

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center is announcing its name change and new leadership.

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With a new season of exhibits and programming, the P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center is marking significant milestones. The first is a new name. As the only cultural institution in the Southwest Valley chronicling the **collective histories** of **Tolleson, Avondale, Goodyear, and Litchfield Park**, the Litchfield Park Historical Society has officially changed its name to the P. W. Litchfield Heritage Center (LHC).

Recently the LHC was entrusted with collections representing the history of Goodyear, Tolleson, and Avondale from the Three Rivers Historical Society. This addition brings the Heritage Center's number of artifacts to over 1,000 items and will help the LHC tell a **broader story** of the people, events, and local enterprises that shaped the Southwest Valley while showcasing the area's collective heritage.

With a museum in operation for over ten years, the organization has taken another significant step in hiring its first Executive Director. Lisa Hegarty has been with the PW Litchfield Heritage Center for seven years and is a former educator who has served with several nonprofit programs focused on arts, education, and literacy. She has worn many hats at the LHC including docent coordinator, exhibit curator, volunteer coordinator, communications coordinator, program coordinator, and board vice president. "I'm proud to be a part of this organization and grateful for the opportunity to serve in this new role. Our local history is fascinating and has links to so many larger historical events. I want our organization to help people feel connected to that history. I think we also have the potential through our exhibits and our cultural and educational programs to create a strong sense of community," says Hegarty.

As the LHC grows into a **regional heritage center** focusing on the **history, arts, and culture** of the **Southwest Valley**, an anticipated new facility on the historic Litchfield hilltop property at Camelback and Litchfield Roads will provide the expanded exhibition space in a community-friendly setting. The organization is currently fundraising for this expansion, which was kicked off by an initial donation from John and Pamela Denny Blackford, granddaughter of Paul and Florence Litchfield.

The LHC will also continue to rely upon the efforts of the cadre of volunteers who are critical to the organization's success. Judy Cook, President of the LHC acknowledges the impact of volunteers saying, "The Historical Society has been blessed with dozens and dozens of volunteers over its almost quarter century of existence. They were individuals who understood that knowledge of history can inform thoughtful decisions about the future. Never underestimate the heart of a volunteer."

“The vision and foundation established by the volunteers over the past two decades is tremendous. This has set the stage for building something really special for the Southwest Valley,” adds Hegarty.

The P.W. Litchfield Heritage Center is unveiling its two latest exhibits. *The Wigwam: From Necessity to Luxury*, which highlights the 104-year history of the landmark resort, and *Paul Litchfield’s Rancho La Loma*, which portrays life at the historic Litchfield hilltop retreat, future site of the LHC’s facility. A special opening reception will be held on October 1st from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at the museum, located at 13912 W. Camelback Rd, Litchfield Park.

The museum is located on the northwest corner of Litchfield and Camelback Roads and is open Wednesday through Friday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and the first Saturday of the month, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Information on upcoming programs can be found at www.PWLHC.org.

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