



FRESNO COUNTY
ITALIAN HERITAGE
MUSEUM EXPANSION PROJECT

—Fresno County—
Historical
Museum



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ITALIAN CULTURE CELEBRATED AT EVENT MARKING COMPLETION OF PHASE I OF THE ITALIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM EXHIBIT IN THE FRESNO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Exhibit Now Open to the Public; Involvement in Exhibit's Expansion Encouraged

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, May 2, 2022...More than 150 people attended a ribbon cutting celebration on April 30, commemorating the completion of Phase I of the Italian Heritage Museum Exhibit in the Fresno County Historical Museum at the Fresno Fairgrounds. Made possible through grants from the Isnardi Foundation and E&J Gallo Winery, along with community donations – the Italian Heritage Museum Exhibit is already revered as one of the most comprehensive exhibits in the Western United States dedicated to the Italian culture and according to Nat DiBudo, Chairman of the committee behind this exhibit, plans are already underway for continued expansion. Speakers included Isnardi Foundation Director, Peter Tocchini; Italian Consul General in San Francisco, Sergio Strozzi; Fresno State Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, Honora Chapman; along with other local dignitaries, committee members and historical contributors – all addressing the importance of preserving the rich history and personal stories of the Italian Americans in Fresno County and beyond.

“There were so many people here today who were so enthusiastic about this exhibit, it made me feel good that our Foundation was able to participate in the reason they were here,” said Peter Tocchini, Director of the Isnardi Foundation and major grant contributor to the exhibit. “The Italian Heritage Museum Exhibit is beautifully done and reflects the hard work that a lot of people put into it.”

“We are extremely thankful for the support of all those involved in making this exhibit come to life,” says Nat DiBudo, Chairman of the Italian Heritage Museum Exhibit committee. “What started as a vision in Spring of 2019, has evolved into a historic and beautiful exhibit. Despite some setbacks due to the pandemic, our committee and contributors pushed forward to make this exhibit a reality so we could tell the important, in-depth stories of our Italian immigrant families – how they settled in Fresno County, their successes, their struggles. It’s an honor to tell these stories of our heritage and part of our community’s history to younger generations and document it for our generations who lived it.”

The exhibit features a replica of Tuscan architecture and a ceiling “affresco” depicting Michelangelo’s *The Creation of Adam* on the Sistine Chapel in Rome, along with artifacts and wine bottles from Italian growers and wineries in Fresno County. There are four interactive touch display screens that showcase photography, videos and in-depth historical information in 12 primary categories, including: The Old Country/The Journey from Italy to America; Communities and Settlements; Agriculture, Business and Industry; Government and Education; Sports, Arts & Entertainment; Food and Dining; Social, Cultural, and Religious; Language and Traditions, plus more. The interactive screens also feature a map of Fresno’s “Little Italy” in 1931, that shows the exact streets where the original Italian families settled. There is the “*Road of Dreams*” mural documenting the first Italians arriving in Fresno County and key historical milestones throughout the years, up until the formation of the Italian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno.



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“This exhibit showcases our family’s Italian heritage, culture, language, traditions, and what makes us who we are today as a community,” says Michael Giovannetti, Vice Chairman of the Italian Heritage Museum Exhibit Committee. “It was important for us to build an exhibit that shares the stories of Italian families in Fresno County – famous or not – to ensure they were not forgotten; that their sacrifices were remembered and honored. For future generations of Italian Americans, this exhibit will help connect them to their past and their family’s history. We hope everyone in our community will come out to see the Italian Heritage Museum Exhibit firsthand.”

To get involved in Phase II of the Italian Heritage Museum Exhibit, please contact Nat DiBudio at nat.dar@gmail.com, Michael Giovannetti at mgiovannetti@csufresno.edu or Italian Heritage Exhibit Producer, Elizabeth Laval at elaval@valleyhistory.org. Fundraising for exhibit’s expansion continues with “Leave a Legacy Donor Program” in which bricks can be purchased to be displayed on the Wall of Donors on the exterior of the Fresno County Historical Museum.

To visit the Italian Heritage Museum Exhibit in the Fresno County Historical Museum, simply visit www.fresnofair.com/museum and select the “Book a Tour” button. Once you fill out the information, a free tour of the exhibit and Museum will be arranged.

RESOURCES: Available at this link: <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/hmD3bIStdV>

- Video from Ribbon Cutting and Program
- Ribbon Cutting Photo of the Isnardi Foundation, Italian Consul General in San Francisco, Italian Heritage Museum Exhibit Committee members, Fresno County Board of Supervisors Friends of the Fair Board members, Big Fresno Fair Board Members and Fair Management.

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