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MUSEUM REINVIGORATES GALLERIES

Scottsdale's newest museum is attracting fans of the wild and artistic West, and neighboring businesses have become fans, too.

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PHOTOS BY ROB SCHUMACHER/THE REPUBLIC

Bill Welch, owner of the Cowboy Legacy gallery, shows off his favorite piece this week in Scottsdale. Welch, whose gallery sells Western-inspired paintings and sculptures, says he's seen an increase in foot traffic and sales since the Museum of the West opened nearby.

Museum of the West lifts neighbors

SONJA HALLER

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Scottsdale's newest museum is attracting fans of the wild and artistic West, and neighboring businesses have become fans, too.

That's because, since Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West opened in January, surrounding shop owners have experienced a slight boon.

Su Vino Winery at Marshall Way and First Street has typically depended on word-of-mouth and Groupon coupons to attract new business. The Museum of the West opening across the street has helped, said Michelle Berry, tasting-bar manager.

"We've had a lot more walk-bys and walk-ins," Berry said of the winery that opened in 2007. "A lot of people have walked in and said, 'Hey, I just saw your place. How long have you been here?'"

Bill Welch, owner of the Cowboy Leg-

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West

Address: 3830 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale.

Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Admission: \$13 general admission; \$11 seniors and active military; \$8 students and children; free for children 5 years and younger.

More information: 480-686-9539, info@scottsdalemuseumwest.org

acy gallery, said he's seen an increase in foot traffic and sales. His gallery on Main Street sells Western-inspired paintings and sculptures.

"Probably five out of 10, if not six out of 10 people who come here, are either

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Scottsdale's newest museum, the Museum of the West, has brought visitors back to Marshall Way, an area of Old Town that has experienced storefront vacancies in recent years.



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Community News

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ROB SCHUMACHER/THE REPUBLIC

Cowboy Legacy Gallery on Wednesday, June 24, 2015 in Scottsdale, AZ.

Museum

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going to the museum or have just left the museum," Welch said. "So that makes me really happy, and it's been a good thing for us."

The true test of the museum's economic impact on surrounding businesses remains to be seen. The museum opened in January, and the tourism season begins in the fall and lasts through spring.

The added visitors to downtown Scottsdale haven't been enough to save some businesses along Marshall Way, which has experienced storefront vacancies because of business relocation and closures of several galleries in recent years. The Method Art gallery is closing this summer after seven years on Marshall Way.

Museum Director Mike Fox said a growing synergism among the museum and neighboring galleries and restaurants will become more evident in the next eight months.

The museum is dedicated to telling the story of 19 Western states through art and artifacts, and every exhibit is on loan. Fox said the museum expects to attract 100,000 visitors during its first year

in operation and looks toward visitors and sustaining memberships to fund its operating costs.

About 1,000 households — individuals, senior couples or families — have become museum members so far, Fox said. Annual membership prices range from \$25 for seniors to \$500 for sustaining members.

Scottsdale owns the publicly funded museum and expects revenue from the city's hotel-bed tax, which funds tourism-related efforts, to pay off the \$11.4 million in construction debt. The City Council agreed to provide up to \$400,000 in matching funds for the museum's annual operating expenses each year for the next five years.

The museum's operational revenue is expected to be \$1.5 million in its first stabilized year, growing to \$2.5 million by the fifth year.

Ellen Andres-Schneider, chairwoman of the Scottsdale Cultural Council, became a sustaining member, in part, because the West is her own history, as she has pictures of herself and former Mayor Herb Drinkwater riding in the annual Western Parada del Sol. The museum also reflects the Valley's artists and art lovers.

"I love the inclusion of some of our local artisans and collectors who help keep the West alive here in our Valley," she said.

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