



MEDIA RELEASE

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GRAND JUNCTION CELEBRATES HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF PLAZA URRUTIA

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. May 14, 2024 – The City of Grand Junction and the North American Basque Organizations (NABO) will host a celebration of the historic designation for Plaza Urrutia in the State Register of Historic Properties of Colorado on Saturday, May 18 from 11 a.m.- 5 p.m. at Canyon View Park, at the corner of G and 24 Roads. The dedication ceremony will take place at 2 p.m.

“This is a great honor for all Basques that live not only in Colorado but throughout the United States and Canada,” stated Marie Petracek, President of the Colorado Basque Club and Treasurer of NABO. “The event is an opportunity for the Grand Junction community to learn more about the Basques who were instrumental in developing Grand Junction many years ago.”

“The aim of pelota is simple: to share the joy of pelota with the community. The aim of NABO is simple: the perpetuation of ‘Basquetude’ (the culture and Basque identity),” continued Petracek.

The Plaza Urrutia handball court located at Canyon View Park was built by Jean Urruty in 1978 as a place for handball and for those of Basque cultural descent to come together as a community.

The event will include the dedication ceremony which includes the presentation of a plaque with the Plaza’s history, an exhibition of Basque Pelota (handball), games for children, and food available for purchase from the Smokey Bonez Food Truck. The event is an opportunity for the Grand Junction community to learn more about the Basques who helped to develop Grand Junction many years ago. Four pelota players will be coming from San Francisco and Chino, CA to demonstrate this exciting, fast-paced sport. The grandfather of the player from Chino once played on the court that was built by Jean Urruty.

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