



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FRIENDS OF SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK AND NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE
COMPLETION OF JOINT FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN FOR SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK**

\$180,000 Raised to Support New Interpretive Exhibits at Rincon Mountain Visitor Center

Tucson, AZ – Today – Earth Day, 2014 – ***Friends of Saguaro National Park*** and the **National Park Foundation** announced the completion of a joint fundraising campaign to support the installation of new interpretive exhibits at Saguaro National Park’s Rincon Mountain Visitor Center. This unique local and national fundraising partnership jointly raised \$180,000 to support the National Park Service’s \$400,000 effort to replace the 55-year-old exhibits. When completed in late summer or early fall of 2014, this critical project will enhance the overall visitor experience, by relating the important “story” of Saguaro National Park in an interesting, and technologically-current way.

In making today’s announcement, **FOSNP** Executive Director Robert Newton noted, “*We are grateful to our donors for helping us relate the park’s story to the more than 600,000 people who visit Saguaro each year. These new interpretive exhibits will inform visitors about the saguaro cactus, and its importance to the Sonoran Desert ecosystem . . . about the extraordinary biodiversity of the Sky Island ecological community . . . about the unique Saguaro Wilderness, and its juxtaposition with a rapidly expanding urban area . . . and about the adaptation, and impacts, of people in this arid environment.*”

The **National Park Foundation** and its partners kicked off these joint fundraising efforts in 11 national parks in 2013. **Friends of Saguario National Park** was selected as part of an NPF pilot program, where \$1 million raised by the Foundation could be leveraged by Friends Groups, maximizing the fundraising potential for each park's unique project. *"The National Park Foundation was proud to raise critical funds for Friends of Saguario National Park to leverage dollar-for-dollar in support of the interpretive exhibit replacement project at Saguario's Rincon Mountain Visitor Center,"* said Neil Mulholland, President and CEO of the National Park Foundation. *"This collaborative approach successfully optimized national and local support to make projects of vital and immediate importance possible in national parks across the country."*

Saguaro National Park Superintendent Darla Sidles lauded the unique local/national fundraising partnership. *"With about 650,000 visitors each year, Saguario is the most-visited NPS site in southern Arizona. Our old exhibits had been essentially unchanged since they were installed in 1959 – when park visitation was less than 100,000 people per year – so these new exhibits will enable us to better interpret our resources, and enhance the overall visitor experience."*

Local funding support for the project was provided through donations to **Friends of Saguario** from Rocking K Development Co., A Diamond Ventures Company; the Southwest Gas Corporation Foundation; The Jim Click Automotive Team; the Zuckerman Family Foundation; and previous gifts from former Tucson residents Milton & Adele Ward.

About Friends of Saguario National Park

Friends of Saguario is the nonprofit fundraising partner of the National Park Service at Saguario National Park. Since its founding in 1996, **FOSNP** has sought to help the public **Discover Saguario** – by encouraging the exploration and discovery of the resources, heritage and recreational opportunities of the Park . . . **Protect Saguario** – by assisting the preservation and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of the Park, and sustaining its wilderness character . . . and **Support Saguario** – by strengthening community partnerships, and building environmental stewardship through philanthropy, public education and volunteerism. Learn more about **FOSNP** at <http://www.friendsofsaguaro.org> .

About the National Park Foundation

The **National Park Foundation** is the official charity of America's national parks and nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. Chartered by Congress in 1967, the **National Park Foundation** raises private funds to help **PROTECT** more than 84 million acres of national parks through critical conservation and preservation efforts; **CONNECT** all Americans with their incomparable natural landscapes, vibrant culture and rich history; and **INSPIRE** the next generation of park stewards. Find out more and become a part of the national park community at <http://www.nationalparks.org> .