



EARTH USA 2011

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Title:

Conservation, preservation and rehabilitation of earthen architecture as a youth development program

Abstract:

In 2007 the Town of Bernalillo established a Youth Conservation Corps Program to teach the skills of conservation, preservation, and rehabilitation of earthen architecture to local youth with employment barriers such as adjudication, disenrollment from traditional educational institutions, and other social issues. The program teaches marketable traditional adobe construction and preservation skills, OSHA certification as well as GED attainment and career development. As a result, skills that have disappeared in today's construction arena are reviving a disappearing adobe landscape in Bernalillo.

Funded by the Town of Bernalillo and the New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps, the program currently employs twenty-two men and women between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four on three historic adobe structures in Bernalillo. These sites include the Sena Terron Barn and the Adobe Molino built by the well known master builder Abenicio Salazar, for whom Bernalillo's Historic District is named. The third site is the Graber Terron House which is programmed to become the Firemen's Housing Quarters.

The skills taught range from the production, construction and repair of adobes, preservation skills, traditional lime and mud plasters as well as carpentry, drainage, and traditional roofing and flooring. The training includes in class instruction on adobe code and historic preservation principles which are carefully followed in all projects. As GED attainment is a strong component of this program, all youth without a high school diploma are required to complete the provided GED classes and are encouraged, and assisted, in continuing their education.

The presentation will include program concept and development, case studies of each of three project sites, case studies of individual participants, and community development impacts of the program. The presenters are individuals who have extensive background in community development, preservation, and youth training.