



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 7, 2017

Contact: Kate Anderson

Director of Public Relations

760-699-6925 | kanderson@aguacaliente-nsn.gov

Tribe reveals plans for new cultural center

Agua Caliente project includes new Museum, Spa & Bathhouse, Oasis Trail

PALM SPRINGS – Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Tribal Chairman Jeff L. Grubbe unveiled plans Saturday for a 5.8-acre cultural center in the heart of downtown Palm Springs that celebrates the history, culture and traditions of the Agua Caliente people.



Groundbreaking for the new cultural center is scheduled for early 2018 with a two-year construction cycle.

The cultural center will feature an envisioned Agua Caliente 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 of the 566 federally recognized tribes 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."

As for the museum specifically, the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum Board Chairwoman Millie Browne indicates the new museum is a dream come true.

"This new Museum will provide a resource not only to the Agua Caliente community but to Native and indigenous people around the world," Browne said. "A greater and more modern space will allow us to share our culture and the culture of all native peoples. Their issues are our issues, and our issues theirs. Land and water rights, cultural heritage are only a couple of examples, but through education and collaboration, we can educate guests from around the globe right here in Palm Springs. My hope for the future is that the Museum will continue to grow in the new space, and that the Museum will become a world-class destination and global resource for sharing knowledge and experience across not just indigenous people, but all people, to help understand their past, present and future. Our elders could see that our history needed to be preserved for future generations as well as the public. This is our new Roundhouse, the place to share our history, knowledge and culture."

Inspiration for the design of the cultural center includes Agua Caliente traditions such as basket weaving and pottery known as ollas as well as elements found in nature such as desert landscapes and the Indian Canyons including desert rock formations, the meandering 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 pairs up the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum with the new Spa and Bathhouse, which 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, art gallery, and collections storage vault. The new Museum, a repository for cultural artifacts, stories and history, will also include an education center and garden. The Tribe will build and own the Cultural Center while the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum organization will run the day-to-day operations of the Museum sharing the stories of Native people and, in particular, the Agua Caliente people, who have a vibrant, living culture with a rich and complex history.

“The new Museum will be a state-of-the-art- facility with a basket-starter shape incorporated in its architectural design and a dome-element in the Grand Lobby,” said Julia Bussinger, Director of the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum. “It will adhere to the best museum environmental standards to display and take care of our collections, and host world traveling exhibitions. This is an exciting time. My staff and I are ready for the opportunities ahead of us, and we will work diligently to convey the living culture continuum.”

The Spa includes approximately 40,000 square feet to celebrate the ancient healing waters of 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 pit 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 their home in downtown Palm Springs.

“This Cultural Center will allow us to reconnect to our own cultural heritage while sharing it with others,” 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.

About the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum

The Agua Caliente Cultural Museum inspires people to learn about the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and other native cultures. The museum educates people about the issues and challenges of Native and indigenous people. The museum currently operates at 219 S. Palm Canyon Dr. in downtown Palm Springs. For more information, visit www.accmuseum.org.

About JCJ Architecture

JCJ Architecture is a nationally recognized planning, architecture and interior design firm with offices in Phoenix, San Diego, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Boston, Hartford and New York City. Since its founding in 1936, the firm has worked with a diverse range of clients, including over 50 Tribal Nations, on projects ranging from hospitality and leisure, to cultural, community, gaming, education, public safety, and civic. With a comprehensive planning and design process that is formulated to address each project's unique challenge, context and purpose. JCJ is made up of more than 100 employee-owners who are proud to have created buildings and places of exceptional and enduring quality.

###