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Bent's Old Fort

Colorado National Parks

Varied Schedule Reflects Bent's Fort History

Pueblo Chieftain

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The National Park System has granted Bent's Old Fort funds to help repair this adobe structure. Funds also will provide for improved operations and more historical research.

Pueblo Chieftain 1.30.87 p.

Varied schedule reflects Bent's Fort history

LA JUNTA — A wide variety of educational and recreational events will be offered this year at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, according to Bill Gwaltney, chief ranger and VIP coordinator.

"All the events are planned to draw attention to our purpose at the fort," Gwaltney said, which is to give an accurate depiction of life at a pioneer fur trading post in the year 1846.

Two "Winter Quarters" events will be held for authors, teachers and history re-enactors, he said. During each four-day program the participants can "completely immerse themselves in life as it was in 1846."

The first winter quarters will be March 26-29, and the second will occur Oct. 15-18. The courses can be used to collect two college credits from Adams State College, and are a source of credits

for teacher recertification.

On May 5, a traditional Cinco de Mayo celebration will be staged to commemorate the 1863 battle at Puebla, Mexico, when Mexican forces liberated their country from the French. Speakers, dancers, musicians and demonstrations will be part of the activities.

May 14-17 and May 21-24, the play "Voices Under the Wind" will be performed each day. The play was written by Otero Junior College professors Ed Stafford and Tim Walsh.

On July 4, the Fort will stage a typical frontier Independence Day celebration which focuses on patriotism. Early American games and activities will be organized for visitors.

July 31-Aug. 2, the annual dragon encampment will feature more than a dozen of America's finest re-enactors of

frontier history. They will reenact the day-to-day lifestyle of the frontier soldier during the 1820s and 1830s.

Aug. 7-9, descendants of the Bent family will congregate at the fort for the annual Bent's family reunion. This year a Native American pow-wow will be included in the festivities and members of several nations will attend the event, Gwaltney said.

On Aug. 15, fort personnel will stage Kids' Quarters for Children giving youngsters a chance to participate in games and activities similar to those which children played to pass the time in the 1840s.

A five-day historical event is planned for Labor Day weekend, Sept. 3-7.

A fur trader's encampment, featuring talents of individuals from several Western states, will take place both inside and out-

side the fort's walls. Gwaltney said applications will be required for participation this year and people who take part will be credited as actual park volunteers.

A Diez y Sies celebration is planned for Sept. 16. The traditional celebration commemorates Mexico's freedom from Spanish rule on the same day in 1821. Mexican-American folklore, culture, food and dance hold sway in the fort. A documentary paper on the democratic movement in Mexico will be prepared by Dr. David Sandoval, a professor at the University of Southern Colorado.

The final event planned for 1987 is a Christmas celebration in the manner observed at the fort during the fur-trading period. The weekends of Dec. 11-12 and Dec. 18-19 are scheduled for observation of Christmas.