

Centennial Year opens with West Valley Art Museum exhibition "From the East: Cultural Diversity in Arizona", January 3 to March 23, 2012.

The first exhibit by the Museum at the Peoria City Hall Art Gallery celebrates the many who settled in Arizona from other countries over its hundred year existence, in particular our neighbors of Eastern origin with a costume and artifact exhibit from the extensive Ethnic Dress Collection the Museum owns.

The Arizona Centennial celebration also recognizes the unique history of West Valley Art Museum, once known as the Sun Cities Art Museum. The story began nearly thirty years ago, when some ambitious residents of the world's first active retirement community, Sun City, envisioned a local Museum to exhibit fine art from all parts of the world. In October 1976, a group led by Rex Staley (who was then president of Sun City Bank) leased a wing of the Merrill Lynch building, on the northeast corner of Bell Road and 98th Avenue, to become the Museum's first home, albeit, a temporary one.

The first phase of the Museum's next building was finished by 1985. The Jensen Wing, was the next extension in 1987 and the final expansion was complete by 1996. The name was changed to West Valley Art Museum, reflecting a larger demographic, in 1997. It was and is the only art museum ever created by a retirement community and will retain that heritage as long as it exists.

Although the Museum still does not have its own building, the City of Peoria, in partnership with WVAM, has chosen to allow the Museum to plan and execute a program of exhibits for its City Hall Art Gallery for the year 2012 and into 2013.



Koream Hanbok



Chinese temple carving



Chinese official's robe