



Of the goal of "education and interpretation" dovetails with the goal of "revitalization." The MPNHA supported development of interpretive center in Escalante, Garfield County, to tell the story of Mormon pioneer passage through the "hole in the rock." Murals, information placards and a film make the story come alive. Plans call for construction of a museum.

settlers. The pioneers extracted iron-rich clay from the surrounding landscape and made bricks for their homes. They trimmed the homes with handcrafted wood.

In 1997, residents organized Panguitch Main Street, a nonprofit dedicated to preservation of many of these structures. The MPNHA has collaborated with Panguitch City, businesses and property owners to provide financial support. In particular, the Heritage Area has supported restoration of a theater on Main Street.

Today, Panguitch boasts one of the tidiest and most authentic Main Streets in the Heritage Area. In 2006, the entire town was designated as an historic district and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. And in 2012, Mayor Lori Talbot accepted a Heritage Award from the Utah Heritage Foundation in behalf of Panguitch Main Street.

Boulder Loop (Garfield And Wayne Counties)

Hole-in-the-Rock Heritage Center: *One of the most dramatic stories in Mormon colonization of the West is about the 250 pioneers who passed through what they called the Hole in the Rock in order to descend to the shore of the Colorado River, cross the river and settle near the Four Corners area of Utah.*

In 1879, John Taylor, an early president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, directed settlers living in St. George, Parowan and Cedar City in southwestern Utah to travel east to settle what is now San Juan County in the southeastern corner of the state.

It took the pioneers, traveling in 80 covered wagons with 1,000 head of livestock, six months to travel 200 miles across the rugged terrain. They reached the bank of the Colorado only to find they were at the top of a 1,200-foot cliff.

They identified a crevice down the cliff, but it was too narrow for the wagons. So they spent six weeks enlarging it with hammers, chisels and blasting powder. Even then, many in the party were skeptical about whether they could make it through the pass, but they decided to leave the decision to their leader and the Lord. Ultimately, they managed to traverse a 45-degree downward slope through the "hole in the rock" to the river.

For nearly 20 years, residents in Escalante, the last town where the pioneers camped before descending the vertical river bank, have dreamed of creating an interpretive center and museum honoring the hole-in-the-rock party and other pioneers.

The MPNHA, LDS church and Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) partnered to help make the dream come true. The church donated a nine-acre site. The Heritage Area and UDOT helped fund improvements including a pavilion, murals by an Escalante artist, interpretive signs, a fire pit, restrooms and a parking area. That first phase was completed in 2012.

Plans for Phase Two call for adding a museum building. The MPNHA has provided funding toward architectural design. The center is just off State Road 12, a national scenic byway.

A visitor from New Jersey wrote, "We saw this little museum (referring to the interpretive center) and decided to stop. It was excellent. It gave us some history on the pioneers, and Mormon struggles and hardships settling the West...The super nice older couple there (the caretakers) were full of information, and the film was very educational...The lady said her family was part of the original settlers to the area. History was brought alive for us."