

Felicity mayor dedicates modern 'Rosetta Stone' at Center of the World

BY JAMES GILBERT, SUN STAFF WRITER May 18, 2009



PHOTO BY RYAN BRENNECKE/THE SUN

JACQUES-ANDRE ISTEL (left), the mayor of Felicity, Calif., gives a toast Monday evening while dedicating the Felicity Stone located at the center of the eight granite monuments of the History of Humanity.

In what is intended as a message to the future, on Monday evening the Museum of History in Granite dedicated its newest monument.

"It is the 'Rosetta Stone' of our era, with the script to be contributed by scholars of the world," said Jacques-Andre Istel, the mayor of Felicity, Calif., where the museum is located.

Located at the center of the eight granite monuments of the History of Humanity, this new structure has been named the Felicity Stone.

Istel said the Felicity Stone is designed to help people who visit the museum many years in the future to understand the language and thus read its history.

"On behalf of the people of the world, the Museum of History in Granite dedicates this Rosetta Stone of our era, the Felicity Stone, to literacy for the millennia," Istel said.

The Rosetta Stone, created in 196 B.C. and discovered by the French in 1799, is an ancient Egyptian artifact which contributed greatly to the deciphering of the lost language of Egyptian hieroglyphics, which was written 3,000 years earlier.

The Felicity Stone was dedicated during a brief ceremony at 6 p.m. at the museum grounds, in which champagne was poured on it.

The dedication was attended by several dignitaries from Yuma, including Mayor Larry Nelson.

With the monuments already written in major languages such as English, French, Chinese, Hindi, Russian, Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese, the Felicity Stone is to serve as a way to translate the languages of this era.

Istel said a sterling array of scholars from around the world will be assisting the museum as it copes with the immense intellectual challenge of writing the script for the Felicity Stone.

Istel said some of the proposed text could include drawings, mathematical formulas, computer coding and symbols.

"By the time we get this engraved it should be pretty interesting," Istel said.

The History of Humanity is constructed on eight horizontal monuments containing 416 granite panels. It is spread out like spokes of a wheel on the museum grounds. Each monument is 100 feet long and contains 60 panels, each weighing 477 pounds.

When completed, it will serve as the "Cliffs Notes" of life on Earth, according to Istel, etched with words, timelines and drawings.

The History of Humanity is now more than 20 percent engraved. Engraving is currently under way on the new 60 panel "History of the United States," which is next to the also new "History of Arizona" and "History of California" which share a monument on the North/South centerline of the museum grounds.

The dedication of the "History of Arizona" wall is scheduled for Feb. 14, 2010, at 4 p.m.

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