



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2015

Contact:

Deirdre Brosnihan
(520) 724-4600

Deirdre.Brosnihan@pima.gov

Paseo de las Iglesias Grand Opening May 2

Highly anticipated section of The Loop adjacent to South Tucson

Pima County will host a Grand Opening celebration from 9 a.m. to noon May 2 marking the completion of the newest section of The Loop: Paseo de las Iglesias. The event will be pedestrian and family-friendly, with walking tours offered to learn about the history, ecology and archaeology of the area. Many activities will be featured, including a children's bike rodeo, community garden tour, calligraphy lessons and a mini food truck roundup.

The Paseo – a \$14 million flood control, ecosystem restoration and park project – was funded through the 2004 bond election and runs along both sides of the Santa Cruz River from Silverlake Road to Ajo Way. It adds seven miles to the County's 100-plus mile Loop pathway by connecting existing segments of the Santa Cruz River Park north of Silverlake Road and south of Ajo Way with the Julian Wash Greenway. It will be the 42nd park connection on The Loop.

District 5 Supervisor Richard Elías is the event's Master of Ceremony and speakers will include Pima County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry, Chief Deputy Sheriff Chris Nanos, Regional Flood Control District Director Suzanne Shields and Tucson City Councilor Regina Romero. The Rev. Gonzalo Villegas of St. Augustine Cathedral will offer the invocation, and Joseph Joaquin, Cultural Resources Specialist from the Tohono O'odham Nation Cultural Affairs Office, will offer a traditional blessing.

There will be a little something for everyone at the event, including representatives from Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation explaining what artifacts were found during excavation of the site and where those artifacts are now housed, as well as a "walk and learn" segment to explain the Paseo's native plant features offered by Recon, a sub-consultant on the project.

The Paseo de las Iglesias – "the path between the churches" –refers to the area between Tucson's historic Mission San Agustin site and [Mission San Xavier](#). It connects existing segments of the [Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail](#) from Drexel Road to El Camino del Cerro, and representatives from the Anza Trail Coalition will be at the

Grand Opening to discuss the 1775-1776 Anza expedition from the Tubac Presidio to establish the port of San Francisco. To help children get into the Anza spirit, a dress-up station with period costume will be available and children will have the opportunity and to have their photos taken for a National Park Service Centennial social media campaign.

The Paseo is built on a site where people have lived for 4,000 years and includes the seven-acre [Las Milpitas](#) Community Farm, a food-production and education project of Pima County, the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona and City High School. Pima County planted more than 10,000 new trees, shrubs and cacti as part of this project, which also includes two parking areas, three ramadas and an equestrian trailer parking area.

For more information, please contact Deirdre Brosnihan at 520-724-4600 or email Deirdre.Brosnihan@pima.gov for project information or Lisa Matthews at 520-724-8396 or email Lisa.Matthews@pima.gov for additional event information.

WHAT: Paseo de las Iglesias Grand Opening Celebration

WHEN: May 2; 9 a.m. - noon

WHERE: Santa Cruz River Park (0.7 miles west of I-10 on Silverlake Road; then left on Cottonwood Lane)

DETAILS: Dedication ceremony and speakers under the ramada at 9 a.m.; children's bike rodeo at 9:30 a.m. Bike helmets are required by law for children under the age of 18 and are recommended for everyone.

Parking will be in available in the Pima County Adult Detention Complex parking lot on the north side of Silverlake Road with additional parking at 1801 and 1313 S. Mission Road; the Sheriff's Department, Sheriff's Auxiliary Volunteers and Bike Ambassadors will guide visitors to the dedication event.
