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The Buffalo Bill Center of The West Unveils

BUFFALO NATION

A TWO-YEAR IMMERSIVE EXHIBITION

CELEBRATING AMERICA'S MOST ICONIC MAMMAL

As America celebrates its 250th anniversary, Cody, Wyoming becomes home to the most ambitious bison exhibition in the country

This August the Buffalo Bill Center of the West unveils *Buffalo Nation*, a sweeping two-year immersive exhibition that invites visitors into the world of the American buffalo — its thunderous past, its near extinction, its remarkable comeback, and its enduring significance to Indigenous peoples and communities across the America.

Equal parts history, biology, and art *Buffalo Nation* is unlike anything the Center has presented before. The experience begins with **six Spotlight Exhibitions** located throughout the Center of the West's five museums and research library. Each spotlight offers a different look into the buffalo's world through extraordinary objects drawn from the Center's collections—fine art, photography, firearms, natural history specimens, and archival treasures. Whether drawn to contemporary Native art, historic photographs, or the science of prairie ecosystems, each spotlight offers an entry point into the larger story.

“In addition to the six Spotlight Exhibits and Special Exhibition, visitors can anticipate new, large-scale audiovisual experiences featuring the American Bison as they enter the Center,” said CEO Rebecca West. “We want to set the stage for the variety of exciting offerings and share the enthusiasm for the 250th and beyond.”

The exhibition surrounds audiences with sights, sounds, art, and biology, bringing the buffalo's ecological and cultural significance into full view. It is a sensory journey into the story of a North American icon, whose persistence points to what's possible when communities commit to restoration and respect.

Exhibition Themes

- The buffalo is the past, present, and future of the West. Its story precedes and was profoundly shaped by nation-building.

- The buffalo has significance to diverse peoples and universal meaning among many cultures.
- The buffalo's story is tied to place and deeply rooted in the American West.
- Buffalo persist as a physical presence on American lands, a powerful symbol in stories, legends, and Indigenous belief systems.

AN EXHIBITION BUILT FOR THIS MOMENT

The buffalo powered Westward Expansion and nearly faced extinction. As America marks 250 years of nationhood, *Buffalo Nation* invites reckoning, recognition, and action, asking the question, “What does the future hold for the buffalo, and what is our role in this future?”

Key individuals and communities who are rebuilding relationships with bison today are central to the exhibition's narrative. Complex histories, the western landscape, conservation, culture, and community emerge as inseparable. This is not a museum exhibit about an animal; it's a larger story about interconnectivity, offering hope for the future.

WHAT VISITORS WILL EXPERIENCE

Visitors to Buffalo Nation will embark on a powerful immersive journey into the world of the buffalo through hands-on activities, large-scale visuals, storytelling, and interactive technology.

Across the Center's campus, Spotlight Exhibitions will showcase rare artifacts, fine art, photography, and natural history specimens that reveal the buffalo's enduring cultural and ecological significance. Inside the primary exhibition, guests will encounter floor-to-ceiling imagery, tactile experiences with bison hide and bones, engaging multimedia presentations, and interactive Storyteller Modules featuring Indigenous leaders, ranchers, scientists, and conservation voices. Designed to inspire curiosity, reflection, and dialogue, the exhibition invites visitors of all ages to explore the buffalo's significance to the American West.

Buffalo Nation is a true community project, shaped by a passionate curatorial team with outside experts, and enriched by an Exhibition Advisory Council, student work, tribal and nonprofit partnerships, filmmakers, photographers, and leading AV innovators.

THE BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST

A Smithsonian Affiliate located just 50 miles from the East Gate of Yellowstone National Park, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West offers an expansive Western experience with five world-class museums under one roof. The Center encompasses the Buffalo Bill Museum, Plains Indians Museum, Whitney Western Art Museum, Draper Natural History Museum, and Cody Firearms Museum — cultivating the enduring spirit of the American West by unifying its history, cultures, art, and natural wonders. Admission is good for two full days of exploration.