

# OUTDOOR LIFE

## DIY ROAD TRIP

# Rollin' Rollin' Rollin' — Keep them doggies rollin' All the way to Tucumcari Rawhide Days

### Route 66 town celebrates its ties to the TV series and the West

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With spring's siren call to get up and go, the town of Tucumcari, New Mexico, is throwing a great two-day reason to drive two-lane highways across cowboy country to celebrate the Old West, the modern West, and the classic TV series "Rawhide" that filmed on ranches around Tucumcari for six weeks in 1959.

Tucumcari Rawhide Days April 15-16 will include all-afternoon free screenings of "Rawhide" in the 1937 Odeon Theater while the Tucumcari Convention Center and Tucumcari Historical Museum host noon-to-sunset entertainments. A Friday night concert will feature sons and daughters of country legends Hank Williams, Faron Young and Sheb Wooley.

The biggest town along Route 66 between Amarillo and Albuquerque, Tucumcari is celebrated in the song "Willin'," Little Feat's paean to wanderlust: "I've been from Tucson to Tucumcari, Tehachapi to To-



Connie Loveland / Tucumcari Rawhide Days

While working to get rights to some promotional images from the classic Western TV show "Rawhide," organizers of Tucumcari Rawhide Days went ahead and created their own Western scenes to promote the April 15-16 events that recall the Old West and the TV show that introduced Clint Eastwood to the world.



Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

From Trinidad to Tucumcari is exactly the same distance as the drive to Denver and only 15 minutes longer on two-lane highways across scenic cowboy country. Young cowboy Paul Grice pauses within the village limits of Roy, NM, alongside the road from Trinidad to Tucumcari Rawhide Days and its two-day celebration of Western culture April 15-16.

nopah, driven every kind of rig that's ever been made." The distance from Trinidad to Tucumcari is exactly the same as the distance to Denver, 199 miles. Crossing cowboy country on two-lane highways makes the trip only 15 minutes longer than the Denver drive.

Named for the nearby Tucumcari Mountain, Tucumcari hosted the cast and crew of "Rawhide" as they filmed on area ranches. Local landscapes were visible in the opening scenes of many episodes throughout the show's seven-year run from 1959 to 1966. "Rawhide" introduced a young Clint Eastwood as Rowdy Yates and joined "Bonanza," "Gunsmoke" and "Wagon Train" during the golden years of the TV Western. Nowadays every episode of "Rawhide" is available in DVD sets by season or whole-series.

Organizers of Tucumcari Rawhide Days have spent a year creating a full schedule of family-friendly activities. While "Rawhide" episodes are screened in the historic Odeon Theater, other entertainments will include gunfights, a trick roper, a longhorn photo opportunity, and demonstrations plus music, games, vendors and food.

Friday night's 8 p.m. Tucumcari Convention Center concert will feature The Next Generation Band with music and storytelling by Jett Williams, Robyn Young and Chrystie Wooley. Others will include cowboy singer Mike Moutoux and Santa Fe



Connie Loveland / Tucumcari Rawhide Days

Local cowboy Rex Gray recreates a scene where the classic TV show "Rawhide" was filmed outside Tucumcari, NM, in 1959. The popular series lasted seven years in prime time telling stories built around an endless cattle drive across the West.

singer/songwriter Luke Reed. Concert tickets cost \$20 for adults, \$10 under 13, and free for age 5 and under.

Saturday morning (Apr. 16) starts off with an Old West parade and an actual cattle drive. Throughout both days, locals will share their memories and lore of the weeks when "Rawhide" set up camp in town. Clint Eastwood has been formally invited, though his appearance would come as a surprise.

Driving down I-25 from Trinidad, Colorado travelers can get into the cowboy mood by turning east on Hwy 56 at Springer and following signs to Roy and Mosquero along Hwy 39, the shortest and fastest route to Tucumcari. Inspired by Tucumcari's dozens of murals along Route 66, the tiny village of Mosquero has spent the past several years covering its three-block downtown with impressive murals depicting local people, events and culture. The town's young people have painted the murals with guidance from Tucumcari muralist Doug Quarles.

Just beyond Mosquero, the road drops dramatically through steep switchbacks into a deep red-rock river valley with several big cattle ranches. The picturesque valley ends at Logan, 24 miles from Tucumcari via Hwy 54. Google Maps suggests allowing 3 hours 11 minutes from Trinidad to Tucumcari, but that's not taking into account a stop to enjoy the Mosquero murals or other stops to photograph northeastern New Mexico's stunning landscapes along the way.

The Chronicle-News will be at Tucumcari Rawhide Days to photograph the event for a travel feature later in April.

Tucumcari's Blue Swallow Motel is an iconic Route 66 motor court favored by photographers, but all the hotel chains offer plenty of lodging options to serve the countless travelers along I-40. Additional information is available online (search "Tucumcari Rawhide Days") or by email at [tucumcarirawhidedays@gmail.com](mailto:tucumcarirawhidedays@gmail.com) or phone (575) 461-0522.

Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

The road from Trinidad to Tucumcari begins an immersion in the cowboy culture. Travelers will slow in the tiny village of Mosquero, NM, as the entire town has been covered in murals depicting local people and their culture. Tucumcari itself is renowned for dozens of fascinating murals.



Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Young cattle rancher J.D. Chatfield helped paint a mural depicting his father sitting down to eat. Located along the road from Trinidad to Tucumcari, the village of Mosquero is covered in such murals. Traveling to Tucumcari Rawhide Days, allow extra time to enjoy Mosquero's impressive murals.



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- o April 8<sup>th</sup> Mark Hoog, Author, Storyteller, and Youth Motivational Speaker, will speak at the Trinidad Middle School Auditorium @ 6:30pm
- o April 9<sup>th</sup> at the Eagles Hall, 614 Main St, Walsenburg, 11am-1pm
- o April 16<sup>th</sup> at the Cimino Park, Trinidad, 11am to 1pm

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