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National Museum of the American Indian Awarded Accreditation by the American Association of Museums

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian has achieved accreditation from the American Association of Museums, the highest national recognition for museum excellence. Of the nation's nearly 17,500 museums, just 4 percent have received accreditation, according to the AAM.

"This is tremendously good news. Through the dedication of our board of trustees, staff, volunteers and members, we have achieved something extraordinary—accreditation from the American Association of Museums in less than five years since opening our museum on the National Mall," said Kevin Gover (Pawnee/Comanche), director of the museum.

Accreditation is a rigorous multiyear process that examines all aspects of a museum's operations. The accreditation commission, an independent and autonomous body of museum professionals, only certifies museums that are operating at the highest levels of industry standards.

"Accreditation from the American Association of Museums is all about a museum's commitment to excellence in all that it does," said Ford W. Bell, AAM president. "The National Museum of the American Indian is an esteemed institution, with deep significance for all Americans. Accreditation confirms that it is also one of the finest museums in the nation."

Since its creation, the National Museum of the American Indian has hosted thousands of Native American artists, dancers, leaders, musicians, poets, scholars and writers who have educated, entertained and inspired millions of visitors from around the globe. The museum's unparalleled collection of more than 800,000 items has been variously conserved, curated, displayed, digitized, exhibited, repatriated and researched.

This fall, the museum celebrates four landmark anniversaries—the signing of the legislation that created the museum 20 years ago; the 15th anniversary of the opening of the museum's New York City location, the George Gustav Heye Center; the 10th anniversary of the Cultural Resources Center,

a state-of-the art collections facility in Suitland, Md.; and the fifth anniversary of the opening of the museum on the National Mall, Sept. 21, 2004.

Established in 1989 through an Act of Congress, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian is an institution of living cultures dedicated to advancing knowledge and understanding of the life, languages, literature, history and arts of the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere. The museum includes the National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall; the George Gustav Heye Center, a permanent museum in lower Manhattan; and the Cultural Resources Center, a research and collections facility in Suitland, Md.

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