



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### ***Cool Summer Nights* Expanded at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum 14 Nights to Beat the Heat This Summer**

**Tucson, AZ** (April 25, 2014) -- As summer temperatures rise, Arizona residents seek ways to keep cool and still stay active. To indulge this desire to get out and enjoy the environment, the Desert Museum has expanded its summer schedule offering visitors 14 nights to enjoy during its *Cool Summer Nights* season beginning Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup>.

"These Saturday night events have become a tradition in Tucson," states Craig Ivanyi, the Museum's Executive Director. "And because they're so popular, we encourage guests to arrive early, at least by 5 PM in order to have dinner and get a good parking spot! But these nighttime events aren't just about having a good time." All of the programming is in keeping with the Museum's mission ... to instill understanding, appreciation, and conservation of this unique ecosystem.

"At interpretive stations throughout the grounds, the Museum's knowledgeable docents share insights on desert dwellers, plant adaptations, natural history, and conservation," Ivanyi adds. "They are the Museum's front line ambassadors for the Museum's mission." Each summer Saturday night has a unique theme and special activities typically begin at 6:00 PM.

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This year's summer evenings kick off with the return of *Living in Harmony with the Sun*, a partnership with the University of Arizona Skin Cancer Institute. The night's activities include free skin cancer screenings, a sun-fact scavenger hunt, and a presentation of the Museum's popular venomous reptile demonstration, *Live and (sort of) on the Loose*.

On opening night, the Museum will also unveil a new reptile exhibit, ***Snake! Rattle & Roll***. This original exhibit will feature intriguing and lesser-known Mexican rattlesnakes from Sonora and Baja California.

With its expanded *Cool Summer Nights* season, the Museum is bringing back some favorite themes like Astronomy Nights in conjunction with the National Optical Astronomy Observatory (NOAO) and Insect Insanity. But it is also introducing several new themes including World Oceans Night, Conservation Chic & Comedy, two Full Moon Festivals, Native American Cultural Night and Desert Harmonies. Several nights will include complimentary photography and art workshops hosted by the Museum's Art Institute. For the final night of the season, August 30<sup>th</sup> visitors will be *Going Batty for the Desert Museum's Birthday!*

Dining on summer Saturday evenings at the Museum is a true culinary experience as the upscale *Ocotillo Café* is open for dinner. The intimate desert garden setting, accented with original artwork, is the perfect backdrop for original Sonoran regional recipes. Reservations are strongly recommended by calling 520-883-5705.

For taste-tempting treats, check out the Cottonwood Snack Shack located near the Riparian Corridor's otters and beavers. New this year, the "shack" will offer "build-your-own" ice cream sandwiches -- sure to be a hit with families!

Also open for dinner is the Ironwood Terraces Restaurant, the largest dining venue at the Desert Museum which offers a more casual atmosphere, either inside or outside on one of the many patios that overlook the natural desert landscape and nighttime vistas.

And just in case you forget your black light, the gift shops will be open. A great way to shop early for unique holiday gifts!

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For a complete schedule of each week's theme and activity times, please visit:  
[www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org). Regular admission rates apply.

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### **The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum**

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is ranked by TripAdvisor in the Top 10 Museums in the world. It is home to more than 230 animal species, 1,200 varieties of desert plants, and 56,000 individual specimens in addition to a world-class mineral collection, aquarium and art gallery. Its mission is to inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation, and understanding of the bi-national Sonoran Desert region. The museum is located at 2021 N. Kinney Road in Tucson Mountain Park adjacent to Saguaro National Park (West). It is open daily year round with operating hours varying by season. Call (520) 883-2702 or visit [www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org) for more information.

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