

2018 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Cucamonga Service Station



The Cucamonga Service Station is one of only a few original buildings remaining on Route 66 in California from the nostalgic glory days of the historic highway. Constructed in 1915, the station reflects the Spanish Colonial style architecture that gained popularity following the 1915 Panama California Exhibition in San Diego. Originally, the station served the local wine and citrus growers and motoring community. With the opening of Route 66 in 1926, the station served as a refueling and service stop for motorists traveling America's Mother Road. The station operated as a Richfield distributor from the 1930s to the 1960s.

In the decades following the station's closure in the 1970s, the property badly deteriorated. A garage, which had spanned the back of the lot, and a small freestanding restroom, were lost to neglect. The original station building and site, however, survived and remained remarkably unchanged even as the environment around them evolved into modern suburban development.

In 2009, at the urging of the local historical society and concerned citizens, the City of Rancho Cucamonga designated the Cucamonga Service Station as a historical city landmark. The non-profit organization Route 66 Inland Empire California (IECA), dedicated to the preservation of Route 66 history, gained title to the property in 2013. With fundraising efforts, the generosity of local citizens, a grant from the Native Sons of the Golden West, and donated labor and construction materials, IECA embarked on a restoration of the station.

Substantial water damage required replacement of the roof and much of its wood, as well as some of the wood in the walls. The foundation had also experienced significant erosion, requiring repair. Exterior stucco, the station floor, and Spanish tile topping the columns, were all remarkably intact.

Removal of layers of paint from the exterior revealed the original Richfield color scheme of yellow, blue, and red. The station was repainted in the original color scheme, and an original Richfield sign installed on the station's rooftop to match the station's appearance as documented in period photographs. The concrete floor was given a period appropriate sealant and finish, and 1920s-style fixtures and push-button light switches were used throughout.

Community support remained strong during and after completion of the project, with local contractors donating hours of labor as well as materials such as concrete, paint, and windows. The station now operates as a museum and gift shop, where local volunteers donate their time each month to work as docents. With its website presence, and as one of the few surviving original places on Route 66, the Cucamonga Service Station attracts visitors both locally and from around the world. One of the unanticipated consequences of the restoration effort has been an increased appreciation within the community for historic preservation and an interest in preserving other historic resources in the area. On July 23, 2018, the Cucamonga Service Station achieved listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Learn more about the [Cucamonga Service Station](#).