

## **Cottonwood Crossing Chapter, SFTA Presidents' Report for September 2007 SFTA Board Meeting**

In early 2007, the NPS sent the Chapter some 12" x 12" SFNHT logos signs to mount on our Auto Tour sign posts. After some searching, Steve Schmidt acquired some special tamper resistant screws to mount the signs. The Chapter was reimbursed for the cost of the screws using a portion of the NPS \$500 per chapter promotional grant money. George Schutte and Steve Schmidt went out one Saturday to mount a couple of signs to see how it would go and work out the details. Well, it went so easily (thanks to George's cordless drill) that we just went ahead and mounted all of the signs in just a few hours without much effort. Reports from local resident's and local businesses indicate these signs have sparked interest in the Auto Tour and sight-seeing traffic has noticeably increased.

Steve Schmidt has been working with a graphic design company in Kansas City called Box Spring Design, and has developed a brochure for the Marion County Auto Tour. The brochure is ready for printing and should be available for distribution in early September. Some of the NPS \$500 per chapter promotional grant money along with some Cottonwood Crossing Chapter funds are being used to pay the design fee, while the graphic designer, Ryan Miller of Box Spring Design, has donated a portion of his design fees and is charging us a very reasonable amount. The design and layout is quite clever, making the map and descriptions of the points of interest very convenient to use. Chapter funds will be used to print 10,000 copies for local distribution.

Clive Siegle, the SFTA Association Manager, along with the NPS, has worked out all of the details and is ready to order a large quantity of "Santa Fe Trail Crosses Here" signs. The signs will be very attractive and of high quality. With Clive's assistance, Steve Schmidt submitted a grant application for NPS to pay all of the cash costs of putting these signs at every place in Marion County where the SFT crosses existing County Roads. All of the material is lined up, and the orders will be placed just as soon as NPS approves the grant. The Chapter will need to mark the locations, and get utility clearances. Steve has compiled the distance from section corners for locating the signs based on the 1857 public land survey notes (where the trail is not visible). Sharron Schutte and Steve recently met with a Marion County Commissioner and the Marion County Economic Development Director, and then Steve met with the entire County Commission. They are all very excited about this project. The Commissioners gave permission to put the signs in the County right-of-way, and volunteered to have the County crews drill the holes for the signs. As soon as the grant is approved, we will have a planning / organizational meeting to put this project into motion. Unfortunately, the NPS just recently informed us that it did not have funding available for this project, and we will have to wait for funding in the NPS 2008 fiscal year. This was a very disappointing development, but we are confident funding soon will be forthcoming.

We have some new developments regarding Lost Springs. The Shields Family, owners of the Lost Spring site, is agreeable to granting an easement for an historical interpretive site, similar in concept to the Cottonwood Crossing interpretive site. Through Sharron Schutte's contact, Sharron and Steve recently met with a Marion County Commissioner and the Marion County Economic Development Director, and Steve met later with the entire County Commission. They are all very excited and supportive of this project. The Commissioner pledged County participation to provide the culverts and the paving for the interpretive site. He thinks the County can be the easement holder, but needs to review the Easement Agreement with the County Attorney. If we can get the County to hold the easement, then the NPS may get involved. Clive Siegle, SFTA Association Manager, is assisting in getting NPS backing. If we take our time and

do this right, we can have the NPS design the site and provide funding, and have a really big, nice, interpretive site. This project would fit nicely with the Town of Lost Springs intentions to establish an annual Santa Fe Trail Festival. Attached is a proposed project time line. Recently, however, John Conoboy expressed concern that NPS could not support our proposed time line due to staff availability and projected work load. Much work needs to be done, but this project appears very do-able.

Earlier this year, Chris Day and Marcia Fox (SFTA Education Committee) sent out flyers asking Chapters to help locate sponsoring agencies to host Children's Workshops where local children can learn about the Santa Fe Trail. The Cottonwood Crossing Chapter sponsored a Children's Santa Fe Trail Day Camp which was held on July 12 at the City of McPherson Museum with 10 children participating. Instructors for the Day Camp were Chris Day and Marcia Fox (SFTA Education Committee) from Wamego, KS. Glenda Schmidt and Bill and Jean Silverstrand assisted. The event got very nice local coverage in the newspaper. Purpose of the event is to educate grade school children about the history of the SFT. Steve and Glenda hosted 2 adults and 3 children for a follow-up tour of the SFT ruts on their property north of Lehigh. Ginger Becker, a member of our Chapter, and a teacher in Marion County, is interested in having a similar Day Camp in Marion County.

The Lyons Club in Durham, KS celebrated their 50-year anniversary with a dinner April 29. They had a history theme with emphasis on the Santa Fe Trail. They saw the SFTA web site and the Cottonwood Crossing Chapter pages, and thought those were really neat, so they contacted our Chapter to see if we could assist them. So, Steve Schmidt put together a little time line that was used on their place mats, along with some other historical stuff about Durham. With Linda Revello's assistance, SFTA furnished 125 copies of the tri-fold color SFTA membership brochure and the NPS Santa Fe National Historic Trail brochure. One of each was put one at every place setting. The Lyons Club was very appreciative of this support. Of significance here are (1) they are very complimentary of the web site (2) they want to help promote the SFTA and (3) we had an opportunity to promote the SFTA. They expected attendees from about a 5 county area.

Gil Michel and Vernon Lohrentz recently repaired some Auto Tour signs, and Bill Silverstrand and Marlin Christensen did some weed-whacking around the big Stone Monument and other places. Kent and Ginger Becker have been maintaining the Cottonwood Crossing kiosk. Thanks for their efforts.

Programs this year consisted of:

March 29 – Joanne VanCoevern – Letters From Fort Dodge

May 10 – Jim Donahue – Crane Ranch and Durham, Kansas area history followed by tour of the Marion, Kansas Museum

August 16 – Dr. Tom Eddy – Geology and Ecology of the Flint Hills

November 8 – Jon Atkinson – SFTA Strategic Plan and Election of Chapter Officers

The Chapter generally carries a cash balance of \$1,000 to \$1,300. However, this will be reduced somewhat with out Auto Tour brochure development and printing costs.

We carry 41 family units on our mailing list representing 72 persons. Of that number, 28 family units are paid Chapter members representing 48 persons. We do not track membership in the National SFTA.

Chapter officers for 2007 are:

President – Steve Schmidt (McPherson)  
Vice-President – Sharron Schutte (NW of Lehigh)  
Secretary – Doug Sharp (Marion)  
Treasurer – Bill Silverstrand (McPherson)  
Historian – Gil Michel (Newton)  
Wagon Tracks Correspondent – Vernon Lohrentz (Newton)  
Director – Kent Becker  
Director – Vacant

Prepared by Steve Schmidt September 6, 2007

