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Tribe invites community to May 11 groundbreaking for new cultural center

Agua Caliente project includes new museum, spa & bathhouse, Oasis Trail in downtown Palm Springs; opening in 2020

PALM SPRINGS – The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians invites the community to its groundbreaking at 9 a.m. Friday May 11 of its new 5.8-acre cultural center in the heart of downtown Palm Springs that celebrates the history, culture and traditions of the Agua Caliente people.

The groundbreaking will be at the corner of Indian and Tahquitz and kicks off a two-year construction cycle to build a new cultural museum, Agua Caliente Spa and Bathhouse that celebrates the Tribe's ancient Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring, a Gathering Plaza, gardens and an Oasis Trail. The project is on target to open in 2020.

The cultural center will feature a new cultural museum, a new Agua Caliente Spa and Bathhouse that celebrates the Tribe's ancient Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring, a Gathering Plaza, gardens and an Oasis Trail.

"This new cultural center provides an incredible opportunity to share and celebrate our history, culture and traditions with this community and visitors from around the world," Tribal Chairman Jeff L. Grubbe said. "Each federally recognized tribe throughout this country has a distinct culture that includes traditions, language, historic clothing and housing styles as well as historical food and medicine

preparations. We want to share that with others as well as acknowledge the fact that we are alive and well today living in the modern world.”

In preparation for construction:

- Crews will transplant the *Washingtonia filifera* palm trees on the construction site to a temporary location.
- Crews will install the construction fence to secure the site following the groundbreaking celebration.
- Starting this month, the museum location at 219 S. Palm Canyon will no longer be open to visitors so it can be remodeled.
- Starting April 30, the surface parking lot at the corner of E. Calle Encilia and E. Andreas Road will no longer be open through the duration of construction.

Inspiration for the cultural center’s design includes Agua Caliente traditions such as basket weaving and pottery (ollas) and elements found in nature including desert landscapes, Andreas Canyon rock formations, the Andreas Canyon stream and the *Washingtonia filifera* palm trees – the only native palm tree to the California desert.

JCJ Architecture, of Phoenix, is the project designer. JCJ Architecture’s design concept for the cultural center reflects the Tribe’s values and ongoing commitment to the Agua Caliente people. In addition, the center draws upon the rich history of experiencing the healing mineral water.

The cultural center will include numerous outdoor activity spaces, including a Gathering Plaza adjacent to the Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring, originally known as *Sec he (the sound of boiling water)*, which serves as a commemorative focal point for the new development. Here, Tribal Members and visitors can celebrate community, history and pay respect to the life-giving waters that helped shape the Palm Springs region.

Visitors can readily access from the Plaza either the Museum or the Spa and Bathhouse along landscaped terraces and pathways that serve as an extension of the Gathering Plaza. An interpretive green belt, the Oasis Trail, meanders through the property and provides an interactive, cultural learning environment. This trail recreates, on a smaller scale, the distinctive character, geology, flora and beauty of the nearby Indian Canyons, one of the ancestral homes of the Agua Caliente.

The new Museum includes approximately 48,000 square feet and will feature collections in a main gallery, changing gallery and art gallery. The new Museum, a repository for cultural artifacts, stories and history, will also include an education center and garden.

The Spa includes approximately 40,000 square feet to celebrate the ancient healing waters of the Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring with treatments rooms, men and women’s bathhouses, a tranquility garden, a salon, fitness center and outdoor mineral pools.

The water from the Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring is estimated to be upwards of 12,000 years old and is truly unique as it contains a mineral make-up that has not been found anywhere else in the world. The Tribe has shared the healing water with visitors for more than 100 years. This new Spa will be the fifth bathhouse or spa at the site, with the first one operating in the late 1880s.

The Oasis Trail will meander between the Museum and Spa and will include terraces, a waterfall, sandy beach, fire pits and meditation labyrinth.

Building upon the traditions of the Agua Caliente people and the world-renowned natural features of their ancestral lands, the new Agua Caliente Cultural Center will encompass a wide-range of experiences and learning opportunities that conveys the values and legacy of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

As an integral part of the strategic Vision Agua Caliente process that the Tribe initiated several years ago, the Cultural Center will serve as a cornerstone to the long-term goals of the Tribe, and has been designed to be woven into the Master Plan that the Agua Caliente have established for this site in downtown Palm Springs. "This Cultural Center will allow us to reconnect to our own cultural heritage while sharing it with others," Chairman Grubbe said.

About the Tribe

The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians is a federally recognized Indian Tribe located in Palm Springs, California, with 31,500 acres of reservation lands that spread across Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, and into the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto mountains. The Tribe currently owns and operates two 18-hole championship golf courses, the Spa Resort Casino in downtown Palm Springs and the Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa in Rancho Mirage. For more information about the Tribe, visit www.aquacaliente-nsn.gov.