

Tucumcari Neon Restoration Project Update - November 19, 2023:

Phase One of the Tucumcari Neon Restoration is nearly completed!

This phase covered La Cita Mexican Restaurant, Motel Safari, Americana Motel, Del's Restaurant, Loretta's Burrito Hut, the Wash Lady at Blvd. Laundromat, and Tee Pee Curios. We plan to have all seven signs completed by years end.

The New Mexico Route 66 Association would like to thank Tucumcari Mainstreet for assisting us with this project and for their generous donation. Thank you also to the generous individuals from all over the world who have contributed to the project either through our GoFundMe campaign or checks we have received directly to the association office in Albuquerque. Take pride in knowing your donation assisted in covering half the total cost of every participating business's replacement glass, transformers, wiring, and other items needed to have their signs shining once again. The New Mexico Route 66 Association could not have done this without your financial assistance.

We would like to thank Jerry Mares from La Cita Mexican Restaurant and Tucumcari Lumber for the use of his construction lift and Gar Engman of TeePee Curios for the use of his bucket truck. Thank you to Paul Greenstein for flying in from Los Angeles CA to assist with neon duties and teaching both the neon team and businesses owners about various things needed to fix signs. Thank you to Johnnie Meier, Melissa Beasley-Lee, Mike Lee, Larry Plath, and Connie Loveland who have volunteered numerous hours over the past six months removing broken neon, creating templates, installing new neon tubing, and troubleshooting additional sign issues all to help Tucumcari get its glow back.

Some of the details and photos of the first phase of work can be found in our most recent Winter 2023-24 Issue of Route 66 New Mexico Magazine. Now that the issue has had time to reach our members and donators on the GoFundMe site first, we are posting it to the public on our website for others to enjoy and stay abreast on the progress of the project.

Phase Two of Tucumcari Neon Restoration will be (Flora May's) Rt66 Welcome Center & Gift Shop/Townhouse, Odeon Theatre, Pow Wow Restaurant (Thunderbird), and Buckaroo Motel. This phase will begin in January. We will be sure to pack our long underwear for this!

In addition to the magazine article, below is a more current update as of Sunday, November 19, 2023:

Motel Safari is fully back up and glowing once again!



Del's Restaurant is fully back up and glowing once again!



Loretta's Burrito Hut now has new neon and is glowing once again! However, one side is flickering and most likely will need a new transformer. It has been ordered and will be installed on our next restoration trip.

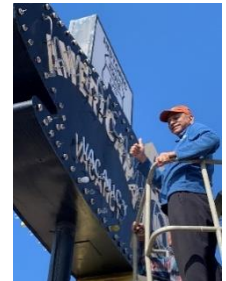


La Cita Mexican Restaurant now has new neon, lightbulbs, and hardware where needed. After installing everything, the neon is still not on. Next step is to check and most likely replace transformers. Since this sign rotates when on, it is not possible to check them while installed in the sign. Therefore, transformers will have to be taken out and hooked up at another location to be tested. We are devoting an entire day of our next restoration trip to investigate, and hopefully complete, what is needed to get it back up and glowing again. All the festive, multi-colored lightbulbs are now on!



Americana Motel "Americana" and "Vacancy" neon is glowing again as is all of "MOTEL" on the west side. The East side still needs 2 letters. Broken glass has been removed and patterns made. New glass will be dropped off in Amarillo next week and should be ready by our next restoration trip.

Ash, the owner of the Americana, was eager and excited to get up in the lift to learn how to install glass and replace hardware. He was a natural!



Wash Tub Lady / Blvd Laundromat now has a few new pieces of neon we removed on our last restoration trip. Upon deeper investigation, we have discovered a few more areas of wiring that need to be addressed. This will be included as a part of our Do-It-Yourself video as examples of how things should NOT be done and how to fix them.

Tee Pee Curios was full of water when we first inspected it back in August. We drained it, removed and made patterns of the broken neon pieces, and replaced broken hardware on the outside while the inside was drying. On our return trip in September, Paul Greenstein, a neon expert, joined us from Los Angeles. The new neon pieces were installed and Paul gave the sign a thorough inspection. It was apparent the transformers were about to give out as well as wiring needed to be replaced. Unfortunately, this 3-day restoration trip was cut short by a whole day due to unexpectedly being without the bucket truck for a day. Therefore, we were unable to replace any wiring at that time. Two transformers were ordered, and plans were to replace them and the wiring on the next restoration trip. Rather than wait for our next trip to have these items taken care of, the owner of Tee Pee Curios chose to complete the project with other volunteers.



We have more exciting news to share with you! However, it will have to wait until everything is confirmed. Until then, as Thanksgiving approaches, let's be thankful for all the wonderful moments and wonderful people in our lives. Throughout this Native American Heritage Month of November, and the rest of the year, share compassion with each other as we remember - we are all related through our creator. Together we can accomplish much more than we accomplish alone.