

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** May 18, 2021

**HIGH DESERT MUSEUM MEDIA CONTACT:**

Heidi Hagemeyer, Director of Communications

[hhagemeyer@highdesertmuseum.org](mailto:hhagemeyer@highdesertmuseum.org)

541-382-4754 ext. 166

**IMLS MEDIA CONTACT:**

Brittany Vanderpool

[bvanderpool@vancomm.com](mailto:bvanderpool@vancomm.com)

410-599-2323

## High Desert Museum Recognized as a 2021 Recipient of Nation's Highest Museum and Library Honor

### *National Medal for Museum and Library Service Recognizes Community Service*

**BEND, Ore.** — The Institute of Museum and Library Services named the High Desert Museum in Bend, Oregon today as one of six recipients of the 2021 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities.

Three museums and three libraries nationwide were selected from 30 finalists for the honor.

"It is an honor and pleasure to honor these six recipients of the 2021 National Medal of Museum and Library Service," said Crosby Kemper, director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. "Through their programs, services and community relationships, these institutions exemplify the ongoing excellence of our nations' museums and libraries across the country, as well as their extraordinary efforts this past year to serve, heal and bring us together. We look forward to celebrating them, as well as paying tribute to the hardworking staff at all American museums and libraries this summer."

The 2021 National Medal for Museum and Library Service winners represent institutions that provide dynamic programming and services that exceed expected levels of service. Through their community outreach, these institutions bring about change that touches the lives of individuals and families and helps communities thrive.

Now nearly in its 40<sup>th</sup> year, the High Desert Museum is the only museum in the nation devoted to the exploration of the High Desert, a region that spans across eight states. It was a 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service Finalist and is the fourth Oregon institution to receive the award over the past 27 years.

The Museum has worked to create programs that offer rich educational programming and expand museum access. This has particularly been true since the start of the pandemic, during which the Museum started a daylong elementary program for La Pine students so caregivers could go to work during online school; provided free memberships to St. Charles Health Care System front-line workers; and is launching an initiative to provide tablets and WiFi hotspots to households for children who might not be otherwise able to participate in online educational programs.

"We consider it a core part of our mission to be responsive to our community by providing quality, inspirational experiences, both on our grounds and beyond," said Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. "We're honored and thrilled by this national recognition."

“The High Desert Museum is a regional treasure. We’ve long been proud of the work it does to respond to community needs,” said Museum Board Chair Ryan J. Hagemann. “This incredible honor is a testament to the hard work and commitment of the Museum team.”

The award will be presented at a virtual ceremony in July. For a complete list of 2021 recipients and to learn more about the National Medal winners, visit the [IMLS website](#).

#### **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 libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America’s museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit [www.ims.gov](http://www.ims.gov) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

#### **About the High Desert Museum**

The High Desert Museum opened in Bend, Oregon in 1982. It’s the only museum in the nation dedicated to the exploration of the High Desert, bringing together wildlife, cultures, art, history and the natural world in exhibitions and unique programming to foster discovery and appreciation of the region. The Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is a Smithsonian Affiliate and was the 2019 recipient of the Western Museums Association’s Charles Redd Award for Exhibition Excellence. To learn more, visit [highdesertmuseum.org](http://highdesertmuseum.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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