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For Immediate Release

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Michael Martin Murphey to Chair Santa Fe Trail 200

The Santa Fe Trail Association (SFTA) has announced that legendary singer/songwriter Michael Martin Murphey will be the honorary chair of Santa Fe Trail 200.

“The SFTA is extremely proud to have Murphey as the honorary chair,” said SFTA President Larry Short. “Murphey is a strong proponent of the Santa Fe Trail and will bring excitement and a new generation of trail enthusiasts as he performs and promotes our Trail up and down its length and across the nation.”

“I’m deeply honored to be chosen as the Honorary Chair of the Santa Fe Trail’s bicentennial commemoration,” said Murphey. “The story of the Santa Fe Trail is as essential to the American story as that of the Revolution. From the beginning, our fathers were looking West.... I am thrilled to be a spokesman for that story.”

Murphey’s career has spanned decades with such hits as “Wildfire” and “Carolina in the Pines,” and “Geronimo’s Cadillac.” His recent album, *Austinology*, has met with critical acclaim and paired Murphey with old friends Lyle Lovett and Willie Nelson, among others. He has been a champion for the history of the American West and the Santa Fe Trail.

The bicentennial of the opening of this historic trade route will be marked with events throughout 2021.

“Our SFTA leadership group and twelve chapters are developing plans for numerous major events and commemorations of that first journey from Missouri to Mexico,” said Short.

In addition, a national steering committee with membership from a variety of disciplines has been established to offer guidance and feedback.

The SFTA was established in 1986 to help protect and preserve the historic Santa Fe Trail. In 1987, the U.S. Congress recognized the significance of the Santa Fe Trail through its designation of the Santa Fe Trail as a National Historic Trail, a component of the National Trails System administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The SFTA has a cooperative agreement in place with the NPS that allows them to work on a variety of projects that meet the common goals to preserve, protect, promote, and increase the public's knowledge and enjoyment of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

William Becknell left Franklin, MO, on September 1, 1821, with a small group of men and a cargo of goods and arrived in Santa Fe on November 16. They were welcomed with open arms by Mexican citizens and government officials and encouraged to return soon with more goods to trade. Thus began the story of one of America's first international trade routes.

To find out how your community or organization can participate in this historic commemoration, contact Joanne VanCoevern, SFTA Manager at manager@santafetrail.org or 2021 Chair Deb Goodrich at publicity@santafetrail.org.