



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
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Big Bend National Park News Release

NEWLY EXPANDED AND RENOVATED PANTHER JUNCTION VISITOR CENTER OPENS AT BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

Big Bend National Park dedicated the newly expanded and renovated Panther Junction Visitor Center, located at the park's main headquarters in Panther Junction, on May 1st at 3:00 PM. About 250 people ranging from school-aged to long-time Big Bend advocates were on hand to help celebrate. The renovation boasts a complete face-lift and expansion of the visitor center, new handicap accessible comfort stations, new hands-on interpretive exhibits, and a much larger, improved bookstore offering a wide array of educational materials. Visitors heard from park superintendent Bill Wellman, Intermountain Region Deputy Regional Director Tony Schetzle, as well as from the primary project partners - Mike Boren, Executive Director for Big Bend Natural History Association; and Jack Lamkin, President of the Board of Directors for the Friends of Big Bend National Park. The multi-year project was made possible through a partnership involving Big Bend National Park, Big Bend Natural History Association, and fundraising efforts of the Friends of Big Bend National Park.

The Panther Junction Visitor Center was first built in the early 1960's as part of the Mission 66 effort to prepare for the National Park Service's 50th birthday. Forty years later the facility, which was originally designed for the much lower visitor numbers of the 1960's, was in need of expansion and modernization. The historic character and architectural style for which the original structure was noted has been retained. This renovation occurs as the National Park Service approaches its Centennial birthday.

The Panther Junction Visitor Center is now re-opened and operating daily from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

"We are very pleased to be able to provide the new facilities for our visitors to enjoy at Big Bend National Park," said Park Superintendent Bill Wellman. "We invite you to stop by and enjoy the new exhibits, bookstore, and the hands-on learning opportunity they provide."

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