

Clovis initiates a walk of fame for residents

By Marc Benjamin
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A Qualcomm executive, a former Oakland Raiders quarterback, a U.S. president's deputy chief of staff and former "Gunsmoke" actor all have something in common: All spent a significant portion of their lives in Clovis.

On Thursday, the ties that bind those Clovis residents will be commemorated along the Old Town Clovis Trail near Shaw and Clovis avenues, with the unveiling of banners of the five current and former residents: Franklin Antonio, a co-founder of San Diego-based Qualcomm; Chris Colfer, an actor best known for his role in the television show "Glee"; former quarterback Daryle Lamonica; Maria Echeveste, a former White House deputy chief of staff for President Bill Clinton; and Ken Curtis, most famous for his role as Festus Haggen in the "Gunsmoke" television show and as former lead singer for the Tommy Dorsey Band.

The banners will be unveiled at 9 a.m. at the northeast corner of Shaw and Clovis avenues.

"We were looking for a really good mix for the first group," said Shawn Miller, the city's business development manager. "We didn't want all men, we didn't want all women, we didn't want all actors and we didn't want all athletes."

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Shawn Miller, Clovis business development manager

The Clovis trail banners are the equivalent of a star on a Hollywood sidewalk, Miller said.

"We wanted to have a walk of fame and morphed into this," he said.

The banners are the first in a series that will be featured along the Old Town Clovis Trail in the coming years, said Miller. The portion of the trail where the banners will hang is known as Heritage Walk because it contains Clovis historical statues between Shaw and Sierra avenues.

The first group of Clovis residents was selected by a subcommittee of the city's Tourism Advisory Committee, which has spent nearly two years collecting a list of names that could be commemorated on the 2-foot by 4-foot banners. The committee found more than 50 well-known people with connections to Clovis.

A second round of five banners will be hung next year.

Eventually, the flags could continue along the trail to the Civic Center North area at Third Street and Clovis Avenue, the future home of a Fresno County Library branch, Clovis Senior Center and city transit hub, Miller said.

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