

Tallahassee Democrat

Mission San Luis gets visitor center in 2009

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Tallahassee will soon have another venue for conferences, meetings and receptions. Saturday was the groundbreaking for Mission San Luis' new visitor center, which will feature a theater, exhibits, classrooms and a multi-purpose space. The \$7.6-million construction is scheduled to be completed in 2009.

Leslie D. Steele, spokeswoman for the Mission, said the center will also provide a space for receptions after couples get married at the 17th century-style church.

Local dignitaries, including Secretary of State Kurt S. Browning, Department of Management Services Secretary Linda South and Tallahassee Mayor John Marks, watched the ceremony.

"I am so pleased to be here today to celebrate this very special occasion," Browning said in a statement.

After the ceremony, visitors joined the staff at the Mission for an early celebration of Cinco de Mayo, which celebrates Mexican independence.

John Hann, an award-winning author, signed books on colonial Florida. Visitors learned what it was like to be in the military in the 17th century through hands-on colonial arts and crafts and archery demonstrations. Re-enactors from St. Augustine also performed military drills and fired black-powder cannons and muskets.