

## Museum Move to Rosenbaum Building

Several years of preparation came to fruition in the fall of 2008 when the Arizona Capitol Museum moved to safe quarters at the new Polly Rosenbaum Archives and History Building.

For decades, the Museum's more than 8,000 items had been stored in several different locations. At various times, materials had been kept in poor environments, including metal storage sheds or warehouses. There was little or no temperature or humidity control, risking severe damage to valuable items, many of them in delicate condition and irreplaceable. Furniture from the Territorial and State Capitol building was at risk.

The Rosenbaum Building provides an improved physical environment for the collection. A guaranteed stable temperature and relative humidity are in stark contrast to the extreme environment produced by changes in Arizona's seasons. During those swings, wood and textiles expand and contract until, over years they deteriorate.

Museum staff met with other Agency representatives to organize for the move. This involved countless hours of evaluating existing collections and assessing security concerns, identifying shelving, painting and textile racks and other special storage equipment. Because materials from two separate locations were finally going to be merged into one unit, the Museum Curator had to carefully plan for occupation of new storage rooms. She also planned for transfer and placement of 8,000 artifacts on new shelving before they left existing storage areas.



**Professional movers assisted with the Museum's move. Photo by Taylor Arrazola**

This transfer was accomplished successfully because all Museum staff, interns and special volunteers combed through every shelf and box that held artifacts, identifying and packing them for transport. Movers experienced in relocation of cultural collections

worked under supervision of project staff. In addition, Museum specialists themselves carried especially fragile and valuable items.

Access to the new building radically changed the operation of the Exhibits and Collections section of the Museum. A complete inventory of holdings made possible better understanding the entire collection; improved storage of artifacts and works of art; and promoted better management of the circulating art collection. Another major benefit was having room in which to handle the collection safely. Parts of the Capitol building, where some material had been stored were emptied, enabling the Museum to open two new exhibit spaces immediately.

The Polly Rosenbaum Archives and History Building equipped the Capitol Museum to take proper responsibility for items it held in trust for all Arizonans, support outreach to other museums in the state, and to improve the way in which “Arizona’s museum” tells Arizona’s story.