



FRIENDS OF PIO PICO, INC.

Supporting Cultural and Educational Programs at Pio Pico State Historic Park
"Bringing El Ranchito Back to Life"



Press Release – For Immediate Release

FRIENDS OF PIO PICO, CITY OF WHITTIER, AND PRIVATE DONORS RESCUE PIO PICO STATE HISTORIC PARK FROM CLOSURE

June 26, 2012 – Whittier, California

After just over three months of working tirelessly to raise funds to prevent the closure of Pio Pico State Historic Park, the Friends of Pio Pico are proud to announce the success of their RESCUE PIO PICO campaign to raise \$80,000 to save the park.

"Today we celebrate the victory of saving a truly historic landmark in our community," said Carolyn Schoff, President of the Friends of Pio Pico, the nonprofit cooperating association for the park. "People said we couldn't do it in three months, but I am elated to announce today that we reached our goal, and Pio Pico State Historic Park will remain open for the next year!"

The funds are a collaborative effort between the City of Whittier, which has contributed \$30,000 to the cause, and the Friends of Pio Pico, which will be contributing the remaining \$50,000. Half of the funds saving the park are thanks to a recent generous donation of \$40,000 from the Estates of Mose J. Firestone and Sylvia Dilman Firestone. The remainder of the \$50,000 raised by the Friends of Pio Pico came from private donors and community organizations donating anywhere from a few dollars to a thousand dollars at a time. One recent donation of \$140 came from Kidz Saving California State Parks, a group of homeschooled children from the San Fernando Valley that came to the park to volunteer and later held a bake sale to raise funds to save the park. In addition, the Friends of Pio Pico have held several fundraising events including a recycling drive, an Easter Egg Hunt, a birthday party of Pio Pico and most recently, a community festival called Fiesta de Pio Pico, featuring dancers, music, and historical activities for the family.

Pio Pico State Historic Park is one of California's oldest State Historic Parks, and is the site of the 1850s adobe mansion of Pio de Jesus Pico IV, last Governor of Mexican California. The park serves the local community and school children who come to experience the unique opportunity this park provides to "walk through California history." The park has been open to the public as a historic site since 1909.

Pio Pico State Historic Park was one of 70 California state parks slated for closure on or before July 1, 2012 due to state budget cuts. California's State Historic Parks are the hardest hit, and nearly half of them appeared on the closure list. Today's announcement makes Pio Pico State Historic Park the last of the Los Angeles County state parks to be removed from the closure list.

Keeping the park open for the next year means that the park's summer programs will go on as scheduled. The Junior Rancher program for children will be held each Saturday from 11 AM to 12:30 PM, beginning July 14th and going through August 25th. Reservations are required for the event, and more information can be found at www.piopico.org. Upcoming events also include a Summer Lecture Series, Art in the Park, Volunteer Training and Workshops, Fall Living History Days and a major fundraiser to be held later in the year.

But this reprieve from closure is only temporary, and the Friends of Pio Pico plan to continue fundraising efforts to keep the park open beyond July 1, 2013. With no apparent relief for state parks in sight for the next few years, the Friends are looking for a long-term solution that would remove the park permanently from the closure list.

The Friends of Pio Pico wish to thank all those who have donated to help keep the park open and encourage everyone to continue helping them RESCUE Pio Pico State Historic Park for future generations. For more information on the continued efforts to save the Pio Pico State Historic Park, please check our website at www.piopico.org or contact Carolyn Schoff at friendsofpiopico@gmail.com.

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