



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 VOW TO SAVE PIO PICO STATE HISTORIC PARK FROM CLOSURE WITH "RESCUE PIO PICO" CAMPAIGN

March 16, 2012 – Whittier, California

Pio Pico State Historic is one of 70 California state parks slated for closure on or before July 1, 2012. These closures were mandated after a \$33M cut to the state park budget, resulting in the closure of 25% of the state's 278 state parks. California's State Historic Parks are the hardest hit, and nearly half of them appear on the closure list.

After months of exploring other options for keeping the Pio Pico State Historic Park open with the local city governments and LA County as partners, the Friends of Pio Pico (the park's nonprofit cooperating association) is vowing to keep the park open by raising \$80,000 to cover the shortfall that would otherwise close the park's gates.

"The local cities and county have always been great supporters of the park," says Carolyn Schoff, President of the Friends of Pio Pico. "But to be honest, no government agency (city, county or otherwise) currently has the funds or available resources to keep the park open. We are currently working closely with the City of Whittier and they are helping us in whatever ways they can. During their May budget review, they will consider what resources may be available to support the park. We are also waiting to hear back from Supervisor Don Knabe as to whether he will be able to assist with funding as well." At a recent emergency strategic planning session, Schoff and the entire Board of Directors were resolved to save the park and hammered out a plan to raise the \$80,000. The campaign, dubbed "Rescue Pio Pico," seeks to combine special events at and outside the park, designed to raise public awareness and bring the community together to raise the funds over the next three months.

In addition to seeking donors, benefactors and corporations to help raise the funds, the campaign includes an Easter Egg Hunt on April 7th and Pio Pico's Birthday Celebration on May 4th. It will conclude with Fiesta de Pio Pico: Celebration or Wake? on June 16th, either celebrating the success of efforts to save the park or a wake to mourn the loss of a great historic treasure. Other plans include getting the entire community involved with the "Pesos for Pio Pico" recycling fundraising drive (every other Saturday at the park beginning on March 31st) and with the "Pedal for Pio Pico" bike-a-thon.

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 Friends of Pio Pico is the nonprofit cooperating association for the park. The nonprofit was founded in 1999 in order to raise over \$3M to renovate the historic adobe and park after the 1987 and 1994 earthquakes nearly destroyed them. The group has also supported the cultural and educational programs at the park since its reopening in 2003. Once again, it is stepping up to the plate to raise funds to keep the park open!

For more information on the "Rescue Pio Pico" Campaign and 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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