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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 13, 2014

Puget Sound Museums That Normally Compete for Visitors Are Cooperating to Create Inaugural “Museum Week Northwest” May 16th to 23rd

Museum Week Northwest, May 16-23, to include two-for-one admission, special events highlighting museum innovation in Washington State and new mobile app.

Seattle, WA – In conjunction with the Alliance of American Museums Conference taking place in Seattle in May, Puget Sound museums large and small are banding together to create a weeklong celebration in May called “Museum Week Northwest.” Running May 16 -23, Museum Week Northwest highlights the amazing diversity, excellence, and innovation that can be found in museums from Bellingham and Port Townsend, through Seattle and Tacoma, to Olympia and in the many smaller communities in between.

“One reason the American Alliance of Museums chose Seattle for its 2014 annual meeting was so members could come see how Northwest museums are finding their innovation edge by harnessing the same kind of creativity and new thinking driving the local tech industry,” said Doug King, President and CEO of the Museum of Flight in Seattle and chair of the local host committee for the AAM Annual Meeting. “As we started putting together presentations cataloguing the innovative work being done in Northwest museums to share with AAM at its meetings, we realized this was a wonderful opportunity to reach out to people in our own community, and encourage them to explore and attend our museums.”

Innovations by Northwest museums that will be noted during the AAM Conference range from new research by The Center for Wooden Boats to help other museums use low-cost computers and a camera to track the shape of large artifacts over time to a new Pacific Science Center initiative connecting our community, and communities across the country, with cutting-edge local research. The Henry Art Gallery has transformed their former gift shop into a living lab for performances, interactive workshops, micro-residencies, and other experiments designed to test new thinking in art education and engagement. The Tacoma Museum of Glass highlights a new program to help returning vets learn glass blowing as a way to focus and decompress from the stress of battle. The Museum of Flight will highlight work it is doing with computer game companies to develop gradually more difficult flight

simulation challenges as students get older, and new ways to bring those challenges to kids who are too far away to visit the museum in person.

“And these are just a few examples of great museum work being done here in the Northwest,” said King.

SPECIAL OFFERS

During Museum Week Northwest more than 50 of Western Washington’s museums will have special 2-for-1 admission or other special offers for guests. Many local museums presenting to their colleagues at the AAM conference will be repeating those presentations and discussions for the general public in special lectures and presentations at their institutions.

WEBSITE

Producing partner Visit Seattle is creating the Museum Week Northwest website, which will launch in mid-April at www.museumweeknw.org This is where the full list of events, offer and discounts will be posted.

SMARTPHONE APP

With so many special offers, museum lectures, and presentations it would be easy to lose track of events. All the museums will be posting information on their web sites and the main event site, but in true Northwest fashion many are also turning to technology created by a Seattle software startup to make it easier for anyone with a smartphone to find out what’s going on at all the different museums.

Many of the organizations participating in Museum Week Northwest will use a free mobile phone application called STQRY (pronounced: “story”) to assist attendees in finding out where and when events and offers are happening. STQRY will not only guide attendees to the museums participating in Museum Week Northwest, it will also relay information about special offers and exhibits. The STQRY app is free and available on iPhones, Android, and Windows phones, and translates information into 60 languages, helping make museums even more accessible.

“I grew up in Seattle, going to many of these museums as a kid,” said Chris Smith, founder and CEO of STQRY. “Now to have them using my company’s software to tell their stories....it’s just an honor.”

AAM CONFERENCE

This is the first time in 20 years that the American Alliance of Museums has been in Seattle for its annual meeting. The AAM Annual meeting May 18-21 is the largest gathering of museum professionals in the world, bringing together 5,000 museum professionals from all 50 states and more than 50 countries. It will run concurrently with Museum Week Northwest at the Washington State Convention and Visitors Center.

"We know that Washington's museums are a driver for tourism from inside and outside the state and that nationally museums rank among the top family vacation destinations," said Tom Norwalk, President & CEO of Visit Seattle. "It's clear that our museums are not just preserving our history, our stories, our sense of place and who we are, but they're also creating jobs and bringing millions of visitor dollars into our local economies every year."

The state of Washington has 425 museums, science centers, zoos, aquariums, and other similar organizations and employees 3,620 people. "They are sustaining us as a community, helping educate our children, building the ties between those who were born here and those who choose to live here, and creating jobs at the same time," said Norwalk.

About Museum Week Northwest:

Museums around Puget Sound have come together to create Museum Week Northwest the week of May 16th to the 23rd, 2014. For eight days participating museums will celebrate the diversity, quality, and innovations of local collections with special admission offers and a range of events and presentations. Museum Week Northwest coincides with the annual conference in Seattle of the American Alliance of Museums. Attended by more than 5,000 attendees from 50+ countries, AAM's annual meeting gathers museum professionals to learn about the latest innovations in museum design, operations, outreach, programs and collection management. Find out more about public events at www.museumweeknw.org and more about the AAM Conference at <http://www.aam-us.org>