

## **WESTERN SPIRIT: SCOTTSDALE'S MUSEUM OF THE WEST TO EXPAND PROGRAMS AND EXHIBITIONS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION**

**SCOTTSDALE** (November 19, 2015) — Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West on Friday, November 20 will be certified a Smithsonian Affiliate museum, making it a recognized partner with the world's largest museum and research complex. Richard Kurin, Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture for the Smithsonian Institution, will visit the museum located at 3830 N. Marshall Way in downtown Scottsdale, and present the Certification of Affiliation at a private event.

Dignitaries attending the event will include Scottsdale Vice Mayor David Smith; Barbara Barrett, former U.S. Ambassador to Finland; Gay Wray, Smithsonian National Board Member; and Jim Bruner, Chairman of the Board of Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West.

Becoming a Smithsonian Affiliate opens the door to a variety of benefits to Scottsdale's Museum of the West. These include not only loans of iconic artifacts and cultural treasures, but also education programming, expert speakers, and career development for museum professionals.

According to Kurin, with approximately 137 million objects, works of art and specimens in the Smithsonian, affiliates such as Scottsdale's Museum of the West are indispensable resources that help bring more of its educational and historical resources to people in communities throughout the country.

In addition to sharing artifacts from the Smithsonian's vast collection, the Affiliate relationship will provide Scottsdale's Museum of the West with opportunities to collaborate on innovative educational programming to help students understand the legacy of the West and their own role in shaping it.

"As the storytellers of the American West, we are honored to enter this collaborative partnership, which will help broaden our visitors' knowledge and understanding of the history and cultures of the 19 states of the American West," commented Mike Fox, director and CEO of Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West.

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The museum, which opened in January 2015, features rotating exhibitions of hundreds of Western artworks and historic artifacts. Current exhibitions include a 50th anniversary retrospective entitled “A Salute to Cowboy Artists of America and a Patron, the Late Eddie Basha: 50 Years of Amazing Contributions to the American West,” on view through May 31, 2016, and “Inspirational Journey: The Story of Lewis and Clark Featuring the Artwork of Charles Fritz,” on view through October 31, 2016.

Other exhibits include authentic Old West spurs, badges, cowboy gear, and saddles; rare Navajo chief’s blankets; and artworks ranging from Thomas Moran and Alfred Jacob Miller to the Taos Society of Artists.

The museum is managed by Scottsdale Museum of the West, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. It relies upon private support including tax-deductible contributions, memberships, exhibition and program sponsorships, and private hosting of events to fund its operation. For more information, visit [scottsdalemuseumwest.org](http://scottsdalemuseumwest.org) or call 480-686-9539.

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#### **About Smithsonian Affiliations**

Established in 1996, Smithsonian Affiliations is a national outreach program that develops long-term collaborative partnerships with museums, educational and cultural organizations to enrich communities with Smithsonian resources. The long-term goal of Smithsonian Affiliations is to facilitate a two-way relationship among Affiliate organizations and the Smithsonian Institution to increase discovery and inspire lifelong learning in communities across America. More information about the Smithsonian Affiliations program and Affiliate activity is available at [www.affiliations.si.edu](http://www.affiliations.si.edu).

#### **About the Smithsonian Institution**

The Smithsonian Institution was founded in 1846, with a generous bequest from British scientist James Smithson (1765-1829) to found at Washington an establishment for “the increase and diffusion of knowledge.” The Smithsonian is the world’s largest museum and research complex, with 19 museums and galleries and the National Zoological Park.

The Smithsonian’s collections document the nation’s history and heritage and represent the world’s natural and cultural diversity. The total number of objects, works of art and specimens at the Smithsonian is estimated at nearly 137 million, including more than 126 million specimens and artifacts at the National Museum of Natural History.