



Saguaro National Park News Release

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For Immediate Release

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RINCON MOUNTAIN DISTRICT VISITOR CENTER TO CLOSE FOR RENOVATION STARTING MAY 28

PARK STILL OPEN TO VISITORS

Tucson, AZ – Visitors to Saguaro National Park, Rincon Mountain District (east) will notice some changes in the visitor center starting May 28, 2012. The visitor center building, originally built in 1953, is being closed this summer for renovation in anticipation of a new exhibit project starting fall of 2012.

The park will remain open. There will be a temporary visitor center trailer in the parking lot, where visitors can still access the Western National Parks Association bookstore, special interpretative programs and passes. Access to the Cactus Forest Drive and trails will not be affected. Water will continue to be available.

The outward appearance of the building is considered historic and will not change. The inside of the building will be altered to create a functional exhibit space with northern views towards the Catalina Mountains and a new auditorium space for interpretive programs, orientation video programs and guest lectures.

The building renovation will last throughout the summer, with an anticipated re-opening in September 2012. The exhibit project is a two year design and install project.

The visitor center, located at 3693 S. Old Spanish Trail, is part administration building and part public information space. Originally, the building consisted of a small office space and a lobby. In 1959, as part of the "Mission 66" program that upgraded National Park units following World War II, the building was expanded and exhibits were installed that are still in use today.

"Times have changed and it is time to update our exhibits. As part of the project, we found it necessary to also update the visitor center", said Andy Fisher, Branch Chief of Interpretation. "We expect the renovated space to house the new permanent exhibit collection by the fall of 2014. Until then, we plan to host several traveling exhibitions and work from local artists and photographers."

Saguaro National Monument was established in 1933 and then following the acquisition of additional lands, including the Tucson Mountain District (west), the over 91,000 acre Monument was declared a National Park in 1994.

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