The Santa Fe Trail Scenic and Historic Byway- Mountain Branch was established to tell the stories of, promote visitation to, and preserve the historical significance of Colorado’s Santa Fe Trail.

The Santa Fe Trail Scenic and Historic Byway- Mountain Branch of Colorado is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization formed in 2003 to enhance the local economy through the promotion of tourism along its route. We collaborate with stakeholders and businesses to interpret and market a 184-mile scenic drive from Colorado’s Kansas border to the New Mexico border. We invite you to sample our hospitality, scenery, history, culture, nature, and to experience our magnificent true west lifestyle.

The most delightful aspect of the Byway’s scenery is the variety of landscapes. Narrow river canyons, fertile farm country, and lowland meadows with breathtaking mountain vistas surprise us around every bend in the byway. We suggest taking 3 -7 days to tour Colorado’s Santa Fe Trail. It is a genuinely relaxing experience that makes you feel as though you are in another time in history. Much of the land in the corridor is public land offering a myriad of opportunities for outdoor recreation in a vast uncrowded playground. Hundreds of miles of trails are available for all levels of hiking, biking, and horseback riding. These public lands are home to a large diversity of wildlife and hold some of our Nation’s most significant history. Let us be your guide while exploring these hidden treasures. Help us preserve our unique history and leave no trace while visiting. Take only photos, and leave all else for others to enjoy and study.

America’s Byways® is a collection of 125 distinct and diverse roads designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. We are the gateway to adventures where no two experiences are the same. The National Scenic Byways Program invites you to come closer to America’s heart and soul... Visit us online at coloradobyways.org www.fhwa.dot.gov/byways and santafetrailco.com

Colorado Tourism Office
www.colorado.com 1-800-Colorado

This guide was created by Wyvonne and Danny Graham and is funded in part by the Colorado Tourism Office and our generous advertisers.
Look for our Interpretation along the trail  santafetrailco.com

Lamar Welcome Center
Trinidad Miners Memorial Square
Holly Rest Area near Kansas border
La Junta Hilltop Train Display
Las Animas Fort Lyon Kit Carson Chapel
Lamar Welcome Center
Amache Japanese Internment camp in Granada
Trinidad, gateway to the Rockies, lies nestled at the foot of some of Colorado's most magnificent and scenic mountains. To the west is the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range. Almost due north are the twin peaks, known as the Spanish Peaks, and way to the North are Greenhorn Mountain and Pikes Peak. To the south lies Fisher's Peak. This unusual volcanic landmark has a stair step top with an altitude of 9,600 feet. The Purgatoire River flows through the center of Trinidad and to the east lies the vast ocean of prairies and canyons, offering visitors an opportunity to see and explore the Santa Fe Trail as it was since it began. Trinidad hill, also known as Simpson's Rest, is the final resting place of early settler George Simpson.
First time visitors to Trinidad may wonder if they have stepped back in time to the Wild West. This little Victorian Empire was rated America’s 3rd Best True Western Town by True West Magazine in 2008. Its rich history was shaped by Native Americans, Spaniards, French explorers, scouts, trappers and traders who left evidence of their passing in colorful geographic names. Immigrants were drawn by the extensive coal mining and large cattle companies.

The Colorado Welcome Center, located at 309 Nevada Avenue, offers brochures and maps to guide your way while visiting. Catch the free trolley here hourly from 10-3, Memorial Day through Labor Day, for a tour of the city and its buildings.

Many famous and colorful Western characters were a big part of Trinidad history. Kit Carson knew Trinidad well. “Red” Bransford, sister of Red Cloud and aunt of Crazy Horse, operated one of Trinidad’s first lodging establishments on the site of the Columbian Hotel. Billy the Kid frequented Trinidad far too often. Bat Masterson, was town marshal in the 1880s, visited by his tubercular friend and gambling buddy, Doc Holliday. Uncle Dick Wootton was founder of the Raton Pass toll station.
Trinidad was a major trading center along the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Bronze interpretive markers will guide your way through El Corazon de Trinidad National Historic District walking tour. Begin your tour at the Colorado Welcome Center.

The old west comes alive amid opulent 100-year-old buildings and 6.5 miles of winding brick streets. Pick up a guide called “Walk Through the History of Trinidad” at one of the bookstores or the Library. Cool off at Cimino Park and stroll or fish along the Purgatoire River Trail. This historic site has remained a favorite resting place for travelers offering shade and treasured water for weary travelers.
Trinidad has a top ten rated skate park by Tony Hawk and a water park with a pool at the community center located at 1309 Beshoar Ave. Trinidad Municipal Golf Course is unparalleled in beauty and is the number one nine hole golf course in the state. It is located at 1413 Nolan Drive. Trinidad's Central Park, located off Hwy. 12, has a measured walking trail, a baseball field, and a kid's fishing lake. Kit Carson Park has a playground, picnic tables, a Victorian bandstand, Santa Fe Trail's largest DAR Marker, and a magnificent equestrian statue of Kit Carson. Roundup Park has a covered picnic shelter, a commemorative racehorse monument, rodeo grounds, and horse housing facilities.
The Trinidad History Museum is a Colorado Historical Society property located at 312 E. Main. It houses three attractions in one entire city block. Tour the illustrious Bloom Mansion, the Baca House and Santa Fe Trail museum to learn more about the people and their wealth that built Trinidad. See antiquities of the Santa Fe Trail era.

The A. R. Mitchell Art Museum is located at 150 E. Main. The “Mitch” boasts a 1900s western style building with the original tin ceiling, wood floors, and a horseshoe-shaped mezzanine. This spectacular building features a selection of more than 250 paintings by acclaimed western artist Arthur Roy Mitchell and his contemporaries.

The Louden-Henritze Archaeology Museum located at 600 Prospect, has a dinosaur exhibit, fossils, and prehistoric and Native American artifacts.

Old Firehouse No. 1 Children’s Museum is located at 314 N. Commercial. It features an old school room, jail and hands on exhibits.

A.R. Mitchell Museum of Western Art
150 East Main Street • Trinidad, CO 81082 • (719) 846-4224

Featuring The Western Art of Arthur Roy Mitchell (1889-1977)
King of the Western Pulp Cover Artists and Trinidad, Colorado native son

Please visit our website for admission, hours, current exhibits and upcoming events schedule.
WWW.ARMITCHELLMUSEUM.ORG
Located at 32610, Hwy. 12, the Trinidad Lake State Park features trail talks around campfires, boating, fishing, camping facilities, wildlife trails and a watching blind in Long’s Canyon. Visitors can check out a wildlife watching kit at the park visitor center.

Comanche National Grassland

Timpas Creek located on Comanche National Grassland, Hwy. 350, was the first source of water for Santa Fe Trail travelers after leaving the Arkansas River heading southwest. Limestone markers indicate where the Santa Fe National Historic Trail passes through the area and a Daughters of the American Revolution SFT marker is on this site. Visitors are provided several shaded picnic tables with grills, a vault toilet, and RV and bus parking, horse hitching rails, horse trailer parking, and stock water for horses only. No drinking water is available. These scenic pull offs are managed by the USDA Forest Service Office in La Junta. 719-384-2181

Iron Springs, located on Comanche National Grassland, was an important water stop for travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. Depending on the season or weather conditions, several different routes to the spring were used. Between 1861 and 1871, Iron Springs served as a stagecoach station. It was the scene of several Indian attacks. Trail ruts are still visible near the spring just west of the parking lot and a few ruins are nearby.

Sierra Vista Overlook is located just down the road from Timpas. For Santa Fe Trail travelers heading south, the changing horizon from plains to mountains was a major milestone on their journey. One of their guiding landmarks was the distant Spanish Peaks, which came into view along this section of the trail. A short walk up the side of a bluff will give you a commanding view of the Rocky Mountains and surrounding prairie. Stone posts mark a 3-mile section of the Santa Fe Trail from the shelter to Timpas. Visitors are provided a scenic overlook, a horse hitching rail, RV and bus parking, and a Daughters of the American Revolution SFT marker. No drinking water is available.
La Junta, Colorado
Come and Visit Us in the Smile-Hi City!

www.VisitLaJunta.net

Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site
Comanche National Grassland
Jurassic Period Dinosaur Tracks
Koshare Indian Museum & Dancers
La Junta Municipal Pool & Wipe Out Water Slides
La Junta Sk8 Way Skate Park
Otero Museum
And Much More!
Otero Museum
The Otero Museum located at 3rd and Anderson has an extensive collection of exhibits, pictures, and artifacts that tell the history of La Junta, Otero County and the surrounding area. Step back in time to Grandpa’s Day, and visit the Sciumbato Store listed on the National Registry of Historical sites and restocked as it might have been in the old days. See a 1920s Filling Station, a vintage touring car, farm equipment, war mementos, and railroad memorabilia. There is a 1903 windmill, a blacksmith shop, and a coach house containing the original Concord Stage Coach 106. See one of the first cars in La Junta, a chuck wagon, an early 1900s surrey with the fringe on top, collections of barbed wire and arrowheads, saddles, and guns. The log cabin school is a replica of the 1876 first school in Otero, using some of the original logs and plans. Located at 3rd and Anderson, La Junta. Open M-Sat., 1-5, June-Sept., 719-384-7500.

Picketwire Center for the Visual and Performing Arts is located at 8th and San Juan and is the hub for theatrical events. Early Settler’s Day, a one-day event, held on the second Saturday of September begins with breakfast served by the Kiwanis, followed by a parade, and plenty of entertainment and shopping for everyone throughout the day. For over 60 years La Junta has held a Kids Rodeo and Race the first weekend in August. La Junta City Park, located at 10th and Colorado Avenue, has a skate park, playground, and a stocked lake for youngsters to fish. Potter Park at Hwy. 50 and Grant Avenue features baseball fields, picnic tables and a swimming pool with Wipe Out water slide. Call the Chamber of Commerce for more information at 719-384-7411.
Koshare Indian Museum houses an extensive collection of Indian paintings and artifacts considered to be among the finest in the world. This renowned collection of Plains and Southwest art and artifacts includes basketry, pottery, weapons, jewelry, paintings, sculptures, and textiles. The museum houses a Kiva Trading Post, which sells a variety of quality Native American art including prints, pots, jewelry, baskets, kachinas, books, and many other items related to Native Americans. Visit kosharehistory.org to learn more about this special place and the Boy Scouts who created it on Colorado’s Santa Fe Trail. Photos courtesy of photographer Lex Nichols and the Koshare Indian Museum.

In 1933 J. F. “Buck” Burshears worked with the Boy Scouts of La Junta studying archaeology and Indian cultures. They grew up on farms and ranches among Indian ruins and their interests grew. Troop 232 called themselves the Koshares, meaning clown or fun maker in the Hopi language. The Koshare Indian Dancers, have entertained people during summer and winter dance performances for over 72 years, both at home and as far away as Japan. The home dances are held in the Koshare Kiva built by the scouts, which has the world’s largest self-supporting log roof. The famed Koshare Indian Dancers perform authentic Pueblo Indian dances and can be seen at many of our Santa Fe Trail celebrations and festivals throughout the Byway, including Early Settlers Days in La Junta. The museum is located 18 blocks south of Hwy. 50 (First Street) on the Otero Junior College campus. 115 W. 18th Street, La Junta. Open daily 10-5, Mon-Wed, closed Tues. and Thurs. Open until 9PM on dance nights, closed on Major Holidays. Call 719-384-4111 for a schedule of summer and winter dances.
Bent’s Old Fort is one of Colorado’s most evocative historic sites. Summer hours (June 1 - Aug. 31) 8 - 5:30. Winter hours (Sept. 1 - May 31) 9 - 4; $3 adults, $2 children. It is eight miles east of La Junta, or 15 miles west of Las Animas. Take Hwy 50 to 109 to 194 east. Historic DAR Markers welcome you to begin your journey back in time. The gateway was erected by the La Junta Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, while the chapter still owned the land. A. E. Reynolds donated the site of the Old Fort to the La Junta DAR Chapter in 1926. The National Park Service acquired Bent’s Old Fort in 1963 and manage living history programs year round at the fort.
The Bent County Court House was built and furnished between 1886 and 1889. It is the longest continuously used courthouse in the state. The nearby jail was home to Sheriff Dan Gates, father of Ken Gates, known as Festus of the Gunsmoke TV series. He is credited with starting the Las Animas Santa Fe Trail Days and Parade in 1934, the longest running high school event in the U. S. It is in its 83rd year as of April 2017.
The John W. Rawlings Heritage Center was acquired by the Pioneer Historic Society of Bent County in 1999. Formerly known as the Kit Carson Museum, it is open to the public as a museum, art gallery, event space, archival library, storage, and the PHSBC office.

Located at the only stoplight in Las Animas. It features historic store fronts including a post office, a confectionary, and Bent County Bank. Open Monday - Saturday. 12:30-4:30, 719-456-6066. Exhibits include Llewellyn Thompson, Ambassador to six Presidents, J.W. & Dorothy Hoag Rawlings, and Kit Carson. Additional exhibits include Ken Gates (Curtis), Native Americans, a cobbler, farming, telephone, medical, jail, railroading, quilts, and more.

The Old Trail Gallery features works by the Bent County Art Guild including woodcarvings, jewelry, photo greeting cards, oil and watercolor paintings, and award winning photographs.

On the east side of the museum, Bell Park features a gazebo that houses the area’s historical bells.
Boggsville

Boggsville was the first non-military settlement in Southeastern Colorado, founded in the early 1860s in Las Animas, Colorado. Thomas Boggs married Ramalda Luna Bent, stepdaughter of Charles Bent, in Taos in 1846. A 2040 acre tract of land including Boggsville, once a part of the Vigil and St. Vrain Mexican Land Grant, was given to Rumalda Bent by St. Vrain. The settlement consisted of several families including the Boggs, John Prowers, Kit Carson, and John Hough. This was Kit Carson’s last home. Boggs raised sheep and Prowers raised cattle. Both industries flourished on the land surrounding Boggsville during the 1870s. The irrigated farming of Boggsville supplied the major amount of grain, fodder, vegetables, and other food crops for the region.

Boggsville is open the last weekend in April to Memorial Day and Labor Day to the last weekend in October: Open Wednesday - Sunday, 10-4; Memorial Day - Labor Day: Daily, 10am-4pm. The site features a nature trail, and reconstructed homes of the Boggs, Prowers family. Boggsville sits on the banks of the Purgatoire River and is located south of U.S. Hwy 50, on Hwy. 101, 2 miles south of Las Animas. Call 719-456-1358 for more information.
Fort Lyon & Kit Carson Chapel

Open M-F, 8-4:30, call 719-456-0165. Ft. Lyon is located Hwy 50 to Hwy 183, 6 miles E of Las Animas. First known as Fort Wise and later as Fort Lyon, this military fort was built a mile west of Bent’s New Fort in 1860 to protect the new settlers. Major John Sedgwick Jr. built a stone structure on the riverbed just below the bluffs of Bent’s New Fort. In 1865, a spring ice dam in the river backed up the snowmelt deep into the buildings. Fort Lyon was abandoned and moved to its current location near Las Animas. New Fort Lyon was established in 1867 and used by the US army until 1889 at the end of the Indian wars. Fort Lyon became a sanitarium for those suffering from tuberculosis, including Kit Carson, who died in the surgeon’s quarters.

The reconstructed surgeon’s quarters were moved from the parade square at Fort Lyon in 2000 to it’s current location and named Kit Carson Chapel. All that come are welcome and the Chapel is available for use by contacting Bent County at 719-456-1600. Fort Lyon has been a VA hospital, a correctional facility, and today it is a Supportive Residential Community for homeless citizens with an emphasis on serving homeless veterans.

The Fort Lyon National Cemetery was built in 1907 and is still in use today. It is open to the public and visitors are welcome to hike or bike the tree-lined roads of Fort Lyon to explore this historic Santa Fe Trail property.
John Martin Reservoir State Park and Hasty Lake sit like sapphires on the plains. It is the largest body of water in southeast Colorado and a Santa Fe National Historic Trail Site. The park is a bird watchers paradise boasting over 400 species. The reservoir is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and a portion of the reservoir is leased to Colorado State Parks. The blue waters of the lake allow visitors a chance to enjoy a fun day or weekend of swimming, fishing, picnicking, camping, boating, water skiing, sailing, and jet skiing, or windsurfing. The area also provides hiking, picnicking, and sightseeing opportunities. Hunting opportunities are available in the nearby state wildlife area. Information kiosks, a DAR Marker, and Santa Fe Trail wagon ruts can also be found at the park. Take the Red Shin Trail to view Indian carvings, wildlife, and the reservoir. Starting below the dam, tour the Historic Canals, a Rock Art Site, and Prowers-Hudnell ranch, ending at the Santa Fe Trail Marker on the north shore of the State Park. Located at 30703 County Road 24, Hasty CO. John Martin Reservoir is east of Las Animas about 16 miles on Hwy. 50 to Hasty. Turn south on School Street and the Visitor Center is approximately 2 miles on the right. Call them at 719-829-1801.
In 1853 William Bent built a new stone fort east of Bent’s Old Fort on a bluff overlooking the Arkansas River. The fort resembled Bent’s Old Fort, only smaller, with 16’ tall walls. It had 12 rooms surrounded by a central courtyard. All that remains of Bent’s New Fort are the earthworks where the Fort once stood. The Semmens and McCall families made the site an archaeological preserve. The NPS provided interpretive exhibits for the site. It is located 10 miles west of Lamar or 25 miles east of Las Animas. Take U.S. 50, turn south on CR 35 for one mile to CR JJ, turn left for 1/4 mile to CR 35.25 to the Bent’s New Fort parking area. Contact Lamar Country Acres Motel and RV park.
Lamar offers rural family living at its best. Numerous events and activities are scheduled throughout the year. Whether you enjoy outdoor activities, community concerts, or a relaxed shopping atmosphere, this friendly community welcomes you. Lamar is the seat of Prowers County with agriculture as its main industry. The Lamar Depot still serves as a train station for Amtrak passengers, and houses the Lamar Chamber of Commerce and the Colorado Welcome Center. Stop by the Colorado Welcome Center at 109 B. East Beech, for a cup of coffee and visit with the volunteers who make our Welcome Center such a pleasant place to help you with your travel plans and advise of road and weather conditions. 719-336-4379
Each February in Lamar, waves of bright white snow geese fly into southeastern Colorado. They roost near the scattered lakes on the prairie, feeding in the surrounding fields, making the area a favorite rest stop on their annual migration. Join in for a fun-filled day of tours and activities. Take in a sunrise or sunset tour to view snow geese, sandhill cranes, and other waterfowl. Watch the birds while enjoying a waterside country breakfast, go on a guided nature walk, or visit local sites.

Big Timbers Museum

Big Timbers Museum gets its name from the towering cottonwoods along the Arkansas River that once grew in the region. The museum houses a headdress from Buffalo Bills Wild West show, Sand Creek artifacts, a WWI Poster Collection, a 10-star First National Confederate Flag, artifacts related to the D.A.R. Madonna of the Trail Monument, and an exhibit about the Fleagle Gang robbery of First National Bank in Lamar. The transportation museum houses antique cars, wagons, trucks, and buggies. They even have an antique fire wagon. Visit Big Timbers Museum one mile north of Lamar at 7515 Hwy. 50, or phone 719-336-2472. Open Tuesday-Saturday, June 1- Aug. 31, from 10-5, and Sept 1- May 31 from 1-4.
Granada

Granada sits about 19 miles east of Lamar. Irrigated farming dominates the landscape. In 1943 alone, Granada farmers grew a million pounds of vegetables. Local farms yield succulent melons, onions, and peppers. Since 1990, the Amache Preservation Society, a Granada high school group, has worked to preserve the history of Amache Japanese Internment Camp and set up the Amache museum as a school project.

Amache museum displays artifacts from the Amache internment camp. The 160-acre camp included a 10,000-acre farm for raising livestock and produce. Amache Museum is located in Granada's old town hall. It is open during the summer, usually five days a week, and located at 105 East Goff in Granada, CO. Pick up a map and brochure at the museum before starting your self-guided driving tour of Amache.

Amache

Amache is located on Hwy. 385 near Granada. At the dawn of World War II, there were approximately 127,000 Japanese Americans living in the United States. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued orders which lead to the U.S. government’s forcible detention of nearly the entire West Coast population of Japanese-110,000 in all - at ten inland internment camps. The move was upheld on multiple occasions by a divided United States Supreme Court. The Granada Relocation Center, outside Granada, Colorado, housed approximately 7,500 of the West Coast detainees.

Following the end of the war, after three years of occupation, Camp Amache was quickly dismantled—a seeming effort to erase what had taken place, its buildings dismantled or sold and moved elsewhere. Today structures are being rebuilt and an interpreted trail has been constructed. This site has interpretive signage and an audio tour to guide visitors to sites throughout Amache.
At Sand Creek on November 29, 1864, John Chivington led the Colorado Volunteers in a dawn attack on Black Kettle and his band, who had been told they would be safe on this desolate reservation. Two hundred Cheyenne men, women, and children were slaughtered, and their corpses often grotesquely mutilated. The massacre shocked the nation and brought a new wave of Indian-white conflict to Colorado’s high plains along the Santa Fe Trail.

Take a self-guided tour of the site, which is managed by the National Park Service. Sand Creek is located in Kiowa County, Colorado. Follow Hwy 50, turn north on 287, then east on 96. Near Chivington, turn north on CR 54, or at Brandon, turn north onto CR 59. Follow these roads to their intersections with CR W. The park entrance is along W, a mile east of 54 or several miles west of 59.

Holly was originally a stop on the Santa Fe Trail Railroad starting around 1894. The land was rich with open grassland and land for homesteading. The sugar beet industry began in 1906 with the Holly Sugar Company. This was the boom time for Holly until the industry declined in 1945. Today Holly is a popular hunting and wildlife-watching area. Come for the Holly Bluegrass Festival held every year in June.