

**Statement from Deb Goodrich,
Chair, Santa Fe Trail 200th**

In 1925, America marked the centennial of the Santa Fe Trail.

Yes, 19-*twenty-five*, not *twenty-one*.

The truth is, both years and everything in between was significant to the development of the Santa Fe Trail.

While William Becknell's successful trip into Mexico was history-making, it was only opening the door. For the next four years, people became excited. Traffic increased. Potential was realized, envisioned.

In 1825, George Sibley surveyed the "highway between nations." At the same time, treaties with the Kaw and Osage Nations allowed safe passage for freighters. More than that, Mexican citizens saw the potential for trade with the United States and began their own trade excursions *up*, rather than *down*, the Trail.

The SFTA envisioned 2021 as the "big year" for our 200th commemoration. While the challenges of Covid did cause some postponements, the greater reason for extending our anniversary is the **scope of the story**. A story so big, it cannot be told in one year.

Through the efforts of our chapters and partners, the complex story of the Santa Fe Trail has reached new audiences and we have gained so much traction in 2021. Continuing our official commemoration through 2025 gives us the opportunity to build on the relationships we have established, to expand our audience, and share stories on a deeper level.

The bicentennial is the hook we can continue to use to reach a broader audience and maintain the boost in membership it brought us. Engagement is the key. After this year of events, folks are curious and hungry for more events. Let us include them in the events that have become part of our regular schedules, and we will become a part of their schedules for the long-term.

Like our forebears 200 years ago, let us take the anniversary of the years that shaped the Trail to shape the telling of its history now.

