

International Hands-on Workshops for Architectural and Site Conservation



News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Volunteer Vacation in Mexico: Mission Preservation Project Scheduled for September 2003

Boulder, Colorado, 26 June 2003 – Heritage Conservation Network has selected the site of its hands-on building conservation workshop to be held in Chihuahua, Mexico the week of September 21-27, 2003. HCN is working in partnership with Misiones Coloniales de Chihuahua, a non-profit group that helps the people of Chihuahua's small villages preserve the 168 mission churches in the region. Volunteer participants will be working alongside local residents to continue conservation work on the charming mission church of Santa Ana de la Joya.

Although the exact date of construction of Santa Ana de la Joya is unknown, historic records show that it dates to at least 1753. Jesuit and Franciscan priests built numerous missions in the 17th and 18th centuries, and resources to maintain the churches have been largely unavailable for much of the intervening period. As a result, the structures retain much of their original form, materials and ornamentation but they are also in need of significant conservation and repair work. Under the guidance of Misiones Coloniales, villagers in Santa Ana have enthusiastically volunteered their time to begin this much needed work on the church.

Workshop participants will assist in the repair and replacement of the large *vigas* that support the roof; learn the advantages of using lime-based plaster, and learn to make adobes; they will also discuss the upcoming conservation of the beautifully painted wooden ceilings. The week-long workshop also includes field trips to other missions in the area to see the variety of mission architecture and learn how each community is dealing with pressing conservation issues.

The workshop is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the heritage and people of the area since participants will stay in the homes of local families. Anyone interested in helping preserve the historic missions can participate; no skills or prior experience working with historic buildings are necessary. The cost of the workshop is US\$675 and includes accommodation and meals with a local family, bottled water for the week, transportation from the city of Chihuahua to the workshop site, insurance and workshop materials. Additional information and registration materials are available from Heritage Conservation Network's web site at www.heritageconservation.net/workshops.htm or from their office in Boulder, Colorado at +1 303 444 0128.

Heritage Conservation Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of architectural heritage around the world. Through a network of experts, volunteers and community members, the organization aims to increase awareness of the significance of historic sites and foster the appreciation of varied cultures. HCN's workshops stimulate a community's interest in and knowledge of appropriate conservation skills, helping provide for the long-term preservation of its significant structures and sites.

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