



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SANTA YNEZ CHUMASH MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER WINS SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION AWARD FROM U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL – LOS ANGELES**

SANTA YNEZ, CA – January 10, 2024 — The Santa Ynez Chumash Museum and Cultural Center, which is slated to open in 2024, was recently honored for its water conservation design and efforts during the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Sustainable Innovation Awards, presented by the U.S. Green Building Council – Los Angeles (USGBC-LA).

The Sustainable Innovation Awards affirm a project team’s commitment and leadership to create a sustainable environment for all. The awards are merit-based, for built and designed (unbuilt) projects, that go above and beyond in demonstrating innovation, sustainable strategies and exemplary performance in the fields of sustainability, occupant health and community engagement.

USGBC-LA recognized the Santa Ynez Chumash Museum and Cultural Center for its innovative use of greywater and blackwater systems. Water is reused throughout the museum site for toilet flushing and irrigation, in turn reducing the need for potable water by 100 percent. USGBC-LA noted the museum’s use of highly efficient irrigation

controllers that help maximize water conservation in the Santa Ynez Valley's distinctive arid climate and also praised the project's water-efficient landscaping, which incorporates drought-resistant native plants.

The award is especially significant for the Santa Ynez Chumash Museum and Cultural Center because its water conservation project was one of 30 projects submitted for this category. This recognition is a testament to the tribe's commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability.

"Water has always been valued as a precious resource within our tribe," said Kenneth Kahn, Tribal Chairman for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. "We are proud to be recognized by the U.S. Green Building Council - Los Angeles for our ambitious water conservation project. This environmental achievement is a product of the proactive collaboration between the tribe and the museum's architects and is an example of our commitment to being good stewards of our ancestral land. We look forward to introducing our beautiful, one-of-a-kind facility to the public when we open our doors later this year."

The 14,000-square-foot Santa Ynez Chumash Museum and Cultural Center features architecture reflecting Chumash culture, including a Welcome House, Heritage House, Traditional Tule House, Samala Language House and a Tomol House that symbolically combine to represent a village. The 3.5-acre adjoining cultural park features over 11,000 California native plants, including over 140 species, used by the Chumash.

The museum was designed by the Seattle-based, award-winning firm Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects, and the project was managed by Summit

Project Management of Culver City. Bernards, a California-based construction company, provided general contracting and construction services and submitted the museum project to USGBC-LA for award consideration on behalf of the tribe.

“Bernards is an early adopter of green building and sustainable practices, and we pride ourselves on helping our clients find practical and cost-effective alternatives to achieve their sustainability goals while maintaining the architectural and programmatic function of the buildings,” said Rick Fochtman, Executive Vice President for Bernards. “We applaud the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians for prioritizing sustainability with this project, and for integrating sustainable features that have long been a cornerstone of Chumash culture. We congratulate the tribe for receiving this Sustainable Innovation Award for water efficiency from the U.S. Green Building Council - Los Angeles and hope the project serves as a teaching tool, inspiring future generations to find innovative ways to preserve water and all our precious resources.”

In all, 17 projects were awarded, from cultural and financial institutions to retail distribution infrastructure and affordable housing.

“We are incredibly proud to have seen the scope and impact of our community engagement, education and policy work grow so much over the past year, expanding our initiatives around wildfire defense, indoor air quality and water conservation while more than doubling the number of people participating in our training programs,” said Ben Stapleton, Executive Director for USGBC-LA. “The increasing scope and scale of the climate crisis demands more innovative solutions. We look forward to extending our impact in 2024 to issues around extreme heat, clean construction and workforce

development to create a more sustainable, resilient and equitable region for all the people of California.”

USGBC-LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and member-based organization whose mission is to transform Southern California’s built environment into a more sustainable, resilient and equitable region for all. The nonprofit leads by inspiring leaders throughout our communities to take action on climate change, public health and environmental justice while educating, developing and empowering a diverse talent pipeline through training, mentorship and direct-to-community programs. USGBC-LA connects by merging interdisciplinary perspectives and collaborations to create positive systemic change, and advocates through promoting innovative, impactful policy solutions that address the most urgent environmental and social challenges of our time.

In April 2023, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), headquartered nationally in Philadelphia, recognized the Santa Ynez Chumash Museum and Cultural Center with LEED® Silver certification for its environmentally sound design, construction and operational practices. LEED®, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the most widely used green building rating system in the world, and its certification is proof that a business is going above and beyond to ensure the building is constructed and operated to the highest level of sustainability.

With this prestigious LEED® certification distinction, the Santa Ynez Chumash Museum and Cultural Center joined the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian as the only other Native American museum in the country certified at LEED® Silver or better. The Santa Ynez facility became one of 15 museums in California and

the 124th museum in the U.S. to be LEED® certified at the Silver level or better, according to the USGBC's online directory at that time.

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is located in Santa Barbara County, California. Its reservation was established and officially recognized by the federal government in 1901. Today, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians remains the only federally recognized Chumash tribe in the nation. The tribe is a self-governing sovereign nation and follows the laws set forth in its tribal constitution.

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