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Bent's Old Fort

Colorado National Parks

Ceremony Will Signal rebuilding of Fort

Rocky Mountain News

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Fort Bent's fort

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p. 45

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The first adobe in the reconstruction of Bent's construction project.

Fort will be laid Saturday at 2 p.m. on the site ruins near La Junta.

Rep. Frank Evans, D-Colo., will lay the brick at the northeast corner of the one time active trading post.

The public is invited to the special ceremony according to John R. Patterson, National Park Service superintendent of the National Historic Site.

A number of dignitaries have been invited along with descendants of fort founders William and George Bent and individuals from throughout the region who worked hard

The project is planned for completion in time for Colorado's Centennial celebration in 1976.

A \$1,157,427 contract was awarded in April to Mereshon-Gimeno Construction Co. of Lakewood to reconstruct the 1830-40 fort as it was at the height of its popularity during westward expansion.

The structure will be adobe and cement stabilized adobe atop the foundations of the original and will be interpreted by the National Park Service.

The contract is novel in that it was awarded

through the Small Business Administration 8-A provision for minority contractors and is being negotiated on a cost plus fixed fee basis. Strict adherence must be paid to historic preservation practices and delays due to archaeological or his-

torical discoveries are likely.

Among those working on the project will be Indians from the Taos area whose ancestors are believed to have helped with the original fort.

Once the fort is completed the Park Service

will present "living history" programs to help visitors understand what life was like at the fort and the role it played in the development of the West and the Southwest.

Bent's Old Fort is located seven miles east of La Junta on Highway 194.