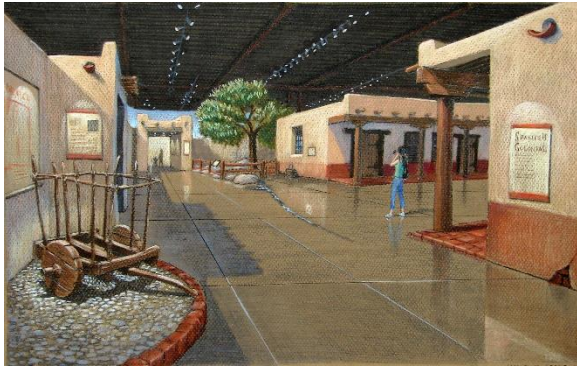
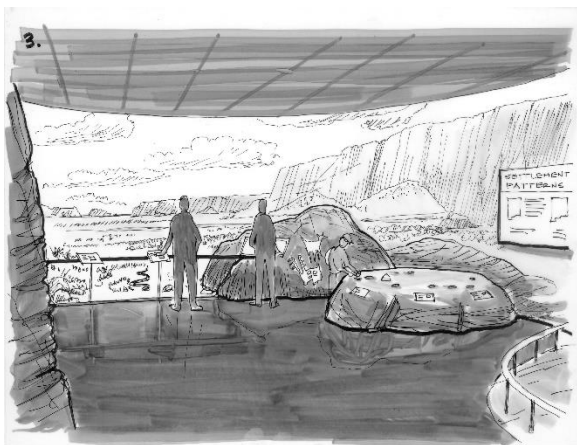


New Mexico Farm and Ranch
Heritage Museum
Las Cruces, New Mexico



The museum's 10,000 sq. foot gallery was revealed in its entirety upon entry, leaving little to surprise the visitor. How could we reconfigure the space to create excitement and prompt discovery?

In 2005-2006, The Acorn Group developed a conceptual plan for the main galley of the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. Given its cavernous atmosphere, the gallery was reconfigured as four exhibit clusters, each helping convey the significance of agriculture in the daily lives of people.

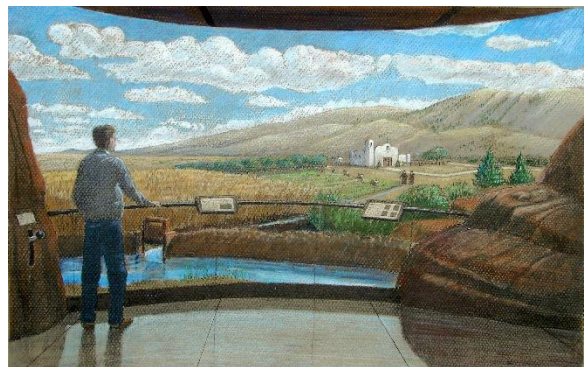


We introduced circuitous pathways that would lead to these clusters and lend an element of anticipation and discovery, particularly among younger visitors. The clusters convey the significance of agriculture in the daily lives of all New Mexicans. The

story is presented as a walk through history, offering glimpses into the pre-historic, Spanish colonial, Mexican/ Territorial, and 20th-century periods.



Interpretation focuses on the role agriculture has played in the development of the State's unique tri-cultural heritage; its importance to New Mexico's communities; and the changes that technology, shifting economies, water crises, and land use trends have brought to agriculture over time.



Front-end evaluation helped inform this planning process by revealing the public's levels of interest in and understanding of the exhibit content. The Acorn Group worked closely with museum staff throughout the project and solicited community and volunteer input during planning sessions and meetings. Just as the presentation of multiple perspectives is important to the exhibit storyline, consideration of the multiple perspectives of stakeholders is equally important to the integrity of the planning process.