



**Key Ingredients at the
Payson Public Library in Payson, Arizona
June 25th through August 7th, 2011**



Key Ingredients: America by Food opened at the **Payson Public Library** on Friday, June 24, and closed on August 7, 2011. Payson, which is located in the heart of the Mogollon Rim, was last stop for the Smithsonian tour in Arizona.

Historically a ranching community, Payson is home to the oldest continuous rodeo in the world, and deep-pit barbecue is synonymous with the cowboy way of life. The **Tonto Apache Reservation** runs along the south border of Payson, and making fry bread and gathering acorns to grind into flour are two of the tribe's ongoing foodways.

The **Library Friends of Payson** were an integral part of the community's successful tour stop. A nonprofit group whose mission is to provide financial and community support to the Payson Public Library, the Friends have evolved from simply providing books to purchasing equipment and funding programs that would not otherwise be possible. The Friends sponsor the annual "Taste of Rim Country," a benefit for the library's programming fund that features food, wine, and a local chef competition. The Friends took the opportunity to publicize Key Ingredients at this year's March 5 event.

Two AHC speaker presentations also served as lead-ins to Payson's Key Ingredients project. On April 18, Old Trails Museum Director **Ann-Mary Lutzick** gave her Harvey House talk, "Don't Cut the Ham Too Thin, Boys," for the Friends monthly meeting. At their June 20 meeting, **Gregory McNamee**, author of *Moveable Feasts: The History, Science and Love of Food*, explored our state's diverse food traditions in his talk "The Food of Arizona: Many Cultures, Many Flavors." These meetings are always open to the public and followed by a wonderful lunch buffet.



Director Terry Morris cuts the ribbon as members of the public, library staff, and Library Friends look on.



A view of the buffet at the Grand Opening festivities.

More than one hundred guests attended the Key Ingredients ribbon-cutting and Grand Opening Reception on June 24, which was sponsored by the **Rim Country Regional Chamber of Commerce**. The Grand Opening featured a sneak peek of the Smithsonian and local exhibits, as well as an impressive array of dishes prepared by the library staff and Library Friends.

Friends President **Alice Natale** trained a group of volunteer docents to guide visitors through the exhibits. **Bessie Jean Tucker**, the library's Programs Director and Assistant Project Director for Key Ingredients, overheard comments from guests that the exhibits were "inspiring," that they "learned a lot," and that seeing Lincoln's china pattern in the Smithsonian exhibition was "special."

For Payson's local exhibit, library staff and patrons shared personal collections of everyday objects that illustrated how Americans have marketed, prepared, and served food, reflecting profound changes in technology and culture over the decades. Displays included a 1940s kitchen with antique stove and utensils, vintage aprons & kitchen linens, historic and current cookbooks, vintage promotional items, and a local recipe collage. Donors included Bessie Tucker, **Library Director Terry Morris**, **Kathy Morgan**, **Candee Randall**, and **Romaine Brophy**.

Payson Public Library took advantage of the Key Ingredients project to add to their growing collection of local recipes, which they hope to turn into a cookbook in the next year or two. A brightly decorated mailbox encouraged people to submit both recipes and their back-stories. The library also offered discounted passes to the **Rim Country Museum** to see the historic kitchen of pioneer **Anna Mae Deming**.



Ed Williams, State Project Scholar for AHC's Between Fences tour, attended with his wife, Vera.



The "mailbox" where patrons dropped off family recipes and stories.

The library also offered a series of public programs that reflected local foodways. A chance encounter at a local store between coupon queen **Monica Vaughn** and Bessie Tucker led to an "Extreme Couponing" class at the library. A married mother of three girls, Monica only began couponing in 2010 and now states, "I will never buy things the way I used to again." She taught a few classes at her home, and even went to the store with people to help them shop. Monica's June 28 class was so popular in this tough economy that three more classes were added, and library staff were gratified that the Key Ingredients project could result in meeting an ongoing community need. Other classes included "Eloiza's Flour Tortilla-Making" on July 12, and Terry Morris' three "Picnic in a Jar" classes on July 26.



Part of Terry Morris' historic foodways collection



More of Terry's collection.

Tonto Apache tribal members have often made fry bread at Payson community fund-raisers. The Fry Bread for Families program evolved from a decision by **Mazatzal Hotel and Casino** employees to use that skill to raise money for the Tribe's employee outreach program. In 2010, the Fry Bread team helped twenty-one local families have a wonderful Christmas, and also purchased school supplies for Payson's three elementary schools. "We want to extend our outreach efforts in 2011," said Program Coordinator **Michell Marinelli**, so Fry Bread for Families Fry Bread Lunch Sales took place at the library on June 30 and July 28.

Prior to their Grant Opening, Library and KI Project Director Morris said, "We are very pleased to be able to bring Key Ingredients to our area, and we hope that it will inspire many to become even more involved in the cultural life of our community." Already a busy place, the Payson Public Library saw an increase in visitation for their Key Ingredients run. Staff estimate 1,200 visitors to the Smithsonian and local exhibitions, and 465 attendees at their local programs and workshops, for a total Key Ingredients visitation of 1,665 people.

Director Morris writes:

"Food by its very nature affords each community the ability to come together and celebrate its ethnic diversity. Key Ingredients did just that. Young and old alike loved this exhibit. Many came more than once, bringing a friend, grandchild, or out-of-town visitor. It was a great trip down memory lane for older folks, and a great educational tool for the young people."



*Dutch oven cooking in Payson, circa 1950s.
Payson Public Library, Payson.*



*Dutch oven cooking in Payson today.
Payson Public Library, Payson.*