



S.A. TRICENTENNIAL
1718-2018



TRICENTENNIAL
CALENDAR

TODAY

World Heritage Festival: Multiple locations, worldheritagefestival.org. A five-day celebration spread across the five San Antonio Missions and surrounding areas. Visit the festival's official website for a complete schedule of events. Through Sunday.

UPCOMING

Of Clay and Metal: Mexican Cultural Institute, 600 HemisFair Plaza Way, sanantonio300.org. This exhibit contrasts the work of Mexican masters of pottery with art by Isaac Maxwell. 6-8 p.m. Sept. 13.

Noche de Recuerdos Poetry & Visual Art Showcase: The Movement Gallery, 1416 E. Commerce St., altscm.org. Visual artists, spoken word poets and performers honor Native American culture and traditions at this creative showcase. Free. 6-10 p.m. Sept. 13.

Una Noche Mexicana: La Trinidad United Methodist Church, 300 San Fernando St., latrinidadchurch.com. A family-friendly, traditional celebration of Mexican independence with food, music and a celebration of culture. 5 p.m. Sept. 15.

La Danza de las Aguilas: Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St., sanantonio300.org. A dance drama based on the Mexican tradition with a focus on masks, costumes and movement. 6 p.m. Sept. 16.

MISSIONS

WORLD HERITAGE SITE IS THE FIRST IN TEXAS

Annual festival this week celebrates S.A., UNESCO

FROM EXPRESS-NEWS ARCHIVES

In just 20 minutes on July 5, 2015, an international panel in Germany unanimously agreed to bestow World Heritage Site recognition on the five San Antonio missions, ending a rigorous nine-year quest.

The designation by the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is the first in Texas and the 23rd in the nation, joining the Statue of Liberty, Monticello and Independence Hall. Across the world, there are more than 1,000 sites, including the Great Wall of China, Stonehenge and the Galapagos Islands.

"The world now knows what we in the South Side and the city of San Antonio have always known: that we have a world treasure in our very own backyard," District 3 Councilwoman Rebecca Viagran said in a statement at the time. "The honor of receiving the official World Heritage Site designation will help ensure that we can continue to enhance and preserve our treasure as we share it with the rest of the international community."

The site comprises the state-owned Alamo complex, or Mission San Antonio de Valero, and four



Staff file photo

The site comprises the state-owned Alamo complex, or Mission San Antonio de Valero, along with the four federally run missions and the Rancho de las Cabras, nearly 100 acres of federal parkland about 25 miles southeast of the city by the San Antonio River, with ruins from its historic mission ranch land.

federally run missions – Concepción, San José, San Juan and Espada – that each has an active Catholic parish. It also includes Rancho de las Cabras, nearly 100 acres of federal parkland about 25 miles southeast of the city by the San Antonio River, with ruins from its historic use as mission ranch land.

A study prepared for

Bexar County and released in 2013 estimated that the economic effect from the five missions could be increased by up to 26 percent, to \$502 million annually, by 2025, with proper marketing of the UNESCO title. The report recommended use of festivals, such as the annual World Heritage Festival being held this week.

According to the 349-page nomination, although an interweaving of Spanish and indigenous cultures could be found at other mission sites in the Western Hemisphere, "there existed in San Antonio a level of respect for the indigenous peoples that was uncharacteristic elsewhere." In comparison to mission sites in Mexico, California and

The Missions

In conjunction with the World Heritage Festival, we'll be looking at the four missions that, along with the Alamo and the Rancho de las Cabras, received the U.N. designation.

Friday: Concepción
Saturday: San José
Sunday: San Juan
Monday: Espada

elsewhere, "the ensemble of San Antonio Missions ranks first ... and can fill a critical gap on the World Heritage List," the application stated.

Two members of the 21-nation World Heritage committee, representing Japan and Lebanon, noted the Alamo's fame as the site of the 1836 siege and battle for Texas independence. The Lebanese representative said, "We used to see only El Alamo" but have "discovered there's a complex Franciscan history on the frontiers on the borders of the United States."

Paul Ringenbach, lead author of the nomination, said local boosters succeeded in making a case that the missions possessed an "outstanding universal value" – a site worth saving "for all of humanity."

"It's as if the world community is saying, 'You're right. This is a special place.'"

A longer version of this report by Scott Huddlestone ran July 6, 2015. Read it at ExpressNews.com.