

Museum adds stagecoach exhibit

A year's work pays off

By **CINDY SANTOS**
The Salinas Californian

The California Rodeo Heritage Museum has unveiled a new exhibit that houses an authentic replica of the Wells Fargo stagecoach.

“We worked on it for a year,” said Rodeo museum volunteer Anne Bramers.

Eileen Tuttle began designing the exhibit before the 2005 Rodeo, and construction started at the beginning of the year, Bramers said.

Wells Fargo & Co. donated \$10,000 for the addition.

The exhibit is based on the 2,000-mile route of the Wells Fargo stagecoach, which started in Atchison, Kan., and ended in Sacramento. A giant map of the American West highlights the route, with historic tidbits and information about the drivers and villains along the way.

A 16-minute audio with actors, music and sound effects — reminiscent of an old-time radio drama — tells the story of the Wells Fargo route from beginning to end. The audio history lesson was written for children, who regularly visit the museum, Bramers said.

The stagecoach room also has repli-

DETAILS

n **VISITS:** Open to the public during the Rodeo and by appointment throughout the year

n **LOCATION:** Adjacent to the Salinas Sports Complex

n **ADMISSION:** Free

cas of the Wells Fargo offices at the beginning and end of the route.

Built by J. Stephens Abbot and Lewis Downing in Concord, N.H., during the 19th century, the Wells Fargo stagecoach was known as the Cadillac of its time. It's the subject of this year's commemorative poster, painted by Connie Johnson.

The museum houses other Rodeo memorabilia as well, including a collection of vintage cowboy hats, colorful costumes, saddles, chaps, split skirts, ropes and pictures.

Many of the museum's collections have been donated or loaned to the museum for special events, Bramers said.

The Harden Foundation and Wells Fargo & Company have provided money for the museum for years, Bramers said.

The museum, usually open by appointment only, will open to the public all four days of the Rodeo.



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Anne Bramers, a chairwoman of the Rodeo's historical committee, left, and marketing coordinating Sally Hamana in June show off the new coach display.