Land of Extremes

SHOWCASES THE BEAUTY OF THE DESERT

Desert in the round: a panoramic view

We are in the final stages of the fabrication of the permanent exhibit at the Imperial Valley Desert Museum. We are down to the point of developing the media and interactive computer programs, which will be unique to our exhibit.

Currently, we are working on the Land of Extremes interactive touch screen. 360 panoramic interactive.

This will be the primary interactive exhibit that shows the beauty of the desert and our regional destinations. It requires the development of a unique program that will run on a touch-screen computer, mimicked a 5-foot-by-3-foot LCD projection.

The program will allow a visitor to view the desert around the museum and visitor center from a 360-degree perspective.

From the first screen there are options to get to secondary locations, which will be unique landscapes or hiking destinations.

The program is being developed by Gigamacro in Napa. The company founder was a technology innovator with a passion for developing scientific tools, exhibits, and educational programs that provide ways of exploring the world.

He has been very hands-on with our project.

The big picture

The computer program that most people will interact with does not happen without first seeing the “big picture,” so to speak.

Typically, the panoramic images that are used for a panoramic interactive are taken by a professional photographer working with Gigamacro.

We are completing a very big exhibit on a very small budget, however, and the cost of getting a photographer to come to some of our locations quickly became cost prohibitive.

In December, museum staff were trained to use the 360 panoramic camera and over the last three months we have been hiking to various destinations and shooting the panoramic destinations ourselves.

This has involved finding a convenient location, setting up the camera, and capturing the images. The locations that we have been able to capture with the 360 camera are some of the most remarkable places that a person could ever see.

The trip seemed chancy when we started, but we were able to get a good break in the weather with nearly perfect light and cloud cover.

Land of Extremes Interactive

We have not seen the finished product yet, only test images up on the big screen are being built this week at the museum.

If you cannot make these trips and see this interactive exhibit, however, the Land of Extremes interactive will offer a newly-lit-stared view of what there is to see.

Neal V. Hitch is director of the Imperial Valley Desert Museum.

QUESTIONs? Contact Local Content Editor Richard Montenegro Brown at rbrown@ivpressonline.com or 760-337-3453.

Land of Extremes

 initial sketch of the Land of Extremes interactive exhibit designed by Dean Weldon Exhibits. PHOTO COURTESY OF IMPERIAL VALLEY DESERT MUSEUM

Taking 360-degree panoramic images in Valley of the roses.

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMPERIAL VALLEY DESERT MUSEUM

Also included in this exhibit are the 360 panoramic views of the gorge last weekend between storms.

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The locations that we have been able to capture with the 360 camera are some of the most remarkable places that a person could ever see.

When the exhibit is up, we hope it inspires hikers and adventure seekers to get out into the desert and experience what the Imperial Valley has to offer.

If you cannot make those hikes, however, the Land of Extremes interactive will offer a newly-lit-stared view of what there is to see.

Neal V. Hitch is director of the Imperial Valley Desert Museum.

The user interface of the interactive will be on touch screen with icons for locating destinations and activities in the Imperial Valley region.

It is approximately a three-hour hike with a gain in elevation of about 1,200 feet.

We shot the 360 panoramic image of the gorge last weekend between storms.

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