



For Immediate Release
Date: January 17, 2014

Contact: Joan Liess
(520) 881-8256 or (520) 360-5454
joan@joanliess.com

Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation to Expand Old Tucson

(Tucson, Ariz.) - The nonprofit Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation, in cooperation with Old Tucson Company, has submitted proposed plans to expand Old Tucson into a multi-cultural, Western heritage center. The center will focus on interactive living history educational programs that encourage a deep appreciation for the complex history and diverse cultures of Southern Arizona and Northern Mexico.

The Foundation will work with community partners, including the University of Arizona and local cultural and ethnic organizations and groups, to expand Old Tucson's current living history and experiential learning programs that preserve and present the culture and heritage of the Sonoran region. Old Tucson Company, the current leaseholder of the Pima County owned property located in Tucson Mountain Park, is in discussions with the County to reassign the lease to the Foundation in order to perpetuate the Foundation's intended purpose.

The Foundation's planned expansion integrates into the existing Old Tucson themed facilities and will invite visitors to explore the lives of the region's people through interactive exhibits, entertainment, food and crafts with operational support provided by Old Tucson Company. The contributions of Native American, Mexican and Spanish inhabitants, settlers of African, Asian, and European ancestry or descent, and religious minorities of the period, including Mormons and Jewish pioneers, will be represented through school programs, living history recreations and experiences. Additionally, preservation and display of artifacts that reflect the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity that contributed to the region's rich heritage will be part of the Foundation's mission.

Planned programs and exhibits will chronicle the region's history of traditional activities and industries including ranching, farming, mining and transportation, and explore the lifestyles and contributions of earlier residents including women in the West and the Mexican vaquero [cowboy].

"Over the last five years Old Tucson Company has worked to establish a Foundation to support the goal of providing residents and visitors with a participatory experience that delivers both education and entertainment and reflects the spirit of Arizona's territorial days," stated Old Tucson Company's General Manager and CEO Pete Mangelsdorf. "Operating under the auspices of the Foundation will allow Old Tucson to realize the long-held vision of expanding its offerings to include preservation and education along with film activities, group sales, banquet business and western-themed attraction."

Old Tucson's cultural roots run all the way back to its origin as a film location. In 1939, Columbia Pictures' set builders enlisted the knowledge and skill of the builders of the original Tucson, the Tohono O'odham, for the movie "Arizona." Without the convenience of running water, the Tohono O'odham builders made more than 35,000 adobe bricks to create the movie town. Seventy-five years later, the remains of the original buildings are testimony to the knowledge and craftsmanship of the builders.

Old Tucson is Southern Arizona's premier film location and Hollywood's most famous Western movie location recognized in over 300 feature films and TV Westerns. For more information about Old Tucson, visit www.OldTucson.com or call (520) 883-0100.

Old Tucson is located in Tucson Mountain Park at 201 S. Kinney Road, Tucson, Ariz., 85735.

###

1/16/2014