



STAFF REPORT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING DATE: 01/25/12

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Report by Department of Planning regarding public outreach items

BACKGROUND

No relevant case history.

ANALYSIS

Please enjoy the attached articles.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

No action required.

BACKUP DOCUMENTS

- Mall Photo Display Pays Tribute to Historic Paradise Palms Neighborhood, Las Vegas Review Journal, November 25, 2011.
- 'First Lady of Las Vegas' Helen J. Stewart Inspires Artist, Las Vegas Review Journal, November 27, 2011.
- Spring Valley Street has Roots in North Las Vegas, Review Journal.com, December 6, 2011.
- Helen Stewart Statue Dedicated at Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park, Post Press Release, December 14, 2011.
- Progress on Neon Museum Moving Forward, Las Vegas Review Journal, December 19, 2011.
- Neon Museum Visitors Center to be finished in May, Las Vegas Sun, December 19, 2011.
- Ward 1 Booster Group to Promote Area, Review Journal.com, December 27, 2011.
- Visit Old Mormon Fort to Learn Las Vegas History, Review Journal.com, January 1, 2012.
- Atomic Testing Museum Gets New Name, Designation, Las Vegas Review Journal, January 3, 2012.
- Nevada State Museum Enhances Springs Preserve, Review Journal.com, January 8, 2012.
- North Las Vegas Plan to Restore Kiel Ranch Fails to Silence Critics, Las Vegas Review Journal, January 9, 2012.

Mall photo display pays tribute to historic Paradise Palms neighborhood



JASON BEAN/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

The exhibit "A Place in Paradise" at the Boulevard Mall includes 24 large-scale photos paying tribute to the historic Paradise Palms area. » [Buy this photo](#)

BY STEVE BORNFELD
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Nov. 25, 2011 | 2:01 a.m.

Life was good, paradisiacally speaking.
(Unless someone challenged you to spell
"paradisiacally.")

Stars were out at night. And the morning.
And midday. Celebs of Las Vegas' storied
past seemingly dwelled in every other
house. Paradise, indeed.

"It was the quintessential Las Vegas neighborhood because it was the first master-planned community in Las Vegas," says Brian Paco Alvarez of the Las Vegas News Bureau. Through its vast archives, the bureau assembled "A Place in Paradise," a photographic tribute to historic Paradise Palms, lining the walls of the food court at one of the neighborhood's anchors, the Boulevard Mall.

"It was the first attempt to create the storybook suburb with a mall and schools and tree-lined streets in the modern style," Alvarez says. And it was stuffed with star residents who surely jacked up property

Shecky Greene and Sonny Liston among them.

Twenty-four large-scale photos depict aerial views of Paradise Palms, the early days of the mall and mostly stars who called its houses at least part-time homes. "They had been planning it in the late 1950s," Alvarez says. "It was a testament to what Las Vegas would be many years into the future."

Strolling through the exhibit turns up intriguing images: Dick Cantino (residence: Nahatan Way), accordion strapped to his chest as he sits sideways off a diving board poolside at the Flamingo, backed by a squeezebox band of young accordionists in March 1964. Boxers Liston (Ottawa Drive) and Floyd Patterson at the weigh-in for their fight at the Las Vegas Convention Center in July 1963. Young Arnold Palmer teeing off, in perfect midswing form, at the Tournament of Champions at the area's Stardust Golf Club (now the Las Vegas National Golf Club) in April 1967.

"The great thing about this neighborhood is that it's housing for all different types of people that worked in the hotels, whether they were housekeepers or hotel executives," Alvarez says about the wide range of socio-economic levels accommodated at Paradise. "You had apartments, small midcentury modern homes, and a slew of architects that designed these homes. When they planned this area, they really thought it out well."

Envisioned by local developers Irwin Molasky and Merv Adelson and designed by Los Angeles architects Dan Palmer and William Krisel, Paradise Palms would anchor major developments along Maryland Parkway, including the mall, UNLV (then Nevada Southern University), Sunrise Hospital and the golf course.

"It was moving away from downtown as a way of bringing homes to where the (hospitality industry) workers were along Las Vegas Boulevard," Alvarez notes about the area that became a kind of star in itself when it was featured in Martin Scorsese's "Casino," starring Robert De Niro, Joe Pesci and Sharon Stone.

Surely it earned the cameo, judging by the stars who peopled its streets and are captured in these images.

Caesars Palace developer Jay Sarno (Maricopa Way) with bandleader Xavier Cugat in July 1966. Darin (Cayuga Parkway) at his finger-snappiest performing at a teen dance at the Las Vegas Convention Center in June 1959. Frank Sinatra with Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal (Spender Avenue) on Rosenthal's TV show in August 1977. Outrageously costumed Phyllis Diller (Cayuga Parkway) in midshtick on the Sands stage in May 1965, huge butterflies sewn into her minidress, an odd feathered concoction rising out of her head.

Elsewhere, a celebrity foursome of Joey Heatherton, Nipsey Russell, Ginger Rogers and Foster Brooks (Pueblo Way) dip their fingers into the icing of a birthday cake in July 1976. Rip Taylor (Pawnee Drive) and Debbie Reynolds (Ottawa Drive) hug at the Sands in June 1979. A sweating Greene (Geronimo Way) works his routine onstage at the New Frontier in April 1956. Lucky "Casino De Paris" producer Frederic Apcar (Cayuga Parkway) smiles onstage at the Dunes with a half-dozen showgirls, surrounded by feathers and cleavage in January 1974.

And Carson (Seminole Circle) wears a Sahara Hotel construction hat rakishly tilted on his head in July 1967.

of a March 1968 Review-Journal editorial that calls the mall "the most thoughtfully planned area in Southern Nevada" with "charm and grace."

A Paradise centerpiece, it was celebrated as Nevada's first indoor mall, costing \$40 million-plus, originally featuring a 60,000-square-foot, indoor promenade with trees and shrubs, and anchored by Sears and JCPenney.

"I grew up in this neighborhood when it was in decline, but now there is a movement where people are looking at the old and making it new again," Alvarez says. "Let's bring back these old neighborhoods and make them shine again."

Contact reporter Steve Bornfeld at sbornfeld@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0256.

'First lady of Las Vegas' Helen J. Stewart inspires artist

BY CAROL CLING
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Nov. 27, 2011 | 2:01 a.m.

To Las Vegas history buffs, she's Helen J. Stewart.

But to artist Benjamin Victor, she's just Helen.

He's on a first-name basis with the subject of his latest work: a statue depicting the stalwart Southern Nevada pioneer considered the "first lady of Las Vegas."

The sculpture will be dedicated at noon Saturday near her former home, on the grounds of the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park, near the intersection of Las Vegas Boulevard North and Washington Avenue.

And Helen J. Stewart fans - from former U.S. senator and Nevada governor Richard Bryan to "Peep Show" headliner Holly Madison -- welcome the recognition for Stewart. (In addition to the new statue, there's a documentary film in the works. And the book "Helen J. Stewart: First Lady of Las Vegas" recently was published by Stephens Press, a division of Stephens Media, which owns the Review-Journal.)

Stewart "really deserves" all the attention, Bryan says, calling her "a founding mom" of Las Vegas.

Madison, who became fascinated by Las Vegas' colorful past when she first moved to the city and picked up a book on local history, was "just astounded" by Stewart's story. "Anybody who would read her story would be fascinated," she says. "She was such a strong woman -- and such a good role model."

Stewart first came to Las Vegas in 1880



COURTESY PHOTO

"First lady of Las Vegas" Helen J. Stewart, as captured by artist Benjamin Victor, strides toward the future wearing a decorous dress -- and work boots -- in a sculpture to be unveiled Saturday. ([enlarge to view more photos](#))

when her husband, Archie, 30 years her senior, acquired a 960-acre ranch based at the abandoned Mormon Fort, which had been built 25 years earlier. Four years later, in 1884, Archie Stewart was fatally shot in a gunfight at the equally historic Kiel Ranch (near Carey Avenue and Losee Road in North Las Vegas), leaving Helen widowed with four young children -- and a fifth on the way.

"I couldn't believe what a stressful" future she confronted, Madison says, noting that Helen Stewart "ran the ranch on her own," facing hostile neighbors and legal complications (Archie Stewart left no will) with equal aplomb, despite being in "one of those situations where it seems the world is conspiring against you."

Yet, as Victor's statue depicts, Stewart moved forward, becoming a savvy businesswoman who ultimately acquired more property -- which she sold, in 1902, to the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, setting the stage for the establishment of the city of Las Vegas.

From there, Stewart became a civic fixture in the town she helped found: first postmaster; first woman to serve on a jury; first woman elected to the Clark County School District's board of trustees; founding member of the Mesquite Club and Christ Episcopal Church, both of which continue to serve the community to this day. She also advocated for American Indians, providing land for a Las Vegas Paiute colony.

"It's an incredible history," Victor says. "How could you not be inspired by that?"

Stewart is the second "courageous" Nevada woman with whom the artist has been on a first-name basis; he also sculpted the statue of Sarah Winnemucca displayed in the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C.

Stewart's achievements attest to her "eclectic nature," Victor says, noting that, "if someone asks you, 'Who was Helen J. Stewart,' it's really hard to give a short answer, because she did everything."

When it comes to the qualities Victor finds most inspirational, the artist cites Stewart's fortitude. "To lose your husband and be stuck on a desert landscape is not an easy thing to do."

And being stuck on a desert landscape is something Victor knows - firsthand.

Although he's now based in chilly Aberdeen, S.D., the 32-year-old artist grew up in baked-earth Bakersfield, Calif.

When he was 19, he moved in with his brother Simeon, a Las Vegas electrician the artist credits as a creative inspiration.

"I wouldn't have entered the Sarah Winnemucca competition without him," according to the artist. "Without his help I am sure I wouldn't be doing sculpture today."

During his Las Vegas summer, Victor remembers working construction, tearing out a metal roof at Valley High School in 110-degree heat -- an ordeal that "definitely" helped him get in touch with Stewart's spirit.

"To think of Helen, living out in the middle of the desert, with no air-conditioning ... " he muses.

As Madison notes, Stewart exemplifies "a theme I see in this city's history: People overcoming adversity and doing their own thing."

That theme also fits the quest to build the Stewart statue in the first place, explains Linda Miller, a retired teacher who brings Stewart back to life in costumed performances for civic groups.

History Project a few years ago, she decided to make a Stewart statue "my project" -- inspired, in part, by Victor's Sarah Winnemucca sculpture.

But the 2008 economic crisis brought fundraising efforts to a standstill. That is, until an appeal to the Las Vegas Centennial Commission -- which Miller made, in character as Helen J. Stewart, with Phyllis Weaver as Stewart's best friend Delphine Squires -- led to a \$99,000 grant to finance the project.

Victor began the sculpting process with a sketch, followed by historical research, including a museum visit to "see the actual clothing she wore," he notes. "It was like a step back in time."

The statue is taken from a photograph of Stewart depicting her in "a beautiful dress," but she's lifting her skirts a bit to stride forward into the future -- wearing work boots.

After all, "she built Las Vegas with her own hands," Miller notes.

"She was tough," Victor agrees.

And because the statue is "slightly above ground level," the artist adds, "you can look right into her eyes."

Contact reporter Carol Cling at ccling@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0272.

Spring Valley street has roots in North Las Vegas



SPECIAL TO VIEW

Florence (aka Colanthe) Murphy helped get the North Las Vegas Airport off the ground. Colanthe Avenue in the Spring Valley area is named for her.

BY MAGGIE LILLIS
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Dec. 6, 2011 | 12:17 a.m.
Updated: Dec. 6, 2011 | 12:35 a.m.

When developer Lawrence McNeil was laying out the streets of a new subdivision, he wanted to pay homage to friend, longtime associate and fellow Bonanza Airlines board member Florence Murphy.

The businesswoman and aviation pioneer wanted nothing of it, said Mark Hall-Patton, administrator for the Clark County Museum system.

"He thought highly of her, and she said she didn't want it," Hall-Patton said of the namesake.

But Florence met McNeil with compromise. She would allow her birth name, Colanthe, be assigned to a roadway, if McNeil dedicated a road to his little-known middle name, Gilmary. Thus, Colanthe Avenue in the Spring Valley area was born.

"The idea would be nobody would know who these streets were named for," Hall-Patton said.

inspired him to pen "Asphalt Memories," a compilation of street names' origins.

Hall-Patton considered Murphy a friend until her death in 2006 at age 94. He interviewed and visited with her several times and said she routinely played down her mark on local and national history.

Murphy was the first Nevada woman to receive a commercial pilot's license and the first woman in the United States to serve as a vice president of a regularly scheduled airline. She helped get the now-North Las Vegas Airport off the ground and rounded out her career in real estate.



Florence Murphy

"She broke a lot of these barriers for women but never really thought of it," Hall-Patton said. "I asked her one time about breaking these barriers, and she said 'I didn't really think of it as that.' She was just doing her job."

Her successes and superlatives were a far cry from her humble upbringing in Northern Nevada. Born Colanthe Jones in 1912 in Fernley, Murphy was a tomboy among a brood of brothers, according to the Nevada State Museum.

Around age 5, Murphy decided to ditch her disliked first name and go by Florence, the name of a favorite aunt.

Murphy held a position at University of Nevada, where she met her future husband, John "Red" Murphy. He was a division engineer for the State Highway Division, and his job moved them to Southern Nevada around 1936. She would later go into the airport business with her husband and a business partner.

But when the couple rolled into town, Murphy had little to no experience with aviation, Hall-Patton said.

"She was a housewife," he said. "She came to town, and all of a sudden, she was part of society here. She got invited to parties. She had one dress. She came from a part of the state where they were snowed in six months of the year. Dresses weren't something she thought about."

Soon after moving south, Murphy had her first brush with flight.

In 1936, a small plane circled Las Vegas Boulevard, and its pilot offered short rides to the people gathered. Red and Florence Murphy were part of the crowd.

Murphy took a ride in the two-person aircraft and jumped on the pilot's offer for her to fly for a short period.

"I was up there about a half-hour, and I just loved it," Murphy said, according to Nevada State Museum records.

Two years later, the couple had their private pilot's licenses.

The only airfield in town at the time is now the site of Nellis Air Force Base. The couple, and partner Bud Barrett, purchased a lot off Tonopah Highway, Nevada State Museum records state, with intentions to host a charter service and flight school.

The day Sky Haven Airfield was introduced to Las Vegas was historic on two levels. The day was Dec. 7, 1941, and the Murphys

"There couldn't have been more than 7,000 people in town at the time, maybe a little more," Murphy said in an interview with Hall-Patton. "But we had most of them out there at the air show. And planes came in from all over -- from Los Angeles, from Salt Lake City. Anytime you had an air show, if it were at all possible for you to make it, you went."

Little did the crowd or event organizers know it, but all planes had been grounded because of the bombing at Pearl Harbor hours before.

A military airman stopped the Sky Haven Airfield show soon enough.

Murphy built the airport when Red Murphy and Barrett were away. She got her instructor's license and commercial pilot's license -- the first female in Nevada to do so -- and helped launch Bonanza Airlines, the first Las Vegas airline.

She worked exclusively for the airline after selling the airport. She kept company with Southern Nevada aviation bigwigs such as Howard Hughes and Pat McCarren. She was also a company executive, mother and politically active Republican.

A dispute led her away from aviation in the late 1970s, so Murphy moved her success into the real estate arena, Hall-Patton said.

Contact Centennial and North Las Vegas View reporter Maggie Lillis at mlillis@viewnews.com or 477-3839.

Helen Stewart Statue Dedicated at Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic park

On December 3, 2011 on a cold blustery day, over 300 government officials, civic leaders, friends, and descendants gathered to honor, Helen J. Stewart, often called, "The First Lady of Las Vegas." The statue was dedicated to her near her former home, now the grounds of the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park at the southeast corner of Washington and Las Vegas Boulevard.

Dr. Linda Miller, Helen Stewart interpreter, coordinated the speakers. Speakers were selected who reflected the various organizations Helen Stewart represented. Friends of the Fort President Don Hotchkiss and Nevada State Parks Administrator David Morrow lead the list of speakers. Helen J. Stewart was a civic leader who had governors, state legislators and U.S. Congressmen in her home. Representative Shelley Berkley discussed Helen's closeness with government officials and her contributions to the community. Senator Harry Reid had her accomplishments put into the Congressional Record and this was presented by his aide Melissa Varelis. Senator Heller also sent a proclamation which was presented by his aide Britt Chapman. Former Governor and U.S. Senator Richard Bryan spoke on her closeness with the first families of Nevada. Mayor Carolyn Goodman was thanked by Dr. Miller for the funding from the Las Vegas Centennial Commission which provided the funding for the statue. State Senator Ruben Kuehen, who now represents the district where her home was stood, spoke about her influence on legislation to get the state to pay for her enormous (600) Paiutes basket collection to be displayed at the State Museum. Unfortunately, negotiations broke down before her death in 1926 and all her baskets but one were sold by the family. Her closeness to the Paiutes was reflected by the musical prelude conducted by Kenny Anderson of the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe. Robert Segmiller, vice chair of the tribe explained how well they were treated by Helen Stewart. Charlene Eswonia, the great grand-daughter of Daisy Ben Smith, a Paiute who worked for Helen Stewart, showed a picture of Daisy taken by Helen.

Dr. Linda Young, a Clark County School Board trustee, explained Helen's love for education and her election as the first woman to serve on the school board in 1916. County Commissioner Mary Beth Scow read a quote from one of Helen's letters describing her excitement for her son William being elected to the county commission as it would "show his metal". Bishop Dan Edwards representing the Episcopal Church of Nevada, described Helen's deep faith and her involvement in the founding and naming of Christ Episcopal Church.

Roy York of Rotary International presented a proclamation describing the humanitarian work that Helen had done. She was preparing to be at the 1926 Rotary International Convention with her basket collection when she died in March 1926. The Rotarians sent Helen flowers every week during her illness.

Craig Colton, Postmaster of Las Vegas, honored Helen Stewart who was the first postmaster of Las Vegas beginning in 1893. He said that her picture is the first one to hang on the wall of postmasters in the Sunset post office headquarters.

Immediate past president of the Mesquite Club Joan Powell ,talked about Helen's accomplishments as a charter member of the Mesquite Club and responsible for suggesting the name of the club. Helen was also the fifth president of the club. Ruth Baty, Nevada President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs also reflected on Helen's contributions to the club.

Shelia McKay, honored Helen as a business woman and presented a proclamation honoring her business accomplishments. She also honored Dr. Miller with a pin.

A musical interlude was provided by 15 year old opera singer Ellie Smith. Helen Stewart while president of the Mesquite Club was responsible for bringing opera to Las Vegas. Ellie sang, "Think of Me" from Phantom of the Opera which was a fitting selection for the event as all were thinking about the accomplishments of Helen Stewart.

Descendants of Helen J. Stewart expressed their appreciation. There were about fifteen family members coming from several states. They gathered for a family reunion afterwards.

Benjamin Victor, sculptor, unveiled the statue of Helen J. Stewart. Gwendolyn Clancy discussed the documentary chronicling her life. Participants were then invited to view the video in the Fort's theater while enjoying refreshments.

Helen Jane Wiser Stewart (1854-1926) moved to Las Vegas with her husband in 1882. Two years later her husband Archibald Stewart was killed at the Kiel ranch, and Helen took over running the "Los Vegas Ranch". In later years, Helen and her father Hiram Wiser began buying land in response to rumors of the railroad going through the Las Vegas Valley. In 1902 Helen sold over 1800 acres to Senator Clark of Montana, who had ties to the railroad. In May, 1905, a land sale occurred, and the City of Las Vegas developed.

This work is a culmination of events that began in September 2008 when various community groups such as the Southern Nevada Women's History Project, League of Women Voters, Daughters of the American Revolution, Nevada Council for History Education, Mesquite Club and Christ Church Episcopal Ladies Guild members joined with the Friends of the Fort to kick off fund raising for the statue at the Old Fort. Unfortunately, the down turn in the economy stalled fund raising efforts.

The Friends of the Fort, a non-profit organization that works with the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park, applied for and was awarded \$99,000 by the Las Vegas Centennial Commission on July 26, 2010, to fund the statue of Helen Stewart. Dr. Linda Miller as Helen J. Stewart and Phyllis Weaver as Delphine Squires, made the presentation. Sculptor Benjamin Victor was chosen to design and create the statue. He also sculpted the Sarah Winnemucca statue in Statuary Hall in the US Capitol.

For more information contact the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park at 486-3511 or Dr. Linda Miller at 492-7742

Progress on Neon Museum moving forward



JESSICA EBELHAR/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Mayor Carolyn Goodman laughs while talking to media Monday after an event marking the beginning of construction of the Neon Museum's visitors center in downtown Las Vegas. » [Buy this photo](#)

BY BENJAMIN SPILLMAN
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Dec. 19, 2011 | 12:26 p.m.

A little piece of historic Las Vegas will flicker back to life this summer, if progress on the Neon Museum continues apace.

On Monday, officials at the downtown museum said they expect to complete construction on a new visitors center in six months and open it to the public 30 days later.

The museum, located at 770 Las Vegas Blvd. North, is an upgrade of the site of the Neon Boneyard, a resting place for defunct neon signs mostly salvaged from old casinos.

The preservation organization, founded in 1996, cares for the site, which is a popular place for tours and photo and film shoots.

With the opening of the museum, the centerpiece of which is the remodeled shell of the La Concha motel recycled into a visitors center, downtown boosters hope to broaden interest in the signs beyond filmmakers and photographers.

Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman said

visitors to downtown Las Vegas, where construction of a symphony hall, Mob Museum and new city hall is also under way.

"When they hear about the Boneyard and the Neon Museum, it is going to be a real draw," Goodman said. "New Orleans has Bourbon Street and their jazz, and Las Vegas has the neon."

Goodman also sounded hopeful that raising the profile of the museum would result in more people seeking to film there. As Goodman has stated, one of her goals is to attract more film projects to Las Vegas, but so far she hasn't announced any.

Neon Museum board Chairman Bill Marion said the entire museum project, including a small city park adjacent to the visitors center site, cost about \$6 million and was paid for with public and private sources.

The sources include the Las Vegas Centennial Commission, which gets money from sales of specialized license plates; the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act, which raises funds through Bureau of Land Management sales of public land; the National Scenic Byways Program; the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, which gets money through hotel room taxes; the State Office of Historic Preservation and private donations.

Contact reporter Benjamin Spillman at bspillman@reviewjournal.com or 702-229-6435.

Neon Museum visitors center to be finished in May



NEON MUSEUM/WESTAR ARCHITECTS

An artist's rendering of the old La Concha Motel converted into the visitors center at the Neon Museum.

By **Conor Shine (contact)**

Monday, Dec. 19, 2011 | 1:33 p.m.

Amid a sea of neon signs recalling Las Vegas' heritage, officials from the city and the Neon Museum talked about construction of a visitors center they hope will help the site grow into a key piece of downtown's revitalization.

The \$1.5 million project will see the historic La Concha motel lobby reimaged as a welcoming space to the Neon Boneyard. The project will also include building space for offices, events and educational programming.-

Scheduled for completion in May, the center will allow the museum to increase the number of tours it offers, Executive Director Danielle Kelly said.

The museum is only able to offer two in-depth tours a day because of staff constraints but is expecting to add more staff with the completion of the center, she said. Kelly said she hopes the museum can become a meeting place for the community.

"Preservation is a unique challenge in Las Vegas. But it's something we've found that tourists are very attracted to, and slowly locals are actually becoming very excited about it," she said. "We're just excited to

Neon Museum Boneyard Park



offer...locals another example of something to be proud of.”

Along with the openings of the Smith Center for the Performing Arts and the Mob Museum and a new location for the Lied Discovery Children’s Museum, the Neon Museum’s growth will contribute to a renaissance in downtown, said Bill Marion, the chair of the museum’s board of trustees.

“All of these things will come together to create a real cultural wonderland for the city of Las Vegas,” Marion said. “We’ve worked very hard to turn this dream into a reality.”

Mayor Carolyn Goodman predicted the museum will become another “iconic stopping spot” for tourists.

“All of these different neon signs have created their own art form,” she said. “When (visitors) hear about the Boneyard and the Neon Museum as a place to visit to see the historical value of where these signs have been in the growth of Las Vegas...it’s going to be a real draw.”

Former Mayor Oscar Goodman, speaking at the event on behalf of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, called the Neon Museum another welcome addition to downtown and said the site is already drawing interest from Hollywood executives who want to use the neon signs as a backdrop for films and television shows.

“A great effort is being made to bring those industries into our community,” he said. “This is just part of the support and backup that will attract folks from Hollywood and elsewhere to participate in that kind of development in our city.”

Construction on the project is being done by local minority-owned company SAVI construction and is expected to create about 27 jobs for construction workers and contractors, officials said.

The site is located at 770 N. Las Vegas Boulevard and is leased by the city to the nonprofit that oversees the museum. The nonprofit has raised the funds for construction and received a \$300,000 grant from the LVCVA to help move the La Concha lobby from the Strip, near the Riviera, to the Neon Boneyard.

Ward 1 booster group to promote area



LISA CARTER/VIEW

Las Vegas Historic District president Yiorgo Aretos, second from left, speaks during a Dec. 13 meeting at Sonio's Cafe & Rotisserie, 3900 W. Charleston Blvd. Group members and Ward 1 residents and business owners addressed promoting the ward's history and culture.

BY LISA CARTER
VIEW STAFF WRITER

Posted: Dec. 27, 2011 | 12:20 a.m.

Attempting to bring together residents, citizens, small-business owners and tourists can be a challenge in an economic recession. But members of the newly formed Las Vegas Historic District plan to tackle this challenge and unite those who work, reside and visit some of the city's oldest neighborhoods in Ward 1.

Las Vegas City Councilwoman Lois Tarkanian said that similar to how neighborhood associations make residents aware of available resources in their community, she suggested that the formation of a business organization serving a similar purpose would benefit Ward 1.

"It's all about jobs now, and it's all about keeping businesses going," Tarkanian said. "We had a lot of businesses and

restaurants shut down in this area, and if we work with smaller groups that have separate identities, we can address (similar) concerns with a very focused mind."

Yiorgo Aretos, district president and owner of Sonio's Cafe & Rotisserie, 3900 W. Charleston Blvd., began spearheading the association's formation in October. Aretos knew a business association was necessary based on the ward's characteristics and feedback from Sonio's customers.

"I see so many people on a daily basis, and I kept hearing this consistency with people's complaints and concerns," Aretos said. "I mentioned it to the City Council, and they confirmed there was a need."

The district plans its meetings at 5:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month in Sonio's Cafe & Rotisserie. Its next meeting is set for Jan. 17, and Aretos hopes for a turnout similar to the November gathering, in which more than 40 people attended.

The association has started making an impact in its early stages, hosting a blanket drive for senior citizens and animal shelters at BOHO Furniture Gallery, 4221 W. Charleston Blvd., through Jan. 14, forming an executive board and bringing in specialists to help the group gain nonprofit status. Julie Abarzua, owner of Abarzua Insurance, was brought in to help facilitate the Las Vegas Historic District's leap into the nonprofit world and said she is glad to be part of the association's inception.

"It's really awesome to be part of something at the beginning," Abarzua said. "It's great to see a coalition of business owners gathering to bring business back into the community and promote history and preservation in the area."

Tarkanian said that in order to create a strong business union, working with the ward's oldest businesses first is key.

"We're not trying to take this from the top, but we're also not trying to eliminate new businesses coming in," Tarkanian said. "We need a strong focus of working from the bottom up, and eventually (district members) will have the strength to carry on themselves."

With many of Las Vegas' oldest neighborhoods located in Ward 1, Crystal Solis, district secretary, said bringing to light the culture and history of the area is among the association's top priorities.

"We really want to educate the community by showing that people are still here," Solis said. "We want to bring cultural events here and enhance community in the valley."

In addition to working on becoming a nonprofit, district members are establishing a logo and discussing future cultural events and fundraisers. Aretos said these projects fall in line with the association's mission, which includes promoting economic redevelopment.

"We have a great area here (in Ward 1), and we want to increase commerce here," Aretos said. "What I believe is the core of any economy is small business. It's necessary, and I think people forget that's what runs an economy."

For more information, call 575-0733 or visit facebook.com/lasvegashistoricaldistrict.

Contact Paradise/Downtown View reporter Lisa Carter at lcarter@viewnews.com or 383-0492.

Margo Bartlett Pesek | TRIP OF THE WEEK



Visit Old Mormon Fort to learn Las Vegas history



MIKE MILLER/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

A newly dedicated statue of Helen J. Stewart greets visitors at the Old Mormon Fort.
» [Buy this photo](#)

Posted: Jan. 1, 2012 | 2:04 a.m.

A handsome life-sized bronze statue of pioneer Las Vegas rancher Helen J. Stewart welcomes visitors to the Old Mormon Fort State Historical Park, where she ranched and raised her family in the late 1800s. The statue stands in the courtyard of the park's visitor center along the pathway into the restored fort at the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Washington Avenue.

Unveiled during dedication ceremonies last month, the sculpture by Benjamin Victor portrays Las Vegas' "First Lady" as a petite, attractive figure dressed nicely as befitted her position as a community leader but stepping toward the realities of frontier life wearing sturdy work boots. The artist selected for this bronze was well-known for his creation of another stalwart Nevada woman, Sarah Winnemucca. As a young artist, Victor won a contest to sculpt the Nevada Native American, an advocate for her people. The statue of Sarah Winnemucca in native costume stands in the U.S. Capitol Building's Statuary Hall.

Stop by the Old Mormon Fort for an introduction to Las Vegas history. It's open all year from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays. The park's entry is about half a block east of Las

Park entrance costs just \$1 for visitors older than 12.

Desert landscaping accents the walkway from the parking area to the visitor center, a striking structure designed to capture natural light. Inside, exhibits and historical artifacts explain the significance of the site. Located along a creek with abundant water in the arid desert, the site drew early cultures, explorers, rustlers, travelers, Mormon colonists, miners, ranchers and railroads.

Beyond the new statue in the courtyard, paths invite visitors to explore. Follow one path past the re-creation of Las Vegas Creek, complete with native vegetation and footbridge. Another path leads to the area set aside for a pioneer garden that produces flowers and edibles in season. Walk through a large entrance into the fort's interior, a quadrangle surrounded by reconstructed walls and bastions at two opposing corners.

A group of 30 Mormon missionaries built the fort in 1855 as part of the first permanent non-native settlement. The colony's purpose was to create a wayside for overland travelers on the Mormon Road connecting Utah and California colonies, as well as to contact area Paiutes. A remnant of the wall is thought to be the oldest pioneer structure in Nevada.

The Mormon settlement lasted two years, during which time the pioneers built the fort, set up a school, planted orchards, irrigated garden plots and mined for lead at Mount Potosi. After the colony disbanded in 1857, the site lay abandoned for several years, until 1865 when El Dorado Canyon miner Octavius Gass partnered with a relative of one of the missionaries to operate a store and blacksmith shop to serve overland travelers and to raise livestock on the ranch.

Gass took out a loan with Pioche freight company owner Archibald Stewart. When he defaulted on the loan, Stewart acquired the property. He brought his young wife and children to the remote ranch in 1882, promising it would be for just a couple of years. Unfortunately, Stewart's promise was kept when he was killed two years later by a neighbor in a gunfight at the Kiel Ranch. For lack of available milled lumber in an area so far from civilization, Helen had to use the doors of her house to build a coffin to bury her husband.

Just 30 years old with four young children and another on the way, she proved tough and plucky but always a lady. With her father's help, she continued to run the ranch. The pair bought up more property when rumors of a coming railroad began to circulate. She eventually bought out her father's share.

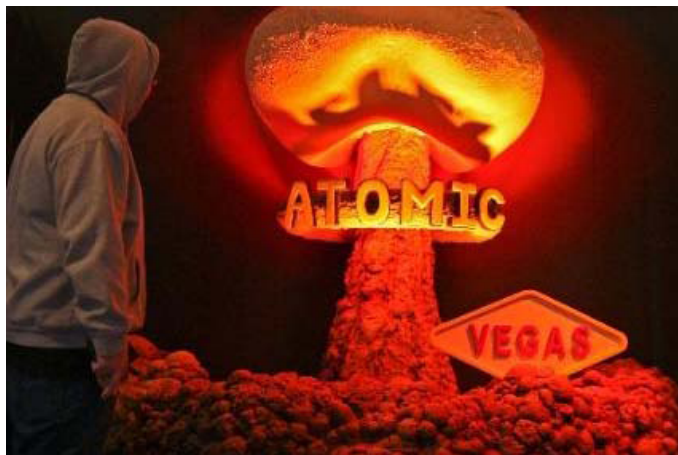
In 1903, she married another man named Stewart (no relation to the first) and sold her ranch to Montana Senator William A. Clark, whose railroad arrived in 1905. Not forgetting her early friends, Stewart provided acreage for the Las Vegas Paiute colony.

As Las Vegas grew following a 1905 land auction, Stewart contributed significantly to the young town. A founder of the first Episcopal church and the Mesquite Club, she served as the first postmistress, first woman juror and first female school board member.

Stewart died in 1926 at age 72.

Margo Bartlett Pesek's column appears Sundays.

Atomic Testing Museum gets new name, designation



REVIEW-JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

With a new designation as one of 36 national museums, the National Atomic Testing Museum in Las Vegas recognizes the Nevada Test Site's role in the Cold War. The Building Atomic Vegas exhibit, which closes this week, commemorates the 60th anniversary of the site. » [Buy this photo](#)

BY KEITH ROGERS
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Jan. 3, 2012 | 1:49 p.m.

With the new year came a new name for the Atomic Testing Museum.

It's now the National Atomic Testing Museum thanks to a provision in this year's Defense Authorization Act signed by President Barack Obama.

In a statement Tuesday, museum and Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation Chairman Troy Wade lauded the efforts of Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Rep. Joe Heck, R-Nev., for including language in the bill that gave Nevada its only "national" museum designation.

Wade thanked Reid "for taking the lead in obtaining this unique designation for our museum."

He credited Heck "for assuring that the language passed the conference review" in the House.

The museum, at 755 E. Flamingo Road, is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. It opened in 2005 to recognize the unique

Nevada National Security Site, played in defending the United States during the Cold War.

"Designation as a national museum is a significant step forward for this unique museum," said Allan Palmer, the museum's executive director and CEO.

"Joining a distinguished family of just 36 museums to have been designated as national museums of the United States, the newly minted National Atomic Testing Museum adds a luster to the already glittering city of Las Vegas," he said.

Palmer added that the new designation will foster growth of the museum as a storehouse for America's nuclear testing artifacts.

During the three-day New Year weekend, more than 400 people per day visited the museum.

Of the 36 national museums, only two are nuclear museums. The other one is in Albuquerque, N.M.

Contact reporter Keith Rogers at krogers@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0308.

Margo Bartlett Pesek | TRIP OF THE WEEK



Nevada State Museum enhances Springs Preserve



MIKE MILLER/FOR THE LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

The Nevada State Museum relocated to the Springs Preserve complex in October after long ago outgrowing its building at Lorenzi Park. » [Buy this photo](#)

Posted: Jan. 8, 2012 | 2:13 a.m.

The Springs Preserve continues to grow as a center for appealing indoor and outdoor activities with the recent opening of the Nevada State Museum. The long-awaited addition of the state museum to the complex of cultural attractions adds dimension to the Springs Preserve's interpretations of Las Vegas Valley history.

Just south of U.S. Highway 95 at 333 S. Valley View Blvd., the Springs Preserve includes 180 acres on the site of the historic springs that created a lush oasis in the Mojave Desert. Early Spanish explorers named the area of springs, creeks and wetlands Las Vegas, or "the meadows" in Spanish. The abundant artesian water that created the oasis was depleted as Las Vegas grew, but the Springs Preserve creates a cultural oasis.

As property long fenced off by the Las Vegas Valley Water District, the site escaped the urban development that now surrounds it. The acreage provided space for a unique kind of park.

The Springs Preserve demonstrates principles of sustainable living in harmony with our environment. Buildings meet "green" construction standards.

The philosophy of wise use of limited

facilities, programs and activities in the complex. Water use is apparent, but none is wasted as its continual reuse is built into systems.

Passive solar use principles apply in the way buildings and activity areas are oriented. Solar power is generated on-site inconspicuously, such as the solar panels installed atop structures shading the main parking area.

Landscaping throughout the preserve demonstrates diverse and even lush effects possible with the use of native plants, drought-tolerant species and specific flowers, fruits and vegetables that can adapt to the desert.

The Nevada State Museum building blends seamlessly into the handsome complex of existing buildings at the Springs Preserve. The museum long ago outgrew its building in Lorenzi Park. After an extended construction period, the museum finally relocated to the Springs Preserve in October. The 70,000-square-foot structure includes a generous 13,000 square feet of exhibit space. The museum's exhibits enhance the Southern Nevada emphasis of other museums in the complex and expand the research to include the rest of Nevada.

Unfortunately, the new Nevada State Museum reflects the realities of the state's current depressed economy. Because of cutbacks, the museum is open just four days a week, Friday through Monday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Springs Preserve remains open every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. but sees more visitors on weekends. Its gardens and trails open to members at 8 a.m., and its trails remain open until 6 p.m. or dusk, whichever comes first. Its cafe and gift shop are accessible without paying admission.

Visitors cannot go to the preserve just to see the Nevada State Museum. It does not have a separate ticket but is included in general admission ticketing or as a perk of membership in the Springs Preserve support association.

Nevada residents pay about half as much for admission as nonresidents. For residents, general admission is \$9.95, \$8.95 for seniors and students and \$4.95 for youngsters ages 5 to 17. Children under 5 are admitted free. The admission fee gives access to all areas of the park, entrance to many regular programs and reductions in tickets for most special events or fees for classes.

Those who frequently visit the Springs Preserve save money by becoming preserve members. Individual annual memberships cost \$25, paid for in a little more than two visits for an adult. The family annual membership fee of \$60 covers entrance fees for two adults and two children. There are also annual single companion fees of \$20.

Information about tickets and upcoming programs is available at springspreserve.org. Learn about upcoming activities that might interest you, such as bike rentals for exploring trails, weekly farmers markets, a traveling NASA space exhibit and gardening skills demonstrations.

Margo Bartlett Pesek's column appears Sundays.

North Las Vegas plan to restore Kiel Ranch fails to silence critics



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOE THOMSON

This adobe building at Kiel Ranch is believed to be among the state's oldest

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BY LYNNETTE CURTIS
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Jan. 9, 2012 | 1:59 a.m.

North Las Vegas finally is making progress toward restoration of the historic Kiel Ranch, the long-neglected home of one of Nevada's oldest buildings and site of three infamous local slayings.

But preservationists who for decades watched the site deteriorate say the city's efforts are too little too late.

"They definitely haven't done enough, and nowhere near what they could have done," said Joe Thomson, president of the Preservation Association of Clark County. "It's just an incredible shame to devastate this site the way they have over time."

The City Council on Wednesday unanimously approved spending \$381,200, mostly in Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act funds, for design services and construction management support in connection with eventually turning the 7-acre ranch into a park and scenic overlook.



A wooden canopy once covered an adobe building on the Kiel Ranch site in North Las Vegas. The building is believed to be one of Nevada's oldest buildings. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is home to natural wetlands. LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL FILE PHOTO
» [Buy this photo](#)

The cash-strapped city is doing all it can to restore the ranch "as funding comes available," Mayor Shari Buck said.

The city renewed efforts to clean up and develop the ranch on Carey Avenue near Commerce Street nearly six years ago after community members expressed outrage that Kiel had been allowed to deteriorate.

The site, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and home to natural wetlands, had become weed-choked and was sometimes used by homeless people as an encampment.

The city soon began cleanup and clearing non-native vegetation. The council in 2009 approved a \$5.4 million long-term plan for the ranch, but funding for much of it remains uncertain.

Historians believe Kiel was settled in either 1855 or in the 1870s by American Indians with help from a group of Mormons.

The ranch was the site of the 1884 shooting death of neighboring landowner Archibald Stewart, husband of Nevada matriarch Helen Stewart. No one was ever prosecuted in the case.

The 1900 shooting deaths of ranch owners and brothers Edwin and William Kiel also occurred there. The deaths were ruled a murder-suicide at the time. But anthropologists later determined someone else had killed the brothers.

The bodies of several Kiel family members, including the brothers, were exhumed from the ranch in 1975 and stored at the Department of Anthropology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

City officials requested the removal, according to a retired UNLV anthropology professor, because of concern the bodies might be damaged during restoration work.

But Thomson believes the bodies should have been returned long ago.

"It is reprehensible to see the remains removed and never replaced," he said.

The city sold off much of the ranch's original 27 acres, now covered by industrial development.

Buck said the city had "grand plans" for the site as early as the 1970s but "most of the land was sold off."

"I think we're doing the best we can with what was left to work with," she said. "But there's not a whole lot left."

Stabilization and restoration of a crumbling adobe building at the ranch was completed last year using grant funds and some of the roughly \$450,000 the city earmarked long ago toward preserving the ranch. About \$300,000 remains in that preservation fund.

Local historian Michael Green said work on the building was an important first step. But, he said, "I wish they had gotten to it a long time ago."

The city has neglected the site so long "when you see a sign of action, it's hard to get excited anymore," Green said.

Officials recently learned the city will receive nearly \$350,000 in grant funds from the Bureau of Land Management to restore the

From the city's standpoint, the ranch's restoration "is moving at a fairly good pace," he said. "The challenge is for us to find grants, apply for grants, wait for the grant cycle and marry up all the timing."

The city, which has undergone several rounds of budget cuts and layoffs in recent years, can't afford to foot the bill itself, Buck said.

City officials didn't devote funds to the ranch in better times because of competing priorities, she said.

"Wants and needs are two different things. I have to balance those."

Still, the city remains committed to the site's eventual restoration, she said.

Another challenge will be maintaining the site with fewer staffers. The number of park maintenance workers in the city has shrunk from 41 to 12, Henley said.

"It's definitely going to be a challenge taking care of existing parks as well as adding new ones," he said.

Once the ranch's restoration is complete, it will operate like a public park. For now the site is closed to the public.

The city has intermittently focused on restoring Kiel for decades. A restoration planned for the 1990s was thwarted by a fire that destroyed the ranch's main building, the White House, in 1992.

Contact reporter Lynnette Curtis at lcurtis@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0285.