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## Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza, Museum open November 3, 2023

*The opening on the sacred site marks one of the most important moments in the modern history of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians*

**PALM SPRINGS, CALIF. (Sept. 8, 2023)** – The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians is pleased to invite all to the much-anticipated Grand Opening of the Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza and Museum from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 3, 2023.

Owned and operated by the Tribe, the 5.8-acre Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza in the heart of downtown Palm Springs celebrates the history, culture, and traditions of the Agua Caliente people. The Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza features the new Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, The Spa at Séc-he that celebrates the Tribe's ancient Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring, a Gathering Plaza, and an Oasis Trail.

“The Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza provides an incredible opportunity for us to share and celebrate our history, culture, and traditions with this community and visitors from around the world,” Tribal Chairman Reid D. Milanovich 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 our culture with visitors through our authentic voice. This is our story, in our own voice. We are here today just like we have been since time immemorial.”

Inspiration for the Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza design is rooted in Agua Caliente traditions such as basket weaving, pottery (ollas), and bird songs, and elements native to the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation including desert landscapes, rock formations found in the Indian Canyons, the Tahquitz Canyon waterfall, and the *Washingtonia filifera* palm trees — the only palm tree native to the California desert.

JCJ Architecture, of Phoenix, is the project designer. JCJ Architecture's design concept for the Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza reflects the Tribe's values and ongoing commitment to the Agua Caliente people. The Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza comprises outdoor spaces, including the Gathering Plaza adjacent to the Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring, originally known as *Séc-he* (the Cahuilla term for “the sound of boiling water”). The Oasis Trail provides an interactive, cultural learning environment. This trail mimics, on a smaller scale, the distinctive character, geology, flora, and beauty of the nearby Tahquitz Canyon and Indian Canyons, ancestral homes of the Agua Caliente people.

The new Museum is approximately 48,000 square feet and features permanent exhibition space dedicated to the history and culture of the Agua Caliente people, a dedicated changing gallery, educational classroom, adjacent teaching garden, and meeting-event space. The Museum Store showcases art, jewelry, and other products sourced directly from Native American artists and Native American-owned businesses from across the nation. The Museum’s Creation Migration Theater welcomes guests with a 12-minute, 360-degree animation of the Tribe’s creation story.

The Spa at *Séc-he*, which opened earlier this year, includes more than 72,000 square feet to celebrate the ancient healing waters of the Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring with treatment rooms, men’s and women's bathhouses, a tranquility garden, a salon, fitness center, outdoor pools, and health-forward dining. The water from the Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring is estimated to be upwards of 12,000 years old and is 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 130 years. This new Spa is the fifth bathhouse or spa at the site, with the first one operating in the late 1880s.

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

“The Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza is one of the most important achievements in our Tribe’s history,” Chairman Milanovich said. “It allows us to share and celebrate our culture and educate guests about our history and who we are as a people. For us, it’s a dream come true that has been in the making for 30 years. When we share our culture, we preserve our culture.”

As an integral part of the Tribe’s vision initiated many years ago, the Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza serves as a cornerstone to the long-term goals of the Tribe to share and celebrate its true identity.

*The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians is a federally recognized Indian tribe located in Palm Springs, California, with more than 31,500 acres of reservation lands, which include portions of Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage and portions of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto mountains. For more information about the Tribe, visit: [www.aquacaliente-nsn.gov](http://www.aquacaliente-nsn.gov).*

