

# Exhibit articles arrive for revamped museum

By ALLEN SEIFERT  
News-Press Staff Writer

3-23-93  
For a few hours, there was a race, like a Pony Express rider galloping against time to carry the mail to Sacramento, Calif.

On Monday, members of the staff of the Pony Express National Memorial, aided by personnel from the St. Joseph Museum, hurried to stay ahead of the movers.

The vans were bringing exhibit articles from Minnesota to revamp the Pony Express Museum.

Work began on the project in December and isn't finished. The muddy, wet spring hasn't made the task any easier.

"We weren't sure we'd get all of the mud cleared away in time," said Sandy Taylor, the museum's curator of special projects. "But we were able to get the inside swept up."

The arrival of exhibit articles brought out museum board president Richard DeShon, board mem-

ber William Carpenter, and a covey of curious onlookers eager to get a first look at museum fixtures.

With St. Joseph Museum Curator Rich Nolf and Neal Deaton of Deaton Museum Services doing the directing, two moving vans were unloaded in light rain, a biting wind and temperatures in the low 30s.

Deaton, from Minneapolis, came with the diorama he designed to make sure it fit.

The diorama is an artist's conception of the Pony Express Trail — adjusted throughout its length for geographical nuances — from the sunny blue skies and trees of the Midwest to the desert and mountains of the West.

Deaton is a national authority on historical art. His recreations of wildlife and nature through painting, sculpture and model-making have gained national recognition.

The 70-foot diorama will encircle one area of the museum. Special



Staff photo by TIMOTHY J. JONES

Please see **Museum/Page 3A** **David Mead carried** in part of a Pony Express exhibit that arrived Monday.

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## Museum board buys building at Ninth-Penn

N.P. 4-8-89  
By ANDREW GOTLIEB  
News-Press/Gazette Staff Writer

The St. Joseph Museum Board announced Friday that it has purchased a vacant bowling alley next to the Pony Express Museum and also plans to double that museum's size.

Dick DeShon, exploratory expansion committee chairman, said that the board purchased Wednesday the old Pony Express Lanes, Ninth and Penn streets, for \$129,000 from an out-of-state owner. Included with the 17,000 square-foot building are parking lots on the southwest and northwest corners of Ninth and Penn.

DeShon said the board — which oversees both the St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express Museum — is developing a plan for a fund drive to pay for that purchase and further improvements.

"The museum doesn't have that money," he said.

The fund drive will be designed not only to cover the building's acquisition costs, but to expand the present Pony Express Museum and pay additional operating expenses. The board hopes to attract corporate sponsorship in addition to seeking individual donations.

DeShon said a goal for the fund drive project had not been estimated nor was it known how much the overall project might cost.

The board is borrowing money from United Missouri Bank to pay for the purchase.

DeShon noted that the present museum building at 914 Penn St. is only about half of its original size. Part of the structure collapsed in 1946 and was replaced with a temporary wall. That wall still remains, but will be removed so the museum can expand. It will be built on land the board owned prior to the purchase.

The committee chairman listed several possible uses for the old bowling alley, including partial demolition to increase the amount of "green space" that will be lost by the southward expansion of the present museum.

Another possibility is to use the building for storage. DeShon estimated that only 10 to 15 percent of the board's collection can be displayed at once and that extra material takes up valuable display space.

Living exhibits, such as leather working, a blacksmithing exhibit or live animals may be considered as well. DeShon said the board will work in cooperation with the city and the parks department.

"(But) we'll be exploring all alternatives," he said, indicating that more definite plans will be announced in the coming months.

DeShon said the museum board will also continue to examine the feasibility of expanding the St. Joseph Museum at 11th and Charles streets.

## Museum

Continued from page 1A

effects will add to the reality of mountain cold and desert heat.

"We believe this is just the beginning of the beginning for St. Joseph," DeShon said. "We're expecting our tourism to double after this museum opens in April."

It will be one of the newest and best and most realistic museums in the nation, blending sights and senses to make a trip down the pony trail a genuine experience, Nolf said.

The first exhibit seen upon entering the museum will be a life-sized sculpture of Johnny Fry mounted on his horse, Sylph. They were the first to leave the Pony Express stables April 3, 1860 on that historic ride.



## ■ COLUMN 1

### Pony Express stables to close

Sunday is the last day you can fix the image of the old Pony Express Museum in your mind, because Monday, the stables will be shut down for three months and will be totally revamped in a \$1.7 million expansion.

Originally, operators had hoped to leave the museum open during the work that will more than double the museum's size, but spokeswoman Kathy Reno said those plans had to be changed.

"We had a reality injection," she said. "Our construction people said we can't construct anything with people in the building, unless we put hard hats on the tourists."

The expanded museum will reopen on April 3, 1993, the 103rd anniversary of the first pony run.

# Kemper advances memorial

Thanks to a generous gift from the Commerce Bank of St. Joseph and the William T. Kemper Foundation, the drive to raise \$1.7 million for the Pony Express Station and Museum is off to a galloping start. The \$100,000 contribution boosts the total received thus far to \$275,000.

Funds raised will be used by the non-profit Pony Express Inc. — A National Memorial group to help pay for restoration of the Pony Express Stables, Ninth and Penn Streets, and expansion and improvements at the museum complex. The Kemper gift was the first major gift received in the fund drive.

In discussing the gift, James M. Kem-

per Jr., a director of the bank, noted that the Pony Express is among the top 10 things remembered about the American West. Kemper said marketing studies suggest that after the first phase, slated to open to the public on April 3, 1993, the Pony Express National Memorial will attract more than 100,000 visitors, generating annual expenditures of \$3 million and creating 70 new jobs.

St. Joseph residents deeply appreciate the gift from the Kemper interests — the family has St. Joseph ties — and hope the generosity will spur additional contributions toward restoring the stables to their original size as well as finance 21 state-of-the-art exhibits.

### Pony Express project requests state aid

Promoters of the Pony Express National Monument project have been invited to make their appeal to the state government.

Sandy Taylor, campaign coordinator, said Thursday that representatives from the group will make their case for state assistance during the annual Governor's Conference in the Ozarks on Nov. 17. They were invited to participate in the conference by the Department of Tourism, Taylor said.

Last week, Dick DeShon and other representatives of the campaign visited state offices in Jefferson City. They were looking not only for state funds, but for assistance in publicizing the museum and the plans to double its size.

"I think the support from the state is going to be wonderful," Taylor said.

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## Museum ground broken

### Pony Express addition begins

By **HOLLY NEUMAN**  
News-Press Staff Writer

9-30-92

During its brief 18-month gallop, the Pony Express served as a link to the isolated state of California. Now, the Pony Express Museum serves as a link to the past.

Those were the sentiments echoed by many at the groundbreaking Tuesday evening for a new addition to the current museum at 914 Penn St. The first phase of the addition will restore the historic stables to their original size, while the second phase will include a new wing for exhibits and collections, a research center and a restaurant.

At the groundbreaking, Mayor Glenda Kelly said that 132 years ago, a group of business and community leaders and citizens opened a gateway to the rest of the country.

"They left bold and indelible footsteps," Kelly said of the Pony Express pioneers. "We're stepping into those same footsteps today."

Dick DeShon, president of Pony Express, Inc., said that the groundbreaking and the addition would restore a lost portion of history to St. Joseph.

"Few events in St. Joseph in recent years have excited the community like this," DeShon told

Please see **Museum/Page 6B**



Staff photo by ERIC KEITH

**After the groundbreaking** ceremony for the Pony Express Museum, director Rich Nolf patches the holes dug by dignitaries.

## Museum

Continued from page 1B

the crowd a few minutes before the shovels decorated with red bandanas broke the earth. "We hope this will mean that no one forgets the lives the Pony Express has touched in its both brief and long history."

DeShon said that many cities along the Pony Express trail claim part of its heritage, but that leaders in those communities looked toward St. Joseph to set the path for its restoration and revitalization.

David Oliver, a Pony Express executive committee member, read greetings from people who could not attend the groundbreaking. One of the well wishers was William Fisher, the great-grandson of Pony Express rider Billy Fisher.

Those involved with the groundbreaking made sure that everyone had a chance to take part in the event. After five groups of board members, trustees and politicians took their turn with the shovels, everyone else was invited to dig a little piece of the ground.

"Many years from now children here can say that they took part in this day," said DeShon.

More than \$1 million has been raised for the addition. The fund-raising goal is \$1.7 million.



# Renovated Pony Express Museum Captures 1860's Era

BUCHANAN CO. NEWS  
4-8-92

When state and national dignitaries cut the ribbon on the \$1.7 million newly expanded Pony Express National Memorial in St. Joseph on April 3, they forged a spectacular link connecting 133 years of tradition that's fired the public imagination more than almost any single episode in American history.

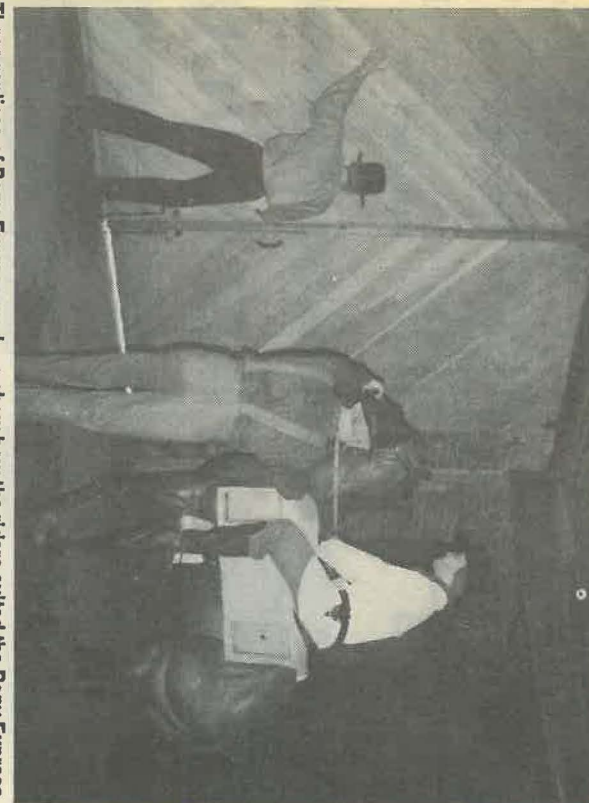
On that date in 1860, Johnny Fry, a "young skinny wiry fellow willing to risk death daily," galloped out of the same stable that now houses the national memorial. He would ferry across the Missouri River, then ride west about 75 miles, changing horses every 10 to 15 miles. The process would continue with new riders and horses, never stopping for more than two minutes, until the mail reached Sacramento 1,966 miles away.

The route he and almost 100 other young riders would follow during the life of the Pony Express was added to the roster of national historic trails by action of Congress last August.

In 1860, the new service would beat delivery time of two existing contractors by almost two weeks. Fry's employers, three Missouri entrepreneurs named Russell, Majors and Waddell, figured this central route would keep communications open to the west coast if confederates disrupted the other



Visitors examine a map showing land Pony Express riders traveled to and from the west coast. The map is only one of many new exhibits at the renovated Pony Express Museum which opened last weekend.



These replicas of Pony Express workers show how the riders exited the Pony Express Stables to begin their ride west to deliver mail. Thousands of visitors braved the cold and wet weather to attend the opening of the renovated Pony Express Museum April 3 and 4.

for fast delivery, and the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company (official title for the service) was defunct.

But never to be forgotten. In 18 short months, riders had completed 16 deliveries to and from Sacramento, covering a total of 650,000 miles through eight states. Yet even though they went through dangerous territory, often braving blizzards and blistering heat, records list only one rider killed and one mailbag, or mochila, lost. Their adventurous exploits and

the catchy name of the service had infected the American imagination, and the contagion eventually would spread worldwide. Today, besides the National Pony Express Association, there are Pony Express organizations and enthusiasts as far away as the Czechoslovakian Republic.

But after the demise of the service in October, 1861, the original stables changed hands 16 times. Half had disintegrated and the other half was badly deteriorated by the time a St. Joseph brewery owner, M. Karl

Goetz, bought the property in 1950. He paid for partial reconstruction, and the Pony Express Museum opened in 1959.

By 1990 there were more than 40,000 visitors annually from all over the world, but exhibits and memorabilia were starved for space. That year civic and business leaders formed Pony Express, Inc., to raise funds for a two-phased restoration and expansion project with new, state-of-the-art exhibits to be incor-

## Pony Express

(Continued from Page 1)

porated with the models, vintage equipment, photos and documents that had been fascinating visitors for 30 years.

The "new" memorial, with more than 4,000 square feet (double the former amount) incorporates an 80-foot three-dimensional diorama of the trail from St. Joseph to Sacramento, complete with simulated changes in weather as well as day and night. There's a map of the route dotted with light-up way station locations.

Near the entrance a life-sized Johnny Fry sits astride his horse Sylph in a scene titled "A Moment in Time". Lifelike models of other horses stand in a series of stalls faithful to the originals.

In back is a "please-touch-me" covered wagon with typical provisions carried by westward-bound pioneers. (Most of the supplies would have been purchased from local outfitters who made St. Joseph a thriving city beginning in the 1840s.) The wagon is one of several hands-on features in the revamped museum.

Costumed interpreters will be stationed throughout the new facility to answer questions. An orientation video provides an in-depth historical background.

A newly constructed community room is connected to the stables by a hallway to be used as a gallery for changing art exhibits related to the Pony Express and St. Joseph.

"When you figure all the ingenuity that went into organizing the Pony Express, it was a phenomenal enterprise," says Richard DeShon, president of the Pony Express National Memorial and son-in-law of M. Karl Goetz, the brewer who rescued the stables from oblivion in 1950.

The new museum completes Phase I in a project that will eventually add a compatible living history facility just to the west of the current structures.

Among some dozen museums in the city, are four in the Pony Express neighborhood — the St. Joseph Museum, which currently operates the Pony Express facility; the Patee House, an historic hotel filled with various St. Joseph memorabilia; the Jesse James House, where the notorious outlaw was murdered, and the Doll Museum.

## Grant given by City Council

continued from page 1

Neighborhood. Pony Express Inc. will be required to provide documents showing the room is used mainly to benefit low and moderate income persons for five years after the project is completed.

The Council also voted to lease land from the Missouri Pacific Railroad for City Yards storage. The rent is \$700 a year or the fair market value of rent on the site. Any increase must be subject to 30 days written notice and cannot occur more than once every 12-month period. The site will be just storage. No improvements are planned by the City. The City will build and pay for a fence at the site.

The Council decided on several zoning issues. It denied a request to approve a zoning change from R-4

Apartment Residential to C-3 Commercial for Charles and Mary Larson at 5102 Faraon to develop a compatible commercial use to those along Faraon Street.

City staff was concerned that the Larsons and their potential buyer had not said what the specific use would be for the site. The Planning and Zoning Commission voted 3-3 against the zoning. Opposition came from 8 percent of the neighboring property owners.

Councilwoman Linda Wright said she opposed the change because it is being done for speculation. The Council defeated the change 8-0.

The Council approved a zoning change for an area at 3543 Easton Road from R-1A Single Family Residential to C-3 Commercial re-

quested by Ron J. Rosenauer as conservator of the estate of Loren Crane. The rezoning will mean the area can be sold to a commercial developer. Rosenauer spoke on his behalf.

The city staff is concerned that it has no idea what will located on the tract. Most of the property in the area is zoned single family with a single-family home west of the requested site. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the request. No opposition was filed by neighboring property owners.

The vote was 7-1 with Wright voting against the change.

The Council approved a special use permit for Harvey McGaugh for a non-profit fraternal organization to be located at 224 E. Highland Ave. See **PONY EXPRESS** page 14

## Grant given by Council

ST. JOSEPH TEL. 10-29-92

by Duane Thies  
Telegraph Staff Writer

The St. Joseph City Council voted to grant \$75,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds for a part of the construction costs to build a Community Room, which is part of Phase I of the Pony Express Museum restoration and expansion Monday night.

The Community Room will be used for civic purposes in the low to moderate income Pony Express See **GRANT** page 4

(Continued to Page 10)



### Paul H. Benefiel

Paul H. Benefiel, age 88, of St. Joseph, died Friday, March 26, 1993, at a St. Joseph hospital.

He was born at Logansport, Indiana, and had lived in St. Joseph for thirty years.

Mr. Benefiel was a musician and a psychiatric aid.

He was of the Roman Catholic faith.

Mr. Benefiel was a 30-year member of the Moose Lodge in Richmond, Indiana.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Erma, in 1966; a brother, Ralph; and three half brothers; a sister, Frances

Waters; and a half sister, Marie Cooley.

Mr. Benefiel is survived by a sister, LaVeta Neeley, of Indiana.

Funeral services were held at 10 a.m. Monday, March 29, at Rupp Chapel. The Reverend William Caldwell officiated. Interment was at Ashland Cemetery in St. Joseph. Members of the Moose Lodge served as pallbearers: Governor John Hatton, Jr. Governor Milton King, Pat Governor James Knapp and Trustee Kenneth Ouckett.

Services were under the direction of Rupp Funeral Home of St. Joseph.

### Jane Elizabeth Sowards

Jane Elizabeth Sowards, age 49, of St. Joseph, died Tuesday, March 23, 1993, at a local health care center.

She was born in St. Joseph and lived her life there.

Mrs. Sowards was preceded in death by her parents, Fred and Jessie Speer.

Survivors include a son, Carl O'Callaghan, of Savannah, Missouri; four daughters, Ruth Ann Thornton, of He-

lena, Missouri, and Barbara Archer, Diane Sowards and Carla Gonzales, all of St. Joseph; a sister, Mary Ann O'Callaghan, of Savannah; twelve grandchildren.

Inurnment was held at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 27, at the Savannah, Missouri, Cemetery. The Reverend William Bridgewater officiated.

Services were under the direction of Rupp Funeral Home of St. Joseph.

### Paul E. Colboch

Paul E. Colboch, age 68, of Bellflower, California, formerly of St. Joseph, died Wednesday, February 24, 1993, at Bellflower, California.

He was born in St. Joseph, and moved to California in 1945.

Mr. Colboch was the owner of Paul Spuds Restaurant Supplies.

He was a member of the Baptist Church of Bellflower. He was also a member of the Rotary Club of Bellflower.

Mr. Colboch was preceded in death by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Colboch, and by two brothers, Hubert and Lloyd.

Survivors include one son, Mike of Hood River, Oregon; four daughters, Susan Montana, Jodie Hust and Linda Ferrell, all of Lakewood, California, and Cindy Burkes of Victoria, Texas; and three brothers, Harold of St. Joseph, Robert of Shawnee, Kansas, and Joe of Topeka, Kansas.

Memorial services were held at White's Funeral Home in Bellflower, California.

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## TO HEART By Harrison Hartley



Mixed reactions are natural in a society as diverse as ours, so it comes as no surprise that about as many people oppose the idea of riverfront gambling as there are people who want it. Of course, there is always that group that doesn't give a good...., but they tend not to vote, so they're really not in the picture. It's the other two outfits who strike sparks.

Personally, I will do no gambling on the riverfront or anywhere else. This does not make me morally admirable, for I am merely a tightwad who won't take a chance with a quarter. Like the skinny kid who can't stand the taste of chocolate eclairs, I am not even tempted, so I have no room to talk. My wife, on the other hand, is likely to find her feet stuck to the floor with superglue if I catch her looking longingly westward with dice in her eyes. (The tragedy is that she would probably win if I had the nerve to let her play. She usually does.)

But, like it or not, the casino is coming. The clear lesson from history is that we might as well cash in on it; prohibition did not and will not work in any form. We can't legislate morals, and every time we try, the results are worse than if we had left people in control of their own lives in the first place. We can legislate fair business practices and truth in advertising, and with proper oversight, that is enough to curb any seriously evil effects on the otherwise

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Rupp Funeral Home

### Pony Express Memorial to change its name

N-P 6-18-97

The Pony Express National Memorial, 914 Penn St., is changing its name to the Pony Express Museum, according to the Pony Express Inc. Board of Trustees. The board felt the name change could better identify the museum, since it had been confused with the Pony Express Statue.

The name change will take place gradually. As the brochures with the former name are used,

new ones will be ordered with the new name.

Summer hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and 1 to 6 p.m. Sundays from June through September. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2.50 for seniors, \$2 for ages children ages 7 to 18, and those 6 and younger are free.

For more information, call 279-5059 or (800) 530-5930.