

KICK OFF THE HOLIDAYS, COWBOY-STYLE, AT THE BRISCOE

***Free Cowboy Christmas with Cowboy Santa, Arts and Crafts and “Going to Texas”
Exhibition Welcomes Local Families Dec. 7***

***Museum Offers Extended Thanksgiving Hours and Free Admission
for Furloughed Federal Employees and SNAP Recipients***

San Antonio, TX – (November 2025) Families are invited to saddle up for the season at the Briscoe Western Art Museum’s annual [Cowboy Christmas](#), 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 7. Cowboy Santa will be on hand 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., fully decked out in his Western best, ready for free photos and holiday wishes from young cowboys, cowgirls, vaqueros and vaqueras. With hands-on holiday crafts and plenty of Western-themed fun, Cowboy Christmas turns the Briscoe into a festive holiday stop along the River Walk. Guests are encouraged to [register online in advance](#) for Cowboy Christmas to help the museum plan for crafts, supplies and Cowboy Santa visits.

This year’s celebration once again falls on the Briscoe’s monthly Locals Day, meaning all Bexar County and San Antonio residents receive free general admission to enjoy Cowboy Christmas and explore the museum’s galleries. Children 12 and under always receive free admission, as do active duty military members, making the Briscoe a terrific holiday destination for families. For visitors from outside the area, Cowboy Christmas fun is included with regular museum admission.

Free Admission for Furloughed Federal Employees Extended through Dec. 7

Through Sunday, Dec. 7, the Briscoe is offering free general admission to furloughed federal employees impacted by the shutdown and one guest. Federal employees may present a valid federal government photo ID to receive complimentary admission, which includes access to Cowboy Christmas and all current exhibitions. The museum’s extended offer is designed to give federal employees and their families a chance to relax, reconnect and enjoy the art and stories of the American West together during the holiday season.

Through the Museums for All program, individuals and families who receive SNAP or WIC benefits enjoy free museum admission by presenting a valid program/EBT card. Museums For All ensures that income is never a barrier to enjoying the Briscoe, making regular museum visits affordable and accessible for all.

“Free admission isn’t just about opening our doors, it’s about opening possibilities,” said Liz Jackson, President and CEO of the Briscoe Western Art Museum. “When families can visit and enjoy museums without worrying about the cost, they can stay a little longer, ask more questions and come back more often. That’s where the real magic happens — when art, history and time together become part of everyday life, not just a special occasion.”

A Holiday Head Start: Extended Thanksgiving Week Hours

The Briscoe is the perfect place to head West for holiday fun, especially during Thanksgiving. To welcome holiday guests and locals enjoying downtown lights and festivities, the museum will be open extra days Thanksgiving week, Nov. 20–26, close on Thanksgiving Day, then open again Nov. 28–Dec. 1. That extended schedule gives everyone more chances to enjoy the museum, its exhibitions and the McNutt Sculpture Garden as part of their River Walk holiday plans.

Visit “Going to Texas: Five Centuries of Texas Maps”

Everyone attending Cowboy Christmas can step into [Going to Texas: Five Centuries of Texas Maps](#), the Briscoe’s landmark exhibition tracing how Texas has been imagined, mapped and claimed over more than 500 years. Featuring rare and original maps from the renowned Yana and Marty Davis Map Collection at the Museum of the Big Bend at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, paired with artworks and artifacts from the Briscoe’s collection and private loans, the exhibition shows how Texas took shape on paper long before it became the place we know today. From early impressions of the Gulf Coast to Republic-era maps and 20th-century sheets charting highways and boomtowns, *Going to Texas* brings Texas history to life for all ages.

On Sunday, Dec. 14, the Briscoe welcomes Eliane and Jon Dotson of Old World Auctions for an engaging conversation on cartographic history inspired by *Going to Texas*. As principals of Old World Auctions – an internationally respected firm specializing in antique maps, atlases and travel ephemera – the Dotsons bring deep expertise in mapmaking, provenance and the art market, illuminating how maps shaped perceptions of Texas and the American West. From early European impressions to statehood-era surveys and twentieth-century sheets, they’ll trace the stories behind the lines, legends and collectors who preserved them. The program is free with registration – [reserve your spot](#) to secure seating.

Holiday Crafts, Cowboy Santa and Western Gifts

During Cowboy Christmas, families can enjoy drop-in crafts that highlight Western themes and traditions, creating keepsakes to take home. A Cowboy Christmas scavenger hunt leads guests through the museum and sculpture garden, encouraging everyone to discover new favorite works of Western art. Visitors who complete the scavenger hunt receive a 10% discount at the [Hendler Family Museum Store](#), where shoppers will find Western-inspired holiday décor, jewelry, books, toys and gifts that go far beyond what’s available at typical retailers.

Museums for All, Locals Day and More Ways to Visit for Free

The Briscoe offers multiple ways families can experience the museum at no cost:

- **Locals Day:** On the first Sunday of every month, Bexar County and San Antonio residents receive free general admission with proof of residence—Cowboy Christmas on Dec. 7 is part of Locals Day.

- **Museums For All:** Through the Museums for All program, individuals and families who receive SNAP or WIC benefits (and MAP where applicable) enjoy free general admission by presenting a valid program/EBT card at admissions.
- **Bank of America Museums on Us:** On the first full weekend of each month, Bank of America, Merrill Lynch and U.S. Trust cardholders receive one free admission by presenting an eligible card and photo ID.
- **Military and kids:** Children 12 and under are always free, as are active duty members of the military. Active duty military families receive half-price admission when accompanied by their service member and retired and former members of the military receive discounted admission year-round.

Taken together, these programs make the Briscoe an easy, budget-friendly outing for families looking to add a little Western adventure to their holidays.

Can't enjoy Cowboy Christmas? The museum is open Thursday, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Friday through Monday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and closed to the public on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The Briscoe is located on the south end of the River Walk, near the Arneson River Theatre and La Villita, with convenient parking at the Riverbend Garage directly adjacent to the museum or one of many downtown surface lots. Museum hours, parking and admission details are available [online](#).

About [The Briscoe Western Art Museum](#): *Preserving and presenting the art, history and culture of the American West through engaging exhibitions, educational programs and public events reflective of the region's rich traditions and shared heritage, the Briscoe Western Art Museum is located on the San Antonio River Walk at 210 W. Market Street in the beautifully restored 1930s former San Antonio Public Library building. Named in honor of the late Texas Gov. Dolph Briscoe Jr. and his wife, Janey Slaughter Briscoe, the museum includes the three-story Jack Guenther Pavilion, used for event rentals and programs, and the outdoor McNutt Sculpture Garden. Follow the Briscoe on social media, @BriscoeMuseum.*