In early February, the Gillespie joined 45 mineral museums and science centers from the U.S., Canada, and Europe in exhibiting select Arizona specimens from their collections, as part of the Centennial of the State of Arizona (which celebrated one hundred years of statehood on Valentine’s Day).

The Gillespie Museum exhibit, Southwest by Southeast, features eight specimens from the collection, including azurites and malachites from the famed Copper Queen Mine in Bisbee as well as an historically significant Wulfenite, a great lead mineral from the region. The exhibit also draws from archival photos and correspondence to recount how some of the 200 Arizona minerals found their way to the Gillespie Museum collection—hard rock geology on display in central Florida, a region of limestone and sandy soil.

Dr. Karen Cole, Director, and Prof. Bruce Bradford, Curator, installed the special exhibit at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. While there, they acquired two new minerals to add to the museum’s suite of Smithsonites.

The exhibit will be re-installed in the Gillespie in mid-March, and features graphics designed by Stacey Junkins.
Educational Programs Update
DeLand Middle School Seventh Grade Visits, With Support From Target Field Trip Grant

In mid-February, seventh grade science students of DeLand Middle School toured the Gillespie with support from a Target Field Trip Grant, awarded to their teacher, Emily Strickland, who is in her third year of teaching in Volusia County.

As a participant in two science faculty workshops sponsored by the Gillespie last year, Ms. Strickland learned about the museum’s educational programming for K-12 students. She applied for this grant with the goal of providing students hands-on experience in geology and to enhance their understanding of sustainable land practices.

During their visit, the 65 science students toured the Gillespie mineral collection and earth science displays. They participated in a mineral identification laboratory and learned about the role native plants and organic gardening play in protecting the Floridan aquifer, through activities around the museum grounds, Hatter Harvest Garden and the adjacent Rinker Environmental Learning Center. Their activities were followed by a picnic lunch and celebratory cake.

Ms. Strickland has also received grants to start a garden on the DeLand Middle School campus and has raised over $2,500 for other projects, including an annual Earth Day celebration. We’re very proud to have her as a member and a friend to the museum.

Saturday Programs & Event Details
Save a Volusia Sandhill: March 24 Workday at the RELC

Our Saturday program for the month of March takes us into the new teaching landscape at the Rinker Environmental Learning Center. We’re inviting visitors to help us plant native shrubs and seedlings, pull some weeds, and become a part of this restoration project.

The Teaching Landscape: Volusia Sandhill Ecosystem is a long-term project facilitated by Dr. Karen Cole, Director of the Gillespie, and Professor Cindy Bennington, Plant Ecologist - Stetson Biology Department. It has been funded by the museum, the Biology Department, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Stetson Faculty/Staff Tree Fund. Most recently, this outdoor classroom has been awarded two grants—$10K from Volusia County Tree Replacement Fund, for establishing longleaf pines and other trees associated with the sandhill ecosystem, and another $7K from the Florida Forest Department’s Urban and Community Grant Program. The latter grant has supported two student interns this semester, Jessica Bosma and Alonnah Creswell, both environmental science majors who are helping to develop interpretive signs for ten teaching stations in the landscape.

Saturday’s activities will include spade work in the landscape as well as art projects using pine cones, leaves, and acorns from a sandhill habitat, and a scavenger hunt designed to teach about this important natural environment. Join us any time between 10am and 1pm for outdoor fun and the chance to sow some good seeds.