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## **NEW ONLINE TOURISM MAP HIGHLIGHTS REGIONAL HERITAGE**

Interactive map encourages residents to plan day trips to nearby destinations

*TUCSON, AZ* – The Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance launched an online heritage tourism map today, creating the region’s first online, interactive heritage tourism map. In an effort to encourage residents to plan day trip vacations around local heritage destinations this summer, the “Heritage Experiences” interactive mapguide allows viewers to plan outings based on their interest in 10 heritage themes or experiences that are unique to the Santa Cruz Valley.

“This is a user-friendly way to find interesting places in our region that you’ve never been to, or didn’t know about,” says Jonathan Mabry, Chairman of the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance. “With the rising cost of gas, many people are rediscovering the nearby historical and natural treasures that make southern Arizona unique, and this interactive map makes it easier to plan those affordable ‘stay-cations’.”

The map is available on the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance’s website, at [www.santacruzheritage.org/interactivemap](http://www.santacruzheritage.org/interactivemap).

"Heritage and Culture is one of Tucson’s key destination drivers and an emerging interest among travelers to our region. Our ability to celebrate this unique aspect for a visitor experience, makes us a desirable tourism attraction," says Rick Vaughan, V.P. of Sales & Marketing at the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The heritage map highlights ten nationally unique stories this region has to tell, and the related heritage experiences available to the public at destinations throughout the Santa Cruz Valley. The Santa Cruz Valley includes the watershed of the Santa Cruz River, from Nogales to Marana, and from Green Valley to Sonoita and Elgin.

The distinctive themes or experiences include sky islands and desert seas, streams in the desert, bird habitats and migration routes, Native American lifeways, desert farming, ranching traditions, the Spanish and Mexican frontier, remnants of historic mining booms, U.S. military posts on the Mexico border, and the U.S.-Mexico border culture.

The new interactive map is the online version of the Heritage Experiences map, which was published in May 2007 to promote heritage tourism to local heritage attractions. Both the printed and online map are the region’s first tourism guide to the heritage experiences in the Santa Cruz Valley. The Heritage Alliance, a local, grassroots, non-profit organization, created the heritage tourism map as a project of the proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area. The online heritage tourism map was made possible by funding from the Town of Sahuarita.

The Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization whose mission is to connect people to the cultural, historic, and natural treasures of the Santa Cruz Valley through education, preservation and promotion of its unique resources and living traditions. For more information visit [www.santacruzheritage.org](http://www.santacruzheritage.org).

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