City of Benson
City Council Communication

Regular Meeting **January 28, 2013**

To: Mayor and Council Agenda Item # 2

From: Glenn H. Nichols, City Manager

Subject:

Presentation by author Gerald T. Ahnert on “The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail Company in Arizona”

Discussion:

This presentation, which includes a power point presentation, will focus on the trail’s route and locations within the Benson area.

Bob Nilson, the Tourism/Visitor Center Supervisor stated that this route through Benson would be additional history that tourists would seek out as part of their interest in the area. Mr. Nilson stated that the Visitor Center would provide a brochure highlighting the sites.

Staff Recommendation:

Information only

NEWS RELEASE

City of Benson, Arizona

For immediate release
January 11, 2013

Contact: Bob Nilson
520-586-4293
bob@BensonVisitorCenter.com

Contacts:
Gerald T. Ahnert, Author

Singing Wind Bookshop 520-586-2425

Tel: 315-472-3876
Cell: 315-200-5023
E-mail: nobottomgulch@yahoo.com

Butterfield's Overland Mail Company trail could receive National Historic Trail designation

Author appearing at Singing Wind Bookshop, Jan. 27

Benson, Ariz. (Jan. 11, 2013) – Visitors could have a better understanding of the role the Butterfield Overland Stage trail played in settling the American West if the route is designated a National Historic Trail. In 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives authorized the study of resources along the Butterfield Overland trail. This is just one step of the process that could make that designation possible.

Gerald T. Ahnert, author of the book, *The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail Company in Arizona, 1858-1861* will talk about the area's unique sites during a Jan. 27th talk at the Singing Wind Bookshop.

In addition to the talk at Singing Wind Bookshop, Ahnert will give a presentation to the Benson City Council on Monday, Jan. 28. The presentation will focus on the trail's route and locations within the area.

National Historic Trails are extended trails that closely follow a historic trail or route of travel of national significance. Designation identifies and protects historic routes, historic remnants, and artifacts for public use and enjoyment.

Arkansas Senator John Boozman introduced bill H. R. 5980 to the House of Representatives in 2006. The National Park Service is now studying resources on the eight-state trail, which includes Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. The trail is more than 2,800 miles long.

Ahnert will give detailed information about sites along the trail during his talk. His sources include

- The California Column, which described the route in their General Orders
- An accurately-surveyed General Land Office map of 1873
- Accounts from Silas St. John, a survivor of the massacre at Dragoon Springs Stage Station. In his 1915 letter to Professor Forbes at the University of Arizona, he described the Butterfield trail from the New Mexico border to Tucson.

Those interested in the trail can join the "Butterfield Overland Trail Friends" Facebook group to learn about the trail and the progress of the designation.