

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 2, 2013

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## **Students Live History at Fort Tejon Thanks to Contribution from Element Power**

LEBEC, CA—The 25-year-old Student Living History Program at Fort Tejon State Park will continue to serve 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Southern California thanks to a \$100,000 contribution from the Portland-based Element Power.

Element Power is an international renewable energy company that develops, acquires, owns, and operates a portfolio of clean energy projects, including several large-scale wind and solar projects in California. The contribution, which kept the program functioning, was made to the California State Parks system through the Fort Tejon Historical Association. It came as Fort Tejon State Park was slated for closure.

“The donation could not have come at a better time. We were literally in the process of boxing up our collections for archival and storage.” said Stephen Bylin, Superintendent of the Fort Tejon State Historic Park. “We are very grateful to Element Power for allowing this hands-on education to continue.”

Beneficiaries of the partnership between Element and the State Park are already enjoying the benefits of restored funding. Recently, around thirty 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from Agua Dulce Elementary School stepped off their school bus and were welcomed to Fort Tejon as mid-19<sup>th</sup> century “army recruits.” After being outfitted with their uniforms and other essentials, they stood at attention while a giant American flag was raised over the fort, accompanied by a blast from a cannon. The students spent the next day and a half living much like the fort’s former recruits did, during the Civil War era. From laundry and baking to blacksmithing and wood working, the students experiencing the program are immersed in daily rigors of the primitive existence. Experiences like these not only teach them history, but also foster an appreciation for modern living standards and for the men and women who helped create the Golden State.

Rex Horney, a parent volunteer in his third year of assisting with the program, said, “I appreciate the fact that someone stepped in and made a donation of \$100,000 and helped preserve this.” Horney recently attended Fort Tejon with his fourth child to experience the living history program. “It’s a great experience for the kids. They talk about it for years,” Horney added.

Element Power's contribution has also made the program accessible to more students by providing for buses to transport them to attend the 2-day event. Students were previously responsible for arranging their own transportation to the fort. With many students coming from low-income families this caused a financial strain, making their participation in the program difficult.

"It's these kinds of partnerships that are crucial to helping us continue to bring history and nature to students from all walks of life, and allow us the opportunity to connect with many generations of kids," stated Kathy Weatherman, District Superintendent of California State Parks, Tehachapi District.

"We are happy we have helped with this contribution. Renewable energy is about providing opportunities for future generations, and we saw this unique living history program as an extension of that," said John Gaglioti, one of Element Power's project managers working in California.

Schools in districts near Fort Tejon are invited and encouraged to take advantage of the Fort Tejon Living History program. More information can be found at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

**Note to Editors/Reporters: Photos available upon request.**