300 visited in 1995 which strained parking, bus transportation to the Schmidt/McDonald ranch house and the portable toilets placed on site.

### **Statement of Purpose and Membership**

The "Hands Across History" newsletter is published by the White Sands Missile Range Historical Foundation and the White Sands Pioneer Group (WSPG). Both nonprofit organizations aim to preserve the accomplishments of White Sands Missile Range.

The newsletter is intended to keep members of both groups informed about current events and share information of common interest. The editor

is Jim Eckles. He can be contacted by email at [nebraska1950@comcast.net](mailto:nebraska1950@comcast.net) or at either address below.

Membership to either organization is open to anyone who shares their goals. However, details of membership (dues, etc.) differ between the two groups. For more information, contact the appropriate organization and we will send it via the Post Office or email.

White Sands Pioneer Group  
P.O. Box 318  
White Sands, N.M. 88002

White Sands Historical Foundation  
P.O. Box 171  
White Sands, N.M. 88002

# WSMR 60th Anniversary Schedule

## July 13 - Uprange Bus Tour (free - you buy your lunch)

Buses will leave the Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 1782, at 7:30 a.m. and return sometime between 4 and 5 p.m. Stops will include a number of facilities and historic sites. The missile range's Frontier Club will sell grilled hamburgers and hot dogs at the north end of the range for lunch - you can bring your own, if you want. Seating is limited and you must make reservations by June 30.

Call WSMR Public Affairs to make reservations or to ask questions, 505-678-1134.

## July 14 - Hall of Fame Induction (free)

The induction ceremony will be held outdoors between the museum and the new V-2 display building and will begin at 9 a.m. A reception will be held in the museum after the induction.

Following the Hall of Fame activities, a tour of changes on the main post will offered. Details will be announced at the museum. For more information, call Public Affairs at 505-678-1134

## July 15 - History Seminars (\$10, includes lunch)

Four talks are scheduled from 8 a.m. until lunch at the White Sands Frontier Club. They include the history of the Army, Navy and Air Force at White Sands plus a look at what the next 60 years may bring to White Sands. Then, during a short break, the club will be reset for the luncheon that features John Hunner as speaker. His recently published book is called "Inventing Los Alamos: The Creation of an Atomic Community, 1943-1957." Copies will be available for purchase at the event.

Reservations are required by July 1 and can be made by calling Pam Vick at 505-522-4179 or Jon Gibson at 505-382-8292 or Tomas Chavez at 505-649-0976. They will explain how to pay.

## July 15 - Cox Range Control Center Tours / Equipment Displays (free)

These activities will begin at 12:30 p.m. and run through the afternoon. Seminar attendees will have plenty of time to get to the Cox Bldg. to visit the displays and tour the building. No reservations are necessary. You'll probably have to park in the old Bldg. 300 parking lot and walk across.

## July 15 - White Sands Pioneer Group Banquet (\$30)

This should be another wonderful Pioneer Group reunion banquet. It will begin at 6 p.m. at the Hilton Hotel in Las Cruces. Your choice of menu is chicken relleno or grilled tilapia and will include dessert, coffee and tea. You are on your own at the bar.

Reservations are required by July 1 and can be made with Judy Marrujo at 505-678-3988. After hours, try Tomas Chavez at 505-649-0976.

## July 16 - Trinity Site Open House (free)

Two ways to get into the site. Enter through the Stallion Gate sometime between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. or drive in the Alamogordo car caravan that will leave the county fair grounds at 8 a.m. This will be open to the public so it could be crowded. For more info, contact Public Affairs at 505-678-1134.

No reservations required.

**NOTE:** A special room rate has been arranged by Austin Vick at the Las Cruces Hilton. Tell them you want the special White Sands 60th anniversary rate. Call locally only at 505-522-4300.

**Hands Across History**  
**P.O. Box 171**  
**White Sands, NM 88002**

## **Museum Is Building Missile Range Employee Database**

For the past several months, the Museum has been using a computer program that allows visitors to call up a biography and photo of friends or relatives who work(ed) at WSPG/WSMR. So far, it contains all the commanding officers, all the Hall of Famers, and several other employees.

We need to build this database into the authoritative source on those who have worked at WSMR. To start, we need you to provide a bio for yourself, your relatives and your friends.

We are asking for a "life biography" to include place of birth, education, and job history with detailed info about your/their WSPG/WSMR jobs, as well as retirement activities and a good photo. The computer screen is split in half, one side for the bio and the other for the photo.

This will be a great resource. Eventually, we want photos and bios for anyone who worked at White Sands.

Write the bio in third person format, either in an e-mail or copy it and paste into an e-mail and

send to [Archivist@wsmr-history.org](mailto:Archivist@wsmr-history.org). Or, you can snail-mail it to:

**White Sands Missile Range Museum**  
**ATTN: Registrar**  
**P. O. Box 400**  
**WSMR, NM 88002-0400**

The photo should be at least 6.5 X 8 inches, but can be smaller. You can select an earlier photo or one more current. If the photo is in digital format or you can scan it, e-mail it to the address above. If you can't, mail it to the snail-mail address above and we will scan it. If you want the photo back, let us know and we will mail it back. Photos and/or bios can be updated anytime information changes.

Help us preserve the History of White Sands Proving Ground/Missile Range, of which each one who does or has work(ed) at White Sands is a part. Send your photo and bio soon.