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Spotlight shines on Tuacahn at governor inauguration

IVINS, Utah — It was a veritable collection of Who's Who in Utah gathered at the inauguration of Gov. Spencer J. Cox and Lt. Gov. Deidre M. Henderson on Monday, Jan. 4. But the star shining brightest against the sea of dark suits and other business attire was the majestic red rock backdrop of Tuacahn.

"To be part of such a historic moment on the 125th anniversary of the founding of this state was an incredible opportunity for us," said Kacey Jones, development director for Tuacahn.

Not only was the 125th statehood celebration historic, this was the first time such an event has taken place outside the state's capital city.

A number of factors played into the decision to move the inauguration to the southern end of the state, not the least of which was the desire to comply with the current COVID-19 safety precautions. An outdoor venue in a warmer climate was the ideal solution — something Stephen and Marcia Wade, co-chairs on the gubernatorial inauguration committee, set in motion several months ago.

"Hosting the inauguration at Tuacahn was only possible through the support of the gubernatorial inaugural commission co-chairs Stephen and Marcia Wade and Jesselie and Scott Anderson," Jones said.

As the inauguration committee and Tuacahn staff explored the idea, it became clear they were headed in the right direction.

"Our facilities are uniquely equipped to handle this exact kind of event," said Kevin Smith, Tuacahn CEO.

With only 550 attendees scattered among the 2,200-seat amphitheater, social spacing was not a problem. Other COVID-19 mitigation protocols were strictly adhered to throughout the event, including wristbands issued to each attendee upon proof of a negative COVID test, and all attendees wore masks.

The location also allowed Gov. Cox to show his continued commitment to being governor of the whole state.

While Lt. Gov. Henderson's remarks focused heavily on the "bold actions" and pathways blazed by women, Gov. Cox's speech included several anecdotes about the

early days of Tuacahn itself and the growth in this part of the state, among other things.

Hosting the event at Tuacahn offered the opportunity for many from across the state, and beyond, who have not previously visited Tuacahn to see for themselves all the beauty and amenities this campus has to offer. Moving forward, Tuacahn officials hope that awareness of this desert rose will continue to grow.

“When you have the Wall Street Journal tweeting about your location, that’s a good thing,” Jones said, adding that she hopes even more people will become aware of this unique location as “the only theater that stands at the intersection of public lands and the arts.”

Smith said he knows this event — and all the other things happening at Tuacahn — would not be possible without help from patrons and government officials.

“We are so grateful for the support we’ve been given by our state and local government during the pandemic, with funding from the CARES Act in particular,” Smith said. “We need places like Tuacahn in our state that bring people from outside the state to enjoy what we have.”

To learn more about Tuacahn, it’s upcoming concert season or Broadway shows, log onto www.tuacahn.org

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