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Museum of Northern Arizona Wins Nation's Highest Museum and Library Honor

*National Medal for Museum and Library Service Recognizes Museum's Exceptional
Community Contributions*

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZ. (April 21, 2015) – The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) announced today the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) in Flagstaff, Arizona is one of 10 recipients of the 2015 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The National Medal is the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries for service to the community. For 21 years, the award has celebrated institutions that present extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service to make a difference for individuals, families, and communities. The National Medal will be presented to MNA at an award ceremony in Washington, D.C. on May 18.

"We are incredibly honored to have received this recognition for our service to our community at the national level," said MNA President Dr. Robert Breunig. "This honor is a tribute to the hard work and resourcefulness of the museum staff and their commitment to make MNA a dynamic, forward looking, and welcoming place for our community."

The ten honorees exemplify the nation's great libraries and museums and demonstrate outstanding impact and quality of programs, services, and partnerships, exceeding the expected levels of community outreach. MNA was nominated for the award last fall by Representative Ann Kirkpatrick.

"Folks in Flagstaff have always been proud of the Museum of Northern Arizona, but today we are extra proud that the rest of the country will know of its exceptional service to our community and state," said Kirkpatrick. "I join my fellow Arizonans in celebrating this top honor and sending congratulations to our good friends at the Museum of Northern Arizona."

"These National Medal recipients have demonstrated a genuine understanding of their communities and are committed to addressing community needs," said Maura Marx, Acting Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. "IMLS believes museums and libraries are vital community anchors that enhance civic engagement, cultural and educational opportunities, and economic vitality. The remarkable community contributions these institutions have made are proof positive of this."

After the award ceremony, StoryCorps—a national nonprofit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans—will visit MNA to document stories about the museum from the community.

MNA impacts its community in a multitude of ways: offering enriching programs for all children through its Discovery Program, launching a Navajo language summer camp for Diné youth, producing forums that foster dialogue about critical community issues and the future of the region, celebrating the diversity of regional cultures through Heritage Festivals, and by offering a rich variety of educational exhibitions and public programs.

"This medal confirms that the relationship between the museum and the community is as remarkable as we've always believed it is," said MNA Director and CEO Carrie M. Heinonen. "MNA is a significant cultural

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and scientific resource for northern Arizona, and it has been able to play that role due to active community engagement – not only from its donors and members, but from government agencies, local businesses, and from the community at-large.”

In celebration of winning the National Medal and as a way to say thank you to the Flagstaff community, MNA intends to launch a summer after-hours series called “Thirsty Thursdays,” weekly from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The museum will partner with community members and organizations to program different events from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Flagstaff residents can quench their cultural thirst through music, dance, storytelling, and hands-on activities.

“All of Flagstaff and northern Arizona should take great pride in MNA’s receiving this medal, the highest honor the U.S. government bestows upon museums,” added Heinonen. “I hope it serves as gratification for dedicated supporters and as a call to others that we must not take for granted this national treasure nestled right in our backyard.”

For a complete list of 2015 recipients and to learn more about the National Medal, visit www.ims.gov/medals. To learn more about MNA, visit www.musnaz.org or call 928.774.5213.

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The **Museum of Northern Arizona** inspires a sense of love and responsibility for the beauty and diversity of the Colorado Plateau. Founded in 1928, the 200-acre campus includes an historic exhibit building with nine galleries showcasing the geology, anthropology and art of the region; research and collections facilities; a museum shop and bookstore; and more than 450 public programs annually. To learn more, visit www.musnaz.org or call 928.774.5213.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s [123,000 libraries](#) and [35,000 museums](#). Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov.