



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **IT'S A GIRL!**

#### **NEW BIG HORN LAMB BORN AT ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM**

**Tucson, AZ** (June 12, 2014) The little Bighorn lamb born at the Desert Museum on May 10<sup>th</sup> is a female! The lamb, born just in time for Mother's Day, has been delighting Museum visitors almost from the moment of her birth. "Bighorn sheep are precocial," states Shawnee Riplog Peterson, Curator of Mammalogy. "This means they can stand up and follow their dams right after birth and shortly thereafter are romping over the rough terrain as if they've been doing it forever," she continues. "This is a great opportunity for Tucsonans to see Bighorns within close proximity as they are so difficult to spot in the wild."

The lamb's estimated birth weight was 4kg (8.81 lbs.) and now weighs 8.09 kg. ((24 lbs.) The gestation for Bighorns is 150-180 days and females usually don't breed until 2-3 years of age. Ewe's typically have single lambs, not twins as is sometimes thought.

Museum visitors can see the newborn and watch her playful antics throughout the day as well as on Saturday evenings this summer when the Museum stays open until 10 p.m. Currently, she's sampling alfalfa, carrots, yams, and jojoba. But she is still nursing and will continue to do so until she's weaned at 4-6 months.

(more)

“This 3-year old dam was part of an exchange program organized by the American Zoological Association’s program to breed captive Big Horn sheep with the purpose of expanding the genetic diversity of the 46 animals held in captivity by six partner organizations,” states Shawnee Riplog-Peterson. “By using extensive genetic DNA information, the goal of the program is to breed for the most diverse herd possible, thereby reducing the number of Bighorns taken in future from wild populations.”

For more information about the Bighorn lamb or visiting on Cool Summer Nights, go to [desertmuseum.org](http://desertmuseum.org).

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The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is one of the nation’s leading outdoor, living museums, featuring more than 230 animals and 1,200 varieties of desert plants. Its purpose is to inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation, and understanding of the bi-national, Sonoran Desert region. The Museum is located at 2021 N. Kinney Road, in Tucson Mountain Park adjacent to Saguaro National Park (West). It is open daily year round with operating hours varying by season. Call (520) 883-2702 or visit [www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org) for more information.

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