



NEWS RELEASE

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The Smithsonian Comes to Brownsville

BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS (Sept. 13, 2021) - From space, Earth appears as a water planet with more than 71% of its surface covered with this vital resource for life. Water impacts climate, agriculture, transportation, industry and many aspects of life, even art and music. The Brownsville Historical Association (BHA) will examine water as an environmental necessity and an important cultural element as it hosts “Water/Ways,” a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program. “Water/Ways” will be on view from Sept. 21 through Nov. 6, 2021.

Brownsville has been expressly chosen to host “Water/Ways” as part of the Museum on Main Street program—a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. The exhibition will tour six communities in Texas from Bryan through El Paso; an itinerary is attached.

“Water/Ways” explores the endless motion of the water cycle, water’s effect on landscape, settlement and migration, and its impact on culture and spirituality. It looks at how political and economic planning have long been affected by access to water and control of water resources. Human creativity and resourcefulness provide new ways of protecting water resources and renewing respect for the natural environment.

Designed for small-town museums, libraries and cultural organizations, “Water/Ways” will serve as a community meeting place to convene conversations about water’s impact on American culture. With the support and guidance of state humanities councils, towns hosting the exhibit will develop public programs and facilitate educational initiatives to raise people’s understanding about what water means culturally, socially and spiritually in their own community.

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“Water is an important part of everyone’s life and we are excited to explore what it means culturally, socially and spiritually in our own community,” said Aubrey Nielsen, Collections Manager. “We want to convene conversations about water and have developed local and public programs to compliment the Smithsonian exhibition.”

For free Water/Ways events and programs, visit www.brownsvillehistory.org.

“Water/Ways” is part of the Smithsonian’s Think Water Initiative to raise awareness of water as a critical resource for life through exhibitions, educational resources and public programs. The public can participate in the conversation on social media at #thinkWater.

“Water/Ways” was inspired by an exhibition organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York (www.amnh.org), and the Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul (www.smm.org), in collaboration with Great Lakes Science Center, Cleveland; The Field Museum, Chicago; Instituto Sangari, Sao Paulo, Brazil; National Museum of Australia, Canberra; Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada; San Diego Natural History Museum; and Science Centre Singapore with PUB Singapore. The exhibition is part of the Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation, and local host institutions. To learn more about “Water/Ways” and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for 65 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. For exhibition description and tour schedules, visit www.sites.si.edu.

ABOUT THE BHA

The Brownsville Historical Association (BHA) manages eight historic sites and museums in the Mitte Cultural District and Downtown Brownsville: Stillman House Museum, Heritage Museum, Market Square Research Center, Historic Alonso Building, the Costumes of the Americas Museum, Historic Brownsville Museum, the Old City Cemetery and the Laureles Ranch House Museum. Through exhibitions, educational programs, publications, cultural events, and archival collections, BHA shares Brownsville’s history and cultural arts with the local community.

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