

ARTS

Beloved Arizona art museum is ready to show off its huge \$12M upgrade



Meredith G. White

Arizona Republic

March 24, 2026 | Updated March 31, 2026, 9:40 a.m. MT

Key Points

- Scottsdale's Museum of the West celebrated its 10th anniversary with a new \$12 million expansion.
 - The new Louis Sands IV Center adds 12,000 square feet and four new exhibitions to the museum.
 - New exhibits feature Western American and American Indian art, including sculptures, jewelry, and ceramics.
-

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West celebrated its 10th anniversary in early 2025, celebrating with a huge party and even bigger updates to its facility.

The new Louis Sands IV Center is a two-story building that adds a whopping 12,000 square feet to the museum's already impressive size, bringing the total square footage to 55,000. This new center, which cost \$12 million, will open with four new exhibitions that will bring together Western American and American Indian art, paintings, sculptures, jewelry and ceramics.

"The Louis Sands IV Center allows us to tell the story of the West in a new, more expansive way, placing painting, sculpture, jewelry, and ceramics into conversation across two floors,"

said Andrew Patrick Nelson, Ph.D. and chief curator, in a press release. "Together, these exhibitions reflect the richness and continuing vitality of Western and Indigenous art, setting the state for how our museum will move forward."

New exhibitions at the new Louis Sands IV Center at Western Spirit

Located on the main gallery level, there are three interconnected exhibitions that present the West through its most powerful three-dimensional art forms.

Need a news break? [Check out the all new PLAY hub with puzzles, games and more!](#)

- **"Visions in Bronze":** This exhibit explores how sculptors have used this medium to shape modern myths of the frontier. By drawing on the classical inspirations, this exhibition reveals how bronze has elevated cowboys, mountain men, American Indians and other frontier figures into cultural icons.
- **"From Earth to the Stars":** This exhibit traces the evolution of American Indian jewelry, revealing how artists transform silver, turquoise and stone into expressions of identity while highlighting the deep relationships between land, materials and artistry showing how American Indian jewelers have transformed stones and metals in objects of beauty and cultural meaning.
- **Fire of Ages:** This exhibit examines more than six centuries of American Indian ceramic traditions, showcasing how Hopi and Southwestern potters have shaped clay and fire into vessels of extraordinary beauty and meaning.

Meanwhile, located on the upper level is the exhibition "Working Partners: Masterworks from the Eddie Basha Collection", which is the inaugural public presentation of one of the most significant collections of Western American and American Indian art assembled.

"The grand opening of the new expansion will not just be an unveiling, but a meaningful cultural experience," Nelson said. "The new Louis Sands IV Center will expand the way we tell our stories at the museum, and we are delighted to invite the community to be part of this immersive museum experience."

Celebrate the new expansion at Western Spirit

To celebrate the new addition, Western Spirit is hosting a week of events for the community to enjoy:

- **Tuesday, March 24:** Official unveiling and press conference at 2:15 p.m.
- **Friday, March 27:** Museum members are invited to an exclusive, privately curated preview with RSVP-only tours offered in limited spots from 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. There will also be food and beverages available throughout the day.
- **Saturday, March 28:** The expansion officially opens to the public with free admission from 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Registration is required. Guests can register at the door on event day or ahead of time for expedited entry at westernspirit.org.
 - There will also be family-friendly programming along with experiences like photo opportunities, Old West reenactors, food and whiskey tastings, live Western music and hands-on activities and demonstrations of metal stamping, stone setting, leather embossing, sculptural form and movement along with how to paint desert light.
- **Sunday, March 29:** Free admission continues on this day from 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

"The grand opening of the Louis Sands IV Center marks a transformative new chapter for Western Spirit Museum and a defining moment for Scottsdale as the 'The West's Most Western Town,'" said Todd Bankofier, CEO and executive director of Western Spirit Museum in a press release. "This must-see destination was designed to inspire pride in our community, spark curiosity, and deliver a powerful, immersive cultural experience that really connects with our guests."

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West

When: 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday. Check the website for seasonal hours.

Where: 3830 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale.

Admission: \$28, \$25 for military members and age 65 and older, \$12 for students and children ages 6-17, free for age 5 and younger.

Details: [480-686-9539](tel:480-686-9539), westernspirit.org.

More: [First Friday in Phoenix will look very different in April. Here's why](#)

Meredith G. White covers entertainment, art and culture for The Arizona Republic and azcentral.com. She writes the latest news about video games, television and best things to do in metro Phoenix.