

The [Grafton Heritage Partnership](#) is a remarkable organization that has accomplished a remarkable goal. The partnership brought together more than 20 groups with diverse interests to preserve Grafton, Utah's most picturesque and beloved ghost town, and the surrounding agricultural and riparian environment.

Two previous efforts to preserve Grafton faltered while the town's buildings suffered serious deterioration and vandalism. Lu Wayne Wood, who was born in Grafton in 1911, initiated a new effort to stabilize the town's church/school in 1995. The adobe building was in imminent danger of collapse. From this focus on a single building, the project expanded to include the entire town site. The need for action was urgent as pressure was growing from developers who wanted to purchase the land surrounding Grafton and construct condominiums.

The Grand Canyon Trust joined the partnership to support the preservation of the fragile Virgin River riparian environment. The Trust took on significant fundraising for the project as well as scientific analysis of the site. David Hatfield, mayor of the nearby town of Rockville, accepted the chairmanship of the partnership. His patient leadership helped the ideologically diverse members of the partnership reach successful compromises.

The Grafton Heritage Partnership's achievements are many. It has sensitively renovated the historic church/school and secured commitments from the private landowners in the townsite to keep their land in agricultural use. It also raised \$1,350,000 to purchase the 220-acre Stout Ranch that surrounds the townsite to prevent Grafton from being ringed by development. While the Grafton Heritage Partnership will continue working on the restoration and interpretation of the town site, it has eliminated the major threats to Grafton's future.