



# A Journey through the Presidio

THE PRESIDIO TRUST  
2007 YEAR-END REPORT

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# A Journey through the Presidio



One of the best ways to experience the Presidio is along its trails, whether out for a morning run, a Sunday afternoon bike ride, or a leisurely stroll. Each pathway reveals a different aspect of the Presidio's character and history. Many of the trails that cross the Presidio were informally cut by soldiers as they went about their daily routines, reminding us that generations of America's youth once trained here. Some paths suggest the curiosity of nature lovers and history buffs alike, as they lead into fog-shrouded forests and wildflower glens, or to mysterious fortifications and parade grounds. Scenic overlooks interpose gracefully and draw visitors to breathtaking views of the Pacific, the bay, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Marin headlands, and the San Francisco skyline. The Presidio's trails tell the story of the place – how it evolved to meet the needs of the military, and how it is serving the community today as a national park.

A dozen major routes cross the Presidio. Several, such as the California Coastal Trail, the Bay Area Ridge Trail, and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, are regional trails that connect the varied topographies of Marin and the East Bay to San Francisco and the Peninsula, and points beyond as far as Oregon and Mexico, creating a system that draws the local community as well as visitors from around the world.

To celebrate the Presidio's signature event of 2007 – a landmark gift from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund to improve and expand the Presidio's trails and Rob Hill Campground – this report takes a journey through the park on five major trails. Exciting improvements are underway in every corner of the park. Walk with us and get answers to “what's going on over there,” find hidden treasures, and discover new ways to enjoy the park – now and in years to come.

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## PRESIDIO TRAILS

 Bay Area Ridge Trail  
 Batteries to Bluffs Trail  
 Ecology Trail  
 Golden Gate Promenade

 California Coastal Trail +  
 Juan Bautista de Anza +  
 Lobos Creek Valley  
 Mountain Lake +

 Presidio Promenade +  
 Lovers' Lane +  
 Tennessee Hollow  
 Park Boulevard

+ Trails featured in this report

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PRESIDIO TRAILS AND OVERLOOKS



**LEGEND**

-  Existing Trail
-  Coming Soon
-  Trail Page Number

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# The Presidio of San Francisco

The Presidio is a place where American stories are told and new history is created. Guarding the Golden Gate since the nation's birth, the Presidio was in constant use as a military post for more than two hundred years. It was founded by Spain in 1776, and came under the control of the U.S. Army in 1846. The first "around the world" flights touched down in the Presidio; the first women to enter the Army trained as nurses at Letterman Hospital; and the Army commanded its Pacific Troops during World War II from the Main Post. The Presidio remained the seat of military power for the western states until 1994 when the Presidio became a national park.

One of the most important places in the west, the Presidio became a National Historic Landmark in 1962. It holds the story of our nation as the military pushed the country's frontier across the con-

continent. Through a century of national expansion and growing power, the role of the military is articulated in the Presidio's buildings and landscapes, its fortifications and memorials. Generations of young Americans passed through its gates, committing their lives to an ideal, protecting the nation. The Presidio has enduring value for the American people.

Today, a community is growing in the Presidio, making it a unique national park. Nearly 3,000 people live in the homes that the Army built from the Civil War through the Cold War. More than 200 organizations and businesses operate from buildings that the Army vacated little more than a decade ago. The everyday activity of people reminds us that the Presidio, unlike the wilderness parks, was shaped by people. Its preservation requires new ways of thinking about national parks.

## The Presidio Trust

Created by Congress in 1996, the Presidio Trust's mission is to preserve and enhance the Presidio as an enduring resource for the American people. Six presidential appointees and the Secretary of the Interior, or his designee, sit on the Board of Directors and set the direction and policies for the transformation of the historic military post into a national park. The Trust is charged with making the Presidio financially self-sustaining. After 2012, the Trust will not receive annual

appropriations, and is required to fund the Presidio's operations, maintenance, and ongoing upgrades with income earned from rehabilitating and reusing the park's buildings.

The Presidio is sustaining itself like every healthy community – earning, saving, and investing in the future. This simple economy generates the capital that is making the Presidio a great national park and will ensure its preservation.

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# A Place in Motion

The Presidio has always been a place in motion. Throughout its history, this beautiful land at the Golden Gate has undergone continual change and evolution: windswept sand dunes became forested ridges and parade grounds; humble adobe gave way to clapboard and brick.

Although no longer serving the needs of a military community, the Presidio is still evolving to serve the American people – as a national park and as a National Historic Landmark. One of the largest historic preservation projects in the country, more than half of the Presidio’s historic buildings have been rehabilitated. Many of these buildings are being used by people dedicated to addressing the issues of our time, from media and energy resources, to fitness and youth development. A new generation is making history.

Every quarter of the park is in motion. Plans have been put forth by Equity Community Builders (ECB) to transform the Thornburgh district, a small-scale streetscape in the northeastern quadrant of the park with world-class views, into a “green” village where innovators will explore alternative energy. The Thornburgh project will be ECB’s fifth project in the park. The Main Post, the heart of the Presidio, is becoming the urban center of the national park, alive with cultural programs and services that welcome visitors. We have chosen Larkspur Hotels and Restaurants to convert historic officers’ quarters into guest suites as well as to build a new lodge and restaurant. We are also seeking cultural institutions for the Main Post. A request for proposals has elicited strong interest and we look forward to selecting tenants in the coming months. Recreational activities are coming to the airplane hangars that curve along the bay’s western shoreline at Crissy Field. Soon people will create a new community in the historic buildings in the southeastern section of the park, once the busy Public Health Service Hospital complex. New trails and overlooks will integrate the area, abandoned for more than 20 years, with the rest of the park, allowing visitors to hike the complete perimeter of the park and to explore the rich habitats of the Presidio’s southern hills.

Many partners have worked with us on the Presidio’s transformation from an historic military post into a national park. Over the past year we have worked closely with our long-standing partners, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the National Park Service, and with one of the earliest Presidio benefactors, the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, to improve the Presidio’s open spaces. Thanks to a lead gift and challenge grant from the Haas, Jr. Fund, a 24-mile network of trails and eight scenic overlooks will be completed within the next three to five years. By



Mission Blue Butterfly on Lupine

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summer 2009, Rob Hill Campground will welcome twice the number of campers to a national park camping experience. The Haas, Jr. gift in combination with their earlier gift to the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy for Crissy Field is the largest gift of its kind to the national park system. We honor the Haas, Jr. family for their generosity, vision, and dedication to the community and our national treasures, and we are grateful to them for their leadership.

In keeping with the spirit of the Haas, Jr. Fund gift, we are proud to fund a new program at Rob Hill Campground, Camping at the Presidio (CAP), which reaches out to underserved urban children who have little opportunity to enjoy nature, sleep under the stars, listen to the ocean, and explore a national park. The program is being developed in partnership with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and Bay Area Wilderness Training. In its pilot year, CAP introduced 270 children to the Presidio. Over the next five years, we intend to serve more than 10,000 children.

The Presidio is still a place in motion – change is the essence of its character. As you follow the trails through and around the park, you will see activity throughout. All that we have accomplished in the last decade and all that we plan to achieve in the coming years will continue the Presidio's evolution, adding to its legacy as an important American place, as a singular national park, and as a beloved community resource.

Some things never change – the fog hanging under the bridge, the light through the trees, the restrained beauty of the buildings, and the energy of people who keep the Presidio a living place. A new kind of park is taking shape at the Golden Gate. Come take a hike, explore the park, and let us know what you think.



**David H. Grubb**  
Chairman, Board of Directors



**Craig Middleton**  
Executive Director



Craig Middleton and David Grubb



# Presidio Promenade

The most “urban” of Presidio trails, the Presidio Promenade takes travelers on a journey from the Lombard Gate to the Golden Gate Bridge through some of the park’s most historic districts, including Letterman and the Main Post.

#### Length

2.1 miles (3.4 km)

#### Don't Miss

The Wayburn Redwood Grove was dedicated in 2006 to honor Dr. Edgar and Peggy Wayburn, whose advocacy helped preserve more parkland than anyone else in our history. This restful spot overlooks a newly restored creek habitat.

#### For Kids

A statue of Yoda greets visitors to the Letterman Digital Arts Center, home to Lucasfilm.

#### Coming Soon

The section of the Promenade from the Main Post Transit Center to the Golden Gate Bridge is currently being improved. The new route will allow visitors to hike near the historic Cavalry Stables where the U.S. Park Police Mounted Patrol boards its horses.



## SEEN ALONG THE PRESIDIO PROMENADE



#### First in Nursing

Built in 1918 as part of the Letterman Hospital Complex, Thompson Hall housed the first school of nursing ever created by the Army, and also served as nurses’ quarters. It was removed in the early 1990s. A nearby landfill restoration site was recently named Thompson Reach, honoring this military history. **4**

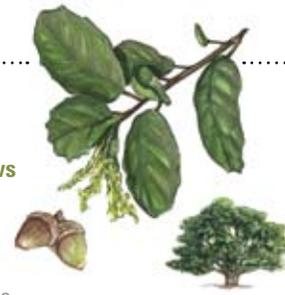


#### Pacific Chorus Frogs

On a quiet night you might hear chorus frogs croaking from the freshwater swale at Crissy Field. Though tiny, their voices can carry a distance.

#### Oaks and Willows

Oak and willow woodlands are indigenous to the Presidio landscape. They are the most valuable plants in the park for wildlife.

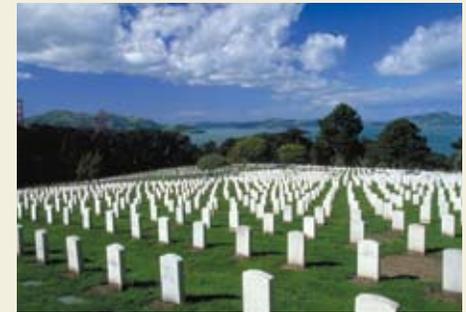


#### Letterman Memorial Tiles

In 1990, before the hospital closed, nearly 800 staff members from Letterman Army Medical Center purchased terra cotta tiles commemorating their service. In 2005, these tiles were relocated to a place of honor along the Promenade. **2**

#### Mexican Fan Palm

This tree, native to Baja California, has been planted in several spots along the Promenade. The skirts of dried leaves clothing the trunks provide a nesting place for Hooded Orioles.



#### National Cemetery

National Cemetery was the first established on the West Coast. More than 30,000 people are buried here, including 35 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, Members of Congress Phillip and Sala Burton, and Major Dana Crissy, for whom Crissy Field is named. **7**

After the Civil War, Congress included segregated African American regiments in the Regular Army. The troops, which eventually became known as "Buffalo Soldiers," helped map the western frontier, sometimes engaging in conflict with native peoples while protecting American settlers. They also served notably in Cuba, and all four regiments passed through the Presidio on their way to and from the Philippine War.

Buffalo Soldier history is visible at several sites along the Presidio Promenade, including the Ruger Street barracks near the Lombard Gate and at the Cavalry Stables.

In 1903, a Presidio Buffalo Soldier squadron was dispatched to patrol Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Parks, protecting lands from "injury and depredations," creating new roadways, and opening the parks to visitors. A second troop served as a "Guard of Honor" welcoming President Theodore Roosevelt to the Presidio.

Four hundred fifty Buffalo Soldiers are buried at San Francisco National Cemetery along the Promenade route.



**Wildlife and Fresh Waters**

Thirty-five thousand native plants are growing at the site where an Army-era landfill was removed and creek waters were "daylighted" above ground. Since restoration work was completed, the number of resident and migrating breeding birds that use the area has increased from five to thirteen, and stickleback fish are seen swimming upstream. **4**

**West Crissy**

The historic airplane hangars and warehouses at West Crissy Field, dating from the waterfront's history as the center of west coast aviation, are becoming recreational destinations. A rock climbing gym and children's swim school will soon open their doors. **9**



**Thornburgh Revitalization**

The Trust is working with Equity Community Builders to revitalize twelve historic buildings in the district west of Gorgas Gate. Once providing "back of house" services for Letterman Hospital, Thornburgh will become a "green" village for innovators and entrepreneurs in sustainability and the new energy economy. **3**



**Crissy Field Overlook**

Ground has been broken to create a new scenic overlook with views of the bay, Crissy Field, and the San Francisco skyline. A beautiful stone plaza will welcome the public in spring 2008, thanks to a lead gift and challenge grant from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr., Fund. **8**



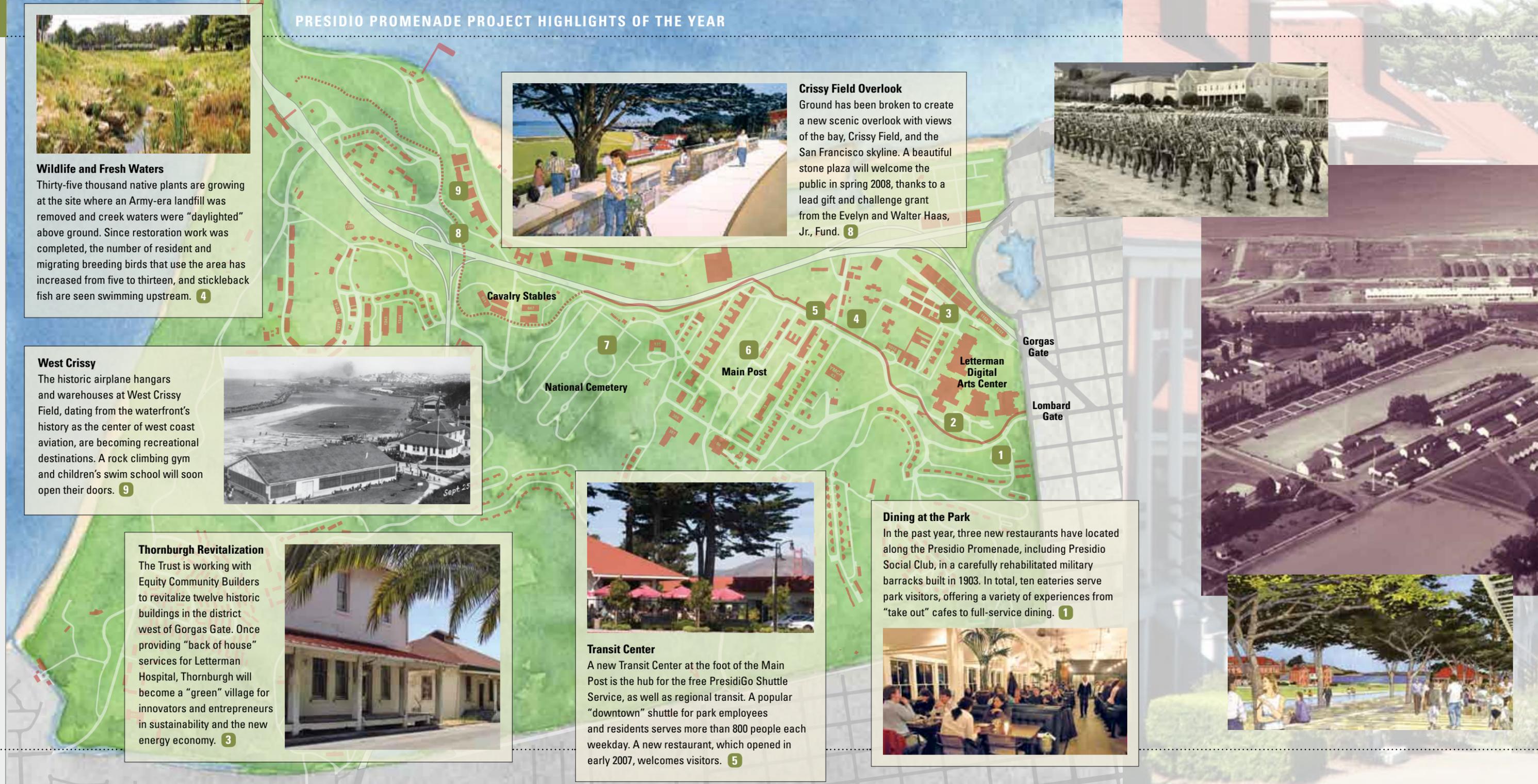
**Dining at the Park**

In the past year, three new restaurants have located along the Presidio Promenade, including Presidio Social Club, in a carefully rehabilitated military barracks built in 1903. In total, ten eateries serve park visitors, offering a variety of experiences from "take out" cafes to full-service dining. **1**



**Transit Center**

A new Transit Center at the foot of the Main Post is the hub for the free PresidiGo Shuttle Service, as well as regional transit. A popular "downtown" shuttle for park employees and residents serves more than 800 people each weekday. A new restaurant, which opened in early 2007, welcomes visitors. **5**



**The Main Post – Revitalizing the Heart of the Park**

The Presidio Promenade loops through the Main Post, the Presidio's historic center, before it meets up with the trails in the wilder western regions of the park.

The Main Post developed around three parade grounds, 25 acres of open space, and is still evolving around its magnificent open spaces. During 2007, the Trust completed the environmental review process and is finalizing designs for re-landscaping the largest of the parade grounds. With its dramatic slope and surprising views, it will become one of the region's premier gathering places.

The Trust has also chosen a partner to develop lodging and a restaurant, and has issued a request for proposals seeking tenants that bring cultural activity, programs, and liveliness to the heart of the park. An archaeology program is taking shape at El Presidio, the original Spanish fort, and construction has begun to convert one of the Post's signature buildings into a museum about Walt Disney's contribution to popular culture.

The Main Post will welcome all, those who come from nearby for a stroll to the bridge, as well as from around the world to explore the history of one of the most important places in the west. **6**

