

# ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL 2026 SPEAKER SERIES

The fourth Saturday of every month in 2026, except December



1/24/2026

**Central & Unser - Patrick J Baca Libra** 8081 Central Ave NW, ABQ

Jacqueline Murray Loring      **The KiMo Theatre: Fact and Folklore**

The Majestic KiMo Theatre on Route 66. For ninety years, hundreds of thousands of adults and children have packed the KiMo theatre to watch ballet, drama, spoken-word, and to listen to poetry readings. Performers have acted, sung, danced, and spellbound audiences with magic. Local filmmakers flock there to watch their indie films come alive on the new silver screen.

**East Mountain Library**

487 NM 333, Tijeras

Roger Zimmerman

**Rerouting Route 66 through New Mexico**

This presentation addresses the factors leading to the establishment of Route 66 in the new Federal highway system and the politically charged changes that resulted in a 107 mile shortening in New Mexico during the 1926-37 timeframe. La Bajada Hill was removed as an obstacle and problems of crossing the Rio Grande and the Rio Puerco had to be resolved.

**Fred Luna Multi-Generational Center** 197 Don Pasqual, Los Lunas, Nm 87031

Roland Penttila

**Little Beaver Town**

In the 1960s, Albuquerque had a theme park showing the west's history with cowboys, old west towns and Native Americans. The owners collaborated with Fred Harmon who created the comic characters of Red Ryder and Little Beaver. They called it Little Beaver Town, and it was to be a Route 66 main attraction. But, that was not to be.

**Gutierrez-Hubbell House**

6029 Isleta Blvd SW, ABQ

Richard Ruddy

**An Iconic View: Route 66 in Downtown Albuquerque**

Ruddy's talk looks at the impact that Route 66 had on Albuquerque's main street, Central Avenue. We see downtown Albuquerque grow from before Route 66 was founded to a vibrant business district the Saturday Evening Post said had "a blazing main drag" and which the Chamber of Commerce claimed to be the brightest main street in America. But there is a downside to this growth which the iconic photographs also show as Albuquerque today valiantly fights to find a new identity for its central business district.

**International District Library**

7601 Central Ave SE, ABQ

Abraham Santillanes

**Why turn left at Albuquerque? Albuquerque, Route 66 and the many roads that came before.**

Other New Mexico towns overshadowed Albuquerque for most of its history. Transportation played an important role in bringing Albuquerque to the significant position it holds today in New Mexico. Starting with Francisco Coronado's trek from Mexico, through Juan de Oñate establishing the Camino Real, to William Becknell opening the Santa Fe Trail, many routes led to the original Albuquerque we now call Old Town. Later the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad and Route 66 helped solidify Albuquerque's importance.

**Loma Colorado Library**

755 Loma Colorado Blvd NE, Rio Rancho

Sondra Diepen

**Route 66 New Mexico**

Come on a tour from Texas to Arizona with photographer Sondra Diepen as she exposes the remains of New Mexico's Route 66 and reveals tales of snakes, rustlers and diners. Sondra will relate how an abandoned trading post covered with faded murals led to 10 years of work uncovering the Mother Road's ghost towns and neon signs, resulting in a book of over 200 photos documenting former and present tourist attractions.

**Martha Liebert Public Library**

124 W. Malinche St, Bernalillo

Jennifer Bohnhoff

**The Civil War on Route 66**

The Battle of Glorieta, often called the Gettysburg of the West, might have changed the outcome of the whole war, but it is only one of three Civil War battles that occurred along Route 66. Join Educator and Author Jennifer Bohnhoff as she provides pictures, maps, and stories about the Battles of Glorieta, Albuquerque, and Peralta.

**Pueblo of Isleta Cultural Center**

71 Tribal Road 40, Isleta

Aimee Tang

**Chinese Merchants of Albuquerque's Route 66**

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Joseph Sabatini

**North Fourth Street – Albuquerque's Original Route 66**

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**Tijeras Canyon - Five Miles of Road and Hundreds of Stories**

Tijeras Canyon with Tijeras at the east end and Carnuel at the west end has been an important community for hundreds of years. Communities thrive because of the people who live and work there. This talk focuses on those people and their stories in a time frame of 1900 to 1950.

2/28/2026

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4/25/2026

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Gordene MacKenzie

**Agriculture, Architecture, Artists, Bootleggers, and Businesses along the Mother Road in Los Ranchos**

Who were the residents? What were their lives like? What did they do and how did they survive and use Fourth street (old Route 66)? What was historic Los Ranchos like during the pre-alignment period from 1926- 1937? The Mother Road played a significant role in shaping history and identity even after the realignment and before the Interstate was built.

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Alan Carlson **History of Auto Racing in Albuquerque**

Racing enthusiast, Alan Carlson, will present the dramatic story of Albuquerque's first race track, Cormit Speedway. Cormit was located at the south end of Wyoming Blvd., and quickly had competitors, including Rio Grande Sports Bowl and Speedway Park. Come learn about Albuquerque's early history of this dangerous sport and the dare-devil drivers. It was on these Albuquerque tracks that the Unsers got their start.

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Tijeras Canyon with Tijeras at the east end and Carnuel at the west end has been an important community for hundreds of years. Communities thrive because of the people who live and work there. This talk focuses on those people and their stories in a time frame of 1900 to 1950.

**Loma Colorado Library**

755 Loma Colorado Blvd NE, Rio Rancho

Richard Ruddy

**An Iconic View: Route 66 in Downtown Albuquerque**

Ruddy's talk looks at the impact that Route 66 had on Albuquerque's main street, Central Avenue. We see downtown Albuquerque grow from before Route 66 was founded to a vibrant business district the Saturday Evening Post said had "a blazing main drag" and which the Chamber of Commerce claimed to be the brightest main street in America. But there is a downside to this growth which the iconic photographs also show as Albuquerque today valiantly fights to find a new identity for its central business district.

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7/25/2026

**Central & Unser - Patrick J Baca Libra** 8081 Central Ave NW, ABQ

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Jacqueline Murray Loring

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8/22/2026

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9/26/2026

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10/24/2026

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11/28/2026

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Alan Carlson

**History of Auto Racing in Albuquerque**

Racing enthusiast, Alan Carlson, will present the dramatic story of Albuquerque's first race track, Cormit Speedway. Cormit was located at the south end of Wyoming Blvd., and quickly had competitors, including Rio Grande Sports Bowl and Speedway Park. Come learn about Albuquerque's early history of this dangerous sport and the dare-devil drivers. It was on these Albuquerque tracks that the Unsers got their start.

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