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MUSEUM & AQUARIUM TO PARTICIPATE IN BLUE STAR MUSEUMS PROGRAM

National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium one of more than 700 museums to offer free admission to military personnel and their families this summer.

Dubuque, Iowa – May 28, 2010—Today the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium announced the launch of Blue Star Museums, a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, and more than 700 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2010. The complete list of participating Blue Star Museums is available at www.arts.gov.

“We are very excited to be able to offer this program to our local families who are actively serving in our military,” said Museum & Aquarium executive director, Jerry Enzler. “It is our way of saying thank you for their service on our behalf.”

Blue Star Museums details

Blue Star Museums runs from Memorial Day, May 31, 2010 through to Labor Day, September 6, 2010. The free admission program is available to any bearer of a Geneva Convention Common Access Card (CAC), a DD Form 1173, or a DD Form 1173-1, which includes active duty military and five immediate family members, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard, and Reserve. Some special or limited-time museum exhibits may not be included in this free admission program. For questions on particular exhibits or museums, please contact the museum directly. To find out which museums are participating, visit www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums. The site includes a list of participating museums and a map to help with visit planning.

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This is the latest Arts Endowment program to bring quality arts programs to the military, veterans, and their families. Other NEA programs for the military have included Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience, Great American Voices Military Base Tour, and Shakespeare in American Communities Military Base Tour.

About Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families is a national, non-partisan, non-profit network of military families from all ranks and services including guard and reserve, with a mission to support, connect and empower military families. In addition to morale and empowerment programs, Blue Star Families raises awareness of the challenges and strengths of military family life with civilian community and leaders. Membership includes spouses, kids, parents, service members, veterans and civilians.

Operation Appreciation is an initiative of Blue Star Families that seeks to connect military families to the larger community. Blue Star Families 2009 annual survey shows that 94 percent of military families feel that the larger community doesn't truly understand or appreciate the sacrifices we make for the country. Through initiatives such as Blue Star Museums, Blue Star Families provides avenues for the larger community to show that they do understand, in meaningful ways that enrich the lives of military service members, spouses, children and parents. For more information, please visit www.BlueStarFam.org.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the largest annual national funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases. For more information, please visit www.arts.gov.

For more information please call 563-557-9545 or visit www.rivermuseum.com.

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