



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 6, 2008

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Allensworth Centennial Celebration has Program of Exciting Speakers, Entertainers and Events

Descendents of the Founding Families, Buffalo Soldiers, Airplane Flyovers, Jazz Bands, and a Kick-off Reception

The program for the two-day Centennial Celebration, October 11 and 12, at Allensworth State Historic Park is nearly complete and it promises an exciting array of events for people of all ages. In addition, Tulare County is sponsoring a kick-off reception for the celebration on Friday night, October 10, at the Visalia Branch of the Tulare County Library.

The history and significance of this important pioneer community will be highlighted throughout the celebration with top-notch speakers and descendents of those who founded the unique town in 1908. For instance, Josephine Blodgett Smith, 94, the granddaughter of Josephine and Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth, will be there. Mrs. Smith remembers many Thanksgivings in the home of the Colonel and she is anxious to travel back to see the home she visited many times as a young girl growing up. She is a great storyteller and as a former school teacher, enjoys talking about her life experiences and her involvement in Allensworth becoming a California State Park. Present also will be another great storyteller, Alice Royal, an Allensworth descendent and the author of the book, "*Allensworth, The Freedom Colony.*" This exceptional book brings the history of this African American Township to life with hundreds of stories and pictures.

In addition, there will be music of all kinds, great food of every description and flavor, children's events and games, living history displays, and tours of the homes and businesses that have been renovated and rebuilt. One of the favorite places for adults is the beautifully restored Allensworth home. One of the favorites for kids is the Blacksmith shop, which will be open and operating, along with demonstrations in butter churning and candle making.

(more)

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The Program

THIS LIST WILL BE UPDATED AS MORE CELEBRITIES, ENTERTAINERS AND SPEAKERS SIGN ON TO PARTICIAPTE IN THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Friday, October 10, 5 – 7 p.m.

Tulare County Reception – A Public Conversation on Allensworth History
Visalia Branch of Tulare County Library, 200 Oak Street, Visalia, public invited

Connie Conway , Chairman, Tulare County Board of Supervisors
Assemblyman Curren Price, Secretary, Legislative Black Caucus
Ruth Coleman, Director, California State Parks

Lonnie G. Bunch, Founding Director
Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture

Mrs. Alice Royal, Allensworth Descendent
Author of *Allensworth, The Freedom Colony*

Susan D. Anderson, Curator,
"Allensworth: 100 Years of the California Dream"

Saturday, October 11, 2008 – Allensworth State Historic Park

Lonnie Bunch – Founding Director, Smithsonian National Museum of African American Culture
William Allen Young - Actor
Shelton Johnson – Buffalo Soldier Living History Storyteller
Phyllis Battle – Jazz Vocalist
Susan Anderson – Historian and Curator of Allensworth Exhibit – “100 Years of the California Dream”
California Redtails Fly-over (A Chapter of the Black Pilots of America)
Mayseo the Magician
Sarah Ford Singers
Crenshaw High School Elite Choir
Members of the Legislative Black Caucus

Sunday, October 12, 2008 – Allensworth State Historic Park

Reverend Eric P. Lee – President and CEO, Southern California Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles
Rick Moss – Chief Curator, African American Museum and Library at Oakland, California
William Allen Young – Actor

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Audubon Middle School Bankers Drum line and New Jazz Group
Richard Jones – Poetry Reading
Rose Jones – Jazz Vocalist
Biggest Little Band in Town – Jazz
Praise and Worship Service

Other Entertainment and Activities – Both Days

Corn Husk Doll Making
Buffalo Soldiers encampment and living history
Butter Churning
Blacksmith Demonstrations
Candle Making
Children's Games and Play Area

Special note to editors, reporters and photographers

Please visit our State Parks websites for Press Pictures

www.parks.ca.gov/allensworth/centennial - Information about the centennial event

www.parks.ca.gov/allensworth/allaboard - Information about the Amtrak trains to Allensworth during the event

www.parks.ca.gov/allensworth/virtualtour - **Press Pictures** -- Images of Allensworth's buildings, photos are copyrighted to California State Parks but may be used for press/media use only (credit line is © 2008 California State Parks)

www.parks.ca.gov/allensworth/formedia – **Press Pictures** --Information specifically for the media, including press releases, links, and information about requesting photographs for media use (in addition to and in higher resolution than those on our Virtual Tour webpage mentioned above) (Please do not release this address to public, it is press only)

About the Allensworth Restoration

Allensworth is one of the 50 State Historic Parks within the State park system. Since 1985, California State Parks has spent over \$9.4 million for reconstruction, restoration, furnishings and infrastructure at the historic park. Extensive road, utility and other infrastructure improvements have been made. More than 22 different structures have been reconstructed or restored, to include the historic Baptist church, the Hackett house, Hackett barn, Ashby house and barn, Johnson Bakery/residence, the Carter Livery Stable and the historic hotel. Today, a walk through this town and through the historic homes, businesses, the church and the school, is an experience in turning back the clock, because one sees much of this restored community as it appeared in the early 1900s.

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