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National Park Service

JAN 1 7 1990

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

United States Department of the Interior

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines* for *Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

| 1. Name of Property | ····· | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| historic name D | <u>eming Main Post Offi</u> | ce | |
| other names/site number N | /A | | |
| | | | |
| 2. Location | | | |
| street & number 201 W. | Spruce Street | N/A | not for publication |
| city, town Deming | | N/A l | vicinity |
| state New Mexico | code NM county Lu | na code 029 | zip code 88030 |
| | | | |
| 3. Classification | · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · | | |
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resou | rces within Property |
| private | x building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| public-local | district | <u> </u> | buildings |
| public-State | site | | sites |
| X public-Federal | structure | | structures |
| | object | | objects |
| | · · · · | _1 | 0 Total |
| Name of related multiple proper | ty listing: | Number of contril | outing resources previously |
| | Offices in New Mexi | | nal Register0 |
| 1900 - 1941 | | | |
| 4. State/Federal Agency Co | prtification | | |
| National Register of Historic In my opinion, the property | r determination of eligibility meets t Places and meets the procedural a preets does not meet the Nat | and professional requirements se | et forth in 36 CFR Part 60. |
| Signature of certifying official | wia | | Date |
| State or Federal agency and bur | | | |
| | | | |
| In my opinion, the property | meets does not meet the Nat | tional Register criteria. 🗌 See c | ontinuation sheet. 12 - 29 - 78 |
| Signature of commenting or othe | | | Date |
| | tion Division, Office of | Cultural Affairs. | |
| State or Federal agency and bur | | | |
| * | | | |
| 5. National Park Service Co | ertification | | |
| I, hereby, certify that this prope | ty is: | | |
| r entered in the National Regi | ster. | | |
| See continuation sheet. | ster. Bith Pole | ind | 2/23/90 |
| determined eligible for the N | | | |
| Register. See continuation | | | |
| determined not eligible for the | | | ······ |
| | | | |
| National Register. | | | |
| removed from the National F | legister. | | |
| | | | |

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) Post Office Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) Post Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation <u>Concrete</u>

roof <u>Tar composition</u> other <u>Limestone</u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Deming Main Post Office is a single-story red brick building on a raised concrete basement. The building consists of the original construction (brick supported by steel framing) and additions (1967, brick veneer over concrete block) to the west and east sides. The facade of the original building is flat, symmetrical, divided into five flatarched bays, and sparingly detailed. Limestone, in the form of belt courses, lintels, sills, and decorative panels, provide the detailing. The 1967 expansion added an easterly wing which expanded the lobby and workroom, and a westerly wing which provided office space. Both wings project plain red brick walls forward of the original facade. Cast-stone water table, belt, and coping courses, extended from the corresponding courses of the original, provide limited detailing. The westerly wing is wider and projects beyond the easterly. Although both are the same height as the original, the westerly contains two stories with access on the east side. A flat built-up tar composition roof covers the entire building.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original front facade is divided into five bays and faces south (Spruce Street). The entry bay is centered and flanked by a window bay of equal size on each side. These bays are recessed slightly and extend vertically from the water table to the belt course. The entry consists of double metal doors with a single glass panel in each. A plain transom bar is above the doors with a three-light transom window overhead (fixed steel sash). Narrow limestone surrounds flank the doors and transom window and extend to a limestone panel, in low relief, of an airplane. The immediately flanking window bays are configured similarly to the entry bay, however, the overhead panels depict a locomotive and an ocean steamer. Plain limestone panels are beneath the sills of the window bays. The sash is double-hung steel with three-overthree lights (wide center light with narrow side-lights). The end window bays extend from the water table to a line

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extending from the top of the sash of the interior bays. Limestone lintels and sills, with plain limestone panels beneath, define the bays which, without the limestone surrounds are slightly narrower than the interior bays. The sash is identical to the interior windows.

Extending across the front of the three center bays are the main entry stairs flanked by square brick buttresses with cast stone caps (the original buttresses were limestone). Free-standing aluminum lanterns are affixed to the tops of the buttresses. A concrete handicap ramp with painted metal railings descends from the entry to the right side of the building. In front of the ramp landing is a low brick-faced planter capped by cast stone. Between the planter and the easterly wing are a concrete landing and three steps (the ramp, planter and landing were added in the 1967 remodel).

The added wings, which frame the original front facade, consist of plain brick walls with cast-stone watertable, belt and coping courses (extended from original facade). The easterly wing projects 2 feet forward from the original facade and is 26 feet wide. The westerly wing projects 18 feet from the original facade and is 37 feet wide. Both wings are divided into three sections by vertical channels (expansion joints) which extend from the watertable to the belt course. Centered between the joints and attached to the wall are aluminum letters: "FEDERAL BUILDING" and in smaller letters: "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE" "DEMING NEW MEXICO." The westerly wing contains a single bay, which faces east to form an entry court. At ground level is a double-door entry (aluminum-framed glass doors). Between the doors and second story windows (fixed, four-light aluminum sash) is a cast stone panel. The wall is red brick with cast-stone detailing.

The west facade consists of the two-story office wing addition, the rear portion of the original facade, and the loading dock addition. Detailed similarly to the front, the wing contains four window bays on each floor. The first story bays are framed with brick sills and flat brick soldier course arches. The second story bays, aligned over those of the first story, also have brick sills but the tops extend to the belt course. The sash is aluminum with a fixed center light and hinged side-lights (vertically-aligned). The exposed rear of the original facade, set back 37 feet from the

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addition facade, consists of the blank brick wall of the workroom corner, and the further set back wall of the mailing vestibule. The wall of the mailing vestibule contains a single pedestrian door with a six-over-six double-hung wood sash window aligned above (mezzanine level). Inboard from the door is another six-over-six double-hung wood sash window. Set back from the vestibule corner is a three-bay (overhead wood-panel doors) brick-enclosed loading dock. The top of the dock enclosure terminates at the sill line of the mezzanine window. A projecting marquee extends over the loading area.

The east facade (facing Copper Street) consists of the easterly addition, the original mailing vestibule and the loading dock addition. Detailed similarly to the original and addition facades, the easterly wing is divided into four equally-spaced window bays. Brick sills and flat brick soldier course arches frame the bays. The sash is aluminum with six lights. The upper three lights and lower center-light are fixed and the lower side-lights are hinged. The facade of the vestibule contains a six-over-six double-hung wood sash window at the mezzanine level. The loading dock is brick-enclosed with a single pedestrian door and two over head wood panel doors. A projecting marquee extends over the loading area.

The rear facade consists of the rear of the original building from which the loading dock extends and the rear side wing additions. When the additions were constructed the following changes were made to the rear facade: the marguee and loading dock (open) were removed; and the three windows above the marquee (mezzanine level) and the single windows on each side of the dock were enclosed with brick. The easterly addition is brick, detailed with cast stone water table, belt and coping courses, and without openings. It also projects about one foot beyond the original wall. The rear of the loading dock is brick and contains a single metal roll-up The westerly wing, recessed about ten feet from the door. original wall contains first and second floor window bays near the interior corner and centered first and second floor doors. The detailing and sash of the window bays are identical to those of the west facade. The doors are metal with a four-light panel in the upper portion. Steel stairs provide access to the second floor.

| 8. Statement of Significance | | |
|--|---|---|
| Certifying official has considered the significance of this proper | rty in relation to other properties: statewide X locally | |
| Applicable National Register Criteria 🔀 A 🗌 B 🔀 C | X D | |
| Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) | D DE DF G | |
| Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) <u>Politics/government</u> <u>Art</u> | Period of Significance 1937-1941 | Significant Dates S <u>ite_acq1</u> 936 C <u>onst1937</u> A <u>ddition-19</u> 67 |
| | Cultural Affiliation | |
| Significant Person | Architect/Builder Louis A. Simon, Su itect/Federal gove | |

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Although the building has been altered, it retains the quality of the original front facade and it provides an example of an architecturally-successful expansion of not only the physical capacity of the building but also of its functional capability. The function has been expanded from a single-purpose post office to a combined post office and federal office building. The retention of the original front facade also maintains the symbolic link to the original building--Deming's first and only federally-constructed post office. It represents the successful lobbying efforts of local civic groups and the federal government's response, through its Depression era public buildings programs, to a time of national economic emergency. The building is also significant for its association with the New Deal public arts programs for its lobby contains a mural executed by Kenneth Adams, a prominent New Mexican muralist and landscape painter.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

As Deming's first and only federally-constructed post office, the building is locally significant under Criterion A. It represents the link between the federal government and the local community, and functions as both a symbol and as an agency of the federal government. The building further symbolizes the massive public building programs of the 1930s which were intended to assist communities during a period of national economic emergency. Perhaps most importantly, it is a legacy of the efforts of local citizens through their elected officials in Washington to get a gift from Uncle Sam.

The dedication of the Post Office, which culminated several years of local lobbying efforts, was indeed a momen-[X] See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

street & number West 705 1st Avenue

city or town _____ Spokane_

- 1. Deming Headlight (Deming), various articles, 1935-1939.
- 2. The Luna County Historical Society. <u>History of Luna County</u>, New Mexico. Deming, NM: J & J Printing, Inc., 1982.
- Construction Progress Photographs September 21, 1936 -April 21, 1937 (monthly).
- 4. Original Floor Plans 1936, Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect.
- 5. Remodel/expansion Floor Plans 1967, Arthur Gorrell, Architect.

| Image: See continuation of individual listing (36 CFR 67) Primary location of additional data: has been requested State historic preservation office Dreviously determined eligible by the National Register Other State agency designated a National Historic Landmark University Incorded by Historic American Engineering Specify repository: Record # Specify repository: Incorded by Historic American Engineering Specify repository: Record # San Bruno, CA 94099-0330 UTM References A [1,3] [2]4_0[0]16_10] [3,5]7_13[2,5,0] A [1,3] [2]4_0[0]16_10] [3,5]7_13[2,5,0] B [| Brovious documentation on file (NBS): | See continuation sheet | | |
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_ telephone <u>(509) 458-6219</u>

state <u>WA</u> zip code <u>99204</u>

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tous event for the community. The May 29, 1937 event brought an impressive list of dignitaries to Deming--State WPA head E. H. Oakley, Governor Clyde Tingley, Congressman J. J. Dempsey, Senator Dennis Chavez, and the Postmaster General himself, James A. Farley. An editorial of May 28th discussed the quandary of having such a distinguished guest as the Postmaster General:

HOWDY JIM!

There has been much ado about what to do when PMG J. A. Farley arrives in Deming. Suggestions have been made that everyone should put on a lot of Hog!, be very formal and all that. We have a different idea. Unless we miss our guess, Mr. Farley is not apt to be too impressed by our formality, especially in view of the fact that most of us our just plain country boys and girls who do not keep very well versed in the practice of formality. What we want to say to him is that we are very happy to have him visit our community, and we want him to know he is more than welcome--so why not say that, in the simplest way

"Howdy Jim. We're glad to have you with us."

<u>ART</u>

The Deming Post Office and the mural it contains is significant under Criterion A for its historic association with the federal government's New Deal public arts programs. The mural is also significant under Criterion C as an integral part of a building that represents a significant type, period, and style of artistic expression. Finally, the building is eligible under Criterion D because of its information potential relating to artistic expression and techniques of the period, and social history of its locality.

The lobby of the building contains a mural over the door of the Postmaster. Entitled "Mountains and Yucca," the oil on canvas (5' X 12') mural was executed by Kenneth Adams in 1938. The mural depicts the Yucca-filled flatlands with a background of barren desert peaks. The landscape is typical of the Deming area.

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Kenneth Adams was born in Topeka, KS in 1897 and died in Albuquerque, NM in 1966. Adams studied at the Art Institute of Chicago; Art Students League in New York with Kenneth Hayes Miller, George Bridgeman, Maurice Sterne, and Eugene Speicher; at Woodstock with Andrew Dasburg; and in France and Italy. In 1924 he moved to Taos and later became the youngest and last member of the Taos Society of Artists. He taught at the University of New Mexico in Taos. In 1938 he moved to Albuquerque where he taught at the University of New Mexico. Adams was described as a contemporary realist, influenced by Dasburg and working in the tradition of Rivera and Orozco. He was known as a realist figure and landscape painter, muralist, lithographer, and teacher. He exhibited throughout the United States. His mural work includes: Goodland (KS) Post Office, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and University of New Mexico Library.

The mural was completed under the auspices of the Federal Works Agency Section of Fine Arts. Federal sponsorship of visual arts programs began in 1933 when President Roosevelt authorized the development of the Public Works of Art Project This and subsequent programs were intended to pro-(PWAP). vide work-relief for artists. After the demise of the PWAP program in June 1934, the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) was established in July 1935. The Section of Painting and Sculpture, later the Section of Fine Arts, was established in October of 1934 by the Treasury Department. This was the program primarily responsible for murals and sculpture found in post offices throughout the country. Commissions were awarded on the basis of anonymous competitions without reference to artists need. In July of 1939, after reorganization of the Executive Branch, the entire building program of the Treasury Department and the Section were transferred to the new Federal Works Agency. The Section of Fine Arts-Federal Works Agency operated the program until June of 1943 when the activities of World War II shifted priorities.

The Section, which was administered in Washington, dealt directly with the artists, and selected artists through national and regional design competition. The Section sought the best decorative art that it could find for designated federal buildings. The intent of the program's administrators was that the work would reflect the themes and styles of the American scene, with a hope that it would strike a responsive chord in the general public. Although the program

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is attributed with having fostered an American Regionalism, art critics could never find a coherent body of work that was truly Regionalist or representative of particular sections of the country, The work that was created did, however, portray the American Scene in the form of localized subject matter. Further, the work resulting from the programs tended to pursue an inoffensive middle ground of style and content which was sometimes viewed as producing limp platitudes rather than strong statements. This resulted from the requirement for final approval from Washington as well as compliance with local preferences. The strife or dark side of the Depression was not portrayed, but instead the nostalgic and positive events of the American Scene were depicted.

Eight New Mexico post offices received murals under various New Deal Arts programs: Alamogordo, Clovis, Deming, Gallup, Hot Springs (now Truth or Consequences), Portales, Roswell, and Raton. In addition, there are Depression-era murals and other artworks in numerous other public buildings throughout the state, which contribute to New Mexico's rich legacy of Southwestern art.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Deming is in southwest New Mexico thirty miles from the Mexican border. The region's warm, arid climate helps make tourism an important part of the local economy. The cattle industry and agriculture, primarily the raising of cotton, milo, beans, peanuts, chile, and pecans, are also important in the region. Deming, which has a population of approximately 10,000, also serves as the seat of Luna County.

In 1881 the Southern Pacific Railway, as it was pushing its rails to the west coast, reached the area where Deming is now located. The construction of a round house and shops was soon followed by tents and shanties. The settlement was named after Mary Anne Deming, the wife of railroad magnate Charles Crocker. When the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway arrived six months later, the junction of the two railroads assured Deming of an important position in southern New Mexico. Deming's location, 100 miles west of El Paso and 200 miles east of Tuscon, also made it seem likely to become a major shipping point.

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Within a year settlers began arriving and building increased. Deming's first postmaster, Chas. H. Dane, was appointed in 1881, the same year the town was founded. The first store opened in 1882; it used old boxcars for storerooms. By 1897 Deming had two schools, two churches, and four hotels. By 1891 two more churches were added, the town had two newspapers, and a "City Club" was organized to promote the community. After the turn-of-the-century, brick buildings were constructed, instead of the wood and adobe buildings that were common earlier.

As predicted, Deming grew to be an early and important shipping point for cattle in southern New Mexico. Mining (primarily silver and lead) and agriculture (after the introduction of irrigation in 1909) also contributed to Deming's growth. Rate increases and problems with squatters using railroad land in Deming, however, led to increased use of El Paso by the railroads.

In 1901, after considerable opposition, Luna County was created from the eastern part of Grant County and the western part of Dona Ana County. In 1902 Deming became the county seat, it was officially incorporated, and it acquired elec-By 1910, when the imposing brick Luna County Courttricity. house was built, Deming had a population of 1,864. In 1916 a National Guard Armory was built in Deming, after Pancho Villa's famous raid at Columbus, New Mexico, where 17 Americans were killed and 20 wounded. The town experienced a boom during World War I when Camp Cody northwest of town was established (at a cost of \$2,025,000) and developed into an important training facility; over 30,000 men were stationed there during the war. Deming's population jumped to 3,212 in 1920, before severe drought and the depression crippled the local economy. CCC and WPA projects, including the City Hall, library, and WPA office building, brought some relief to Deming in the 1930s, as did a new Army Air Force Base during World War II. The town's population grew slightly, to 3,377 in 1930 and 3,608 in 1940. After the war, retirees, veterans, and some industry began moving to the community.

The Deming Main Post Office is on the northwest corner of Spruce and Copper streets. The remainder of the block west of the Post Office is used as a parking lot. To the rear is a two-story concrete block and brick building (First

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Baptist Church). Across Spruce Street to the south is a single-family house with a parking lot in the remaining western portion of the block. One-story masonry commercial buildings are across Copper Street to the east, and the Copper/Spruce intersection to the southeast. The Post Office is at the western edge of the Central Business District.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DEMING MAIN POST OFFICE

"Deming This Week Submitted Federal Building Survey Report" reported the Deming Headlight on February 1, 1935. Information had been gathered on a possible federal building for Deming; a favorable recommendation from the New Mexico Congressional delegation, which had been "working hard" on the matter, was expected. The Deming Lions Club was also working on the project. Also in early 1935 it was reported that a new library would be constructed, with the aid of FERA labor (January llth article), and that a \$40,000 PWA waterworks improvement project was starting (January 18th article). On May 31st it was reported that two CCC camps had been approved for Luna County to combat soil erosion. On August 2nd it was announced that the WPA headquarters, to administer a seven county area and employ 20 to 30 people, was to be located in Deming.

"Deming Will Get New Post Office Building" headlined the <u>Headlight</u> on August 16th. The Treasury and Post Office Department had announced the selection of 351 public buildings to cost \$5,868,000, financed from a \$60,000,000 emergency construction fund. The list also included Portales. On September 13th it was reported that proposals for the post office site had been opened; 13 sites had been offered, ranging from a donation to \$12,800.

An article of October 4th reported that 500 men were on the re-employment list and 108 men were employed on WPA projects in Luna County. WPA projects included the Deming Public Library, Columbus School, Sunshine School, curbing and trees for Deming streets, a sewage disposal plant, the Deming-Hondale Highway, and 24 men placed as farm hands and 37 with individual employers. "Post Office Site Man Looks At Property" reported the <u>Headlight</u> on October 18th; M. A. Clark had been in Deming three to four days before returning to

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Denver. At this time it was also announced that a \$70,000 PWA grant and loan would build a new college gym and "reconvert" the old one (October 25th article) and a proposal had been submitted for a new City Building: the WPA would provide a new city hall, water building, and fire station, of adobe in pueblo style, using the present city site on the north side of East Pine.

On November 29th it was announced that a site at the northwest corner of Spruce and Copper had been selected for the post office; the \$6,000 site was offered by C. J. Kelley and was occupied by the Lester Apartments. At the end of the year it was reported that a \$34,000 contract had been let for a new Natural Gas Plant, another PWA project (December 6th).

The new year of 1936 brought much news of Deming's post office: that the building would be in pueblo style and work would start soon (January 10th); that U.S. construction engineer F. M. Beaudreau had arrived, the site surveyed, and test pits dug (January 31st); Senator Carl A. Hatch had written that the drawings had been finished (the building was not in the pueblo style as earlier predicted), specifications were being completed, and bids would soon be called (May 1st); and that the site was being cleared (May 29th). An article of February 7th had also reported the dedication of Deming's new library; Governor Tingley had been present and photos of the new library and the Deming Community House, both WPA projects and in the pueblo style, were published. It was also noted that local Chamber of Commerce membership was growing.

On June 19th the <u>Headlight</u> reported that bids for the new post office had been opened; a Los Angeles firm had submitted the low bid of \$62,400. On July 24th the paper explained that the contract had been awarded on June 29th to L. F. Dow & Co. of Los Angeles and work would start soon. By August Mr. Dow was in Deming and looking at the site (August 7th article). On September 11th it was reported that ground had been broken and excavation started ("with power shovel"). An article of October 2nd described the building and noted that the foundation was taking shape.

An article of October 16th noted how Luna County had benefited from the WPA: it had spent \$153,748 and put 147 persons to work in Luna County on 15 projects, including the

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Sunshine Community School (\$5,137); Columbus School repairs (\$2,033); Deming street paving (\$20,591 and \$14,876); street improvements for Columbus (\$8,545); Deming sewer work (\$10,-139 and \$12,815); Deming Library (\$8,600); curb and trees (\$6,370); park (\$20,607); and a hospital addition (\$4,774).

On Friday December 4th the <u>Headlight</u> described the cornerstone laying ceremony, to take place the following day. Participants would include Postmaster George W. Dexter; W. J. Evans, the Chairman of Deming Board of Trustees; Congressman J. J. Dempsey; the high school band; and the citizens of Deming, who were invited to attend the event (and sing "America"). In recognition of their efforts, the Lions Club would have the honor of laying the cornerstone.

On April 30th, 1937 it was reported that elaborate plans were being made for the post office dedication. An article of May 21st reported that Governor Tingley, Postmaster General Farley, Senator Dennis Chavez, Congressman J. J. Dempsey, and State WPA head E. H. Oakley would all be attending the event, scheduled for Saturday, May 29th at 8:45 a.m.

The May 28th issue of the <u>Headlight</u> featured a great deal of news regarding the dedication, scheduled for the following day. The program was outlined and a photo of Farley, Tingley, and Dempsey published. "Greetings to Mr. Farley" by Rev. N. U. Stout was published on page 2, along with a homespun editorial, headlined "Howdy Jim."

On June 4th is was reported that the post office had been dedicated as planned; the dedication participants had been escorted by Troop E, lllth Calvary and the State Police to the Methodist Church for breakfast. Farley gave the talk and Mayor W. J. Evans welcomed hundreds of citizens.

Almost a year later, on March 4th, 1938, the <u>Headlight</u> reported that a mural had been placed in the post office lobby. Entitled "Mountains and Yucca," the "decorative landscape characteristic of the southwest" was painted by Kenneth M. Adams of Taos. Adams had also placed murals in Goodland, Kansas and the Colorado Springs Fine Art Center, and as a resident artist at the University of New Mexico under the Carnegie Foundation, he was to prepare four murals for the new Coronado Library at the school. 1:20

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The following information is the same for all the photographs listed: 1. Deming MPO 2. Deming, New Mexico 3. Jim Kolva 4. June 1988 5. Negatives on file at USPS Facilities Service Center, San Bruno, CA. Photo No. 1 (negative #15A) 6. View to north Photo No. 2 (negative #14A) 6. View to northwest Photo No. 3 (negative #17A) 6. View to northeast Photo No. 4 (negative #5A) 6. Lobby mural