

Arizona Daily Star

Tucson's Desert Museum, Bisbee library win national medals for community service

[Henry Brean](#)

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The Copper Queen Library in Bisbee, once named the best small-town library in the U.S., joins Tucson's Desert Museum and the Museum of Northern Arizona as the state's only winners of the national medals from the Institute of Museum and Library Service

Josh Galemore, Arizona Daily Star

The Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum in Tucson and the Copper Queen Library in Bisbee will soon have some new hardware for their trophy cases.

For service to their communities, the two Southern Arizona institutions have been selected to receive national medals from the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#).

The independent federal agency based in Washington, D.C., describes its National Medal for Museum and Library Service as the nation's highest honor of its kind.

[The institute announced this year's recipients](#) — five libraries and five museums — on Tuesday. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Washington this summer.

“These institutions and their dedicated staff are stepping up to anticipate and meet the needs of their individual communities,” said Cyndee Landrum, acting director for the institute, which is a federally funded member of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities. “From New York to Arizona, these 10 recipients are unparalleled sources of education, health, jobs, and cultural resources, bridging the gaps of distance, resources, and experience for community members.”

The Desert Museum and the Bisbee library join the Museum of Northern Arizona as the state's only winners of the 20-year-old award. The museum in Flagstaff won its medal in 2015.

Rep. Raúl Grijalva issued a statement congratulating the two winners from his congressional district.

“This award validates what we've known to be true: the 7th Congressional District of Arizona is home to world class museums and library services,” said Grijalva, who nominated the Desert Museum and the Copper Queen Library for the medal. “I am proud to represent and support these beloved institutions that serve as critical gathering spaces for our community, repositories of knowledge, and cornerstones of learning in Southern Arizona.”

Desert Museum Executive Director Craig Ivanyi called the award “an honor beyond compare” that “affirms that the Museum's work matters to the communities we work within.”

Copper Queen Library Manager Jason Macoviak said he and his staff are “honored and thrilled to bring the National Medal home to Bisbee.”

This is just the latest honor for the two institutions.

In 2019, the 142-year-old Copper Queen was named the [best small library in America](#) by Library Journal.

The Desert Museum has racked up [numerous awards over the years](#), and it continues to rank as Tucson's top attraction on [TripAdvisor.com](#).

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is a sibling agency to the National Endowment for the Arts. It provides the main source of federal funding for the nation's libraries and museums, with a budget of more than \$313 million during fiscal year 2023.



A mountain lion found watches visitors to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. The popular attraction west of Tucson has been elected to receive a national medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Service for its service to the community.

Rebecca Sasnett, Arizona Daily Star