



For Immediate Release

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“Bittersweet Harvest: Bracero Program” at Branigan Cultural Center



Las Cruces, NM – A Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition, *“Bittersweet Harvest: Bracero Program, 1942-1964,”* will be on display at the Branigan Cultural Center May 21 through July 24, 2010. The exhibit reveals the “bittersweet” struggle of the largest guest worker program in U.S. history.

Facing labor shortages on the home front during World War II, the United States initiated a series of agreements with Mexico to recruit Mexican men to work on American farms and railroads. The Emergency Farm Labor Program, more familiarly known as the Bracero Program, enabled approximately 2 million Mexicans to enter the United States and work on short-term labor contracts. It is a testament to the enduring contributions that Mexicans and Mexican Americans have made to American life.

Included in the bilingual exhibition are oral histories, quotes and photographs by Leonard Nadel, a photographer who, in 1956, exposed employer violations endured by many braceros. The Nadel photos inspired the National Museum of American History’s work on *Bittersweet Harvest*.

Bittersweet Harvest is a traveling exhibit from Smithsonian Institute Traveling Exhibits. Funding is made possible through the Smithsonian’s Latino Center, which celebrates Latino culture, spirit and achievement in America by facilitating the development of exhibitions, research, collections and education programs. For more information, visit www.latino.si.edu.

The Branigan Cultural Center, 501 N. Main Street, is located at the north end of the downtown mall in Las Cruces. The exhibits and events are free and open to

the public. Galleries are open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, contact the Branigan Cultural Center at (575) 541-2154 or visit the Center's web site at las-cruces.org/museums.

Photo: A bracero holding a *cartito* (short-handled hoe) in a California lettuce field, 1956.
Photo by Leonard Nadel