

THE STORY BEHIND "TOURIST ENCHANTMENT"
BY BILL CURRY

In 2001 the Chamber of Commerce in Tucumcari approached me with the idea of doing a Route 66 poster in conjunction with the 75th anniversary celebration of the "Mother Road". So, after a deal between us was worked out, I began the process of doing some initial sketches of several different ideas. One of the sketches, really captured the romance of the west and the nostalgia of route 66, and that is what I began to develop. I knew that Tucumcari Mountain had to be in the painting, along with a New Mexico US 66 sign. The corvette idea came from the TV series about route 66. There is a fellow that lives near Tucumcari that is a great guy, but a corvette "nut" and he also restores older corvettes. I approached him about using and photographing his 1966 corvette, he agreed and was excited that I wanted to use his car in the painting. Next, came the chore was trying to come up with models to use that would carry out my route 66 concept. I wanted a beautiful young woman dressed in 1950's attire, who is driving her corvette west, but needs some help with directions. She spots a good looking cowboy riding his horse across the plains, and decides to stop and ask him. I wanted the young woman to suggest a little subtle romance action with the tall and bashful cowboy. After a great deal of searching the young woman and man I finally decided to use as my models were a ranching couple whose names are Becky and Wade Whitson. Wade is the son of Larry and Katy (Dennis) Whitson. The Dennis family is a well-known, prominent Quay County family that began ranching in the Norton Valley, and Becky and Wade still operate that ranch. Last, but not least, a cowboy without a horse: "Well, that's not natural". The horse certainly identifies the "real west" and completes the artistic balance for the painting.