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NEWS RELEASE

Pioneers' Museum selects director

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After a national search, the board of directors of Pioneers' Museum is pleased to announce Caitlin Chávez has been selected as director. "The Board felt Caitlin was the best fit for this museum," said Jurg Heuberger, Pioneers' Museum curator. "Her professional background in higher education and museums, her enthusiasm and her ideas along with her personal charm seem to be exactly what the museum needs."

A recent transplant to Imperial Valley from Southeast Texas, Chávez is thrilled to serve her new community in this leadership role. "Since moving to the valley in August, I have fallen in love with Imperial County's landscape and local community," she said. "It's an honor to serve as Pioneers' Museum's director and continue our mission to share not only the stories of the people who settled in the desert nearly a century ago, but also the voices and experiences of us living here today."

Chávez has served in a variety of roles, most recently holding dual positions as an adjunct instructor of Art History at Imperial Valley College and Instructor of Arts and Humanities at Lamar State College Orange in Orange, Texas. Outside of higher education, she also has worked as an intern in the public relations and curatorial departments at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. In her professional experiences, she has developed an extensive portfolio of award-winning writing, event planning, and educational programming experiences.

As the director, she will oversee the museum's structures which include 22 acres of park ground with historic buildings and a 50,000 square foot main facility. She will also oversee the growing, all-volunteer museum staff, 10,000 archival documents and books, and more than 30,000 photos. Additionally, she will manage 30 major exhibits, including a wildlife gallery with local flora and fauna, a Model T on the Old Plank Road, and galleries highlighting the variety of early settlers to the Imperial Valley.

Chávez was also tapped for the position because of her press relations and marketing experience, said Karen Ayala, Imperial County Historical Society President. "We want to share the museum with the Imperial Valley and beyond," Ayala continues. "We have a lot to share about the valley's history— we were a barren desert brought to life and now are a thriving community. We believe Caitlin will help us share this story."

“We are known as one of the ‘best kept secrets’ in the valley,” Ayala said. “It’s time for us to be well known so more people can experience the museum. Children especially love visiting to learn about the early people who lived in the valley and the objects they used, comparing life back then with our lives today.”

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