

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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Wildland Fallen Firefighter Memorial Unveiled at Smokey Bear Historical Park in Capitan, NM



Capitan, NM – The New Mexico Wildland Fallen Firefighter Memorial is now available for public viewing at the State Forestry Division’s Smokey Bear Historical Park in Capitan, NM. The bronze Memorial is the only one of its kind in New Mexico and honors more than 30 wildland firefighters from across the state who lost their lives in the line of duty.

“Smokey Bear Historical Park is the perfect place for New Mexicans to be able to honor the brave wildland firefighters who gave their lives protecting our state,” said Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. “This beautiful Memorial provides a place for everyone to pay their respects and reflect on those we have lost to wildfires.”

The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

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“We are eternally grateful to all the men and women who put their lives on the line every time they face a wildfire,” said State Forester Laura McCarthy. “This Memorial is now a permanent reminder of the selfless acts of wildland firefighters who didn’t come home.”

Dozens of people attended the official public unveiling of the masterpiece on Saturday, May 4th, which features a wildland firefighter kneeling next to the boots of a fallen comrade. Smokey Bear Historical Park Manager Bennie Long spearheaded the Memorial effort that began nearly two years ago after local firefighters mentioned seeing similar statues and plaques in other states, but not in New Mexico.

“We saw the emotional impact that it had on our wildland firefighters and knew that it was something we had to do to represent New Mexico,” stated Long. “It’s exciting to see the dream come to life so that everyone who visits Smokey Bear Historical Park can pay their respects.”

Ms. Long recruited the Smokey Bear Hometown Association to help with gathering private donations for the Memorial, which cost approximately \$43,000. Utah based artist Matt Glenn of Big Statues LLC., created the bronze sculpture. Glenn is well known for his work, which also includes a bronze statue in Prescott, Arizona made for the 19 Granite Mountain Hotshots who perished during the 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire.

The NM Wildland Fallen Firefighter Memorial is located on the grounds of Smokey Bear Historical Park, 118 Smokey Bear Blvd. (Highway 380) in the heart of Capitan, NM. Summer hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., winter hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information go to nmforestry.com.



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