



Contact:

Jennifer Flaster, (802) 672-2700
(917) 749-3654 (cell)

jennifer.flaster@yahoo.com

Dave Stack, (406) 541-6374

MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FOREST SERVICE HISTORY UNVEILS ARCHITECTURAL AND EXHIBIT PLANS TO THE PUBLIC

Missoula, Montana, September 8, 2009 – The National Museum of Forest Service History unveiled its architectural and exhibit concept plans for its permanent home in Missoula at its Annual Member’s Meeting this evening. The Annual Meeting was held in conjunction with the 2009 US Forest Service Reunion and US Forest Service Leadership Council Meeting.

“Over the course of the Forest Service’s first century, there has never been one central repository where artifacts could be stored, preserved and displayed. There has not been one central exhibition hall where the stories and lessons could be shared with the public. And there has not been one central monument where the leaders, partners, and people whose stories are our history could be recognized and honored. The National Museum of Forest Service History is that place,” said Gray Reynolds, president, National Museum of Forest Service History.

The Museum’s Board, volunteers, staff and partners have just completed three years of site preparation, building design and exhibit planning for the \$12 million, 30,000 square-foot national museum, repository and conservation education center.

“The Forest Service is proud of our rich history and we are eager to share this history with the public. The lessons we have learned since our inception in 1905 will help our nation tackle current and future challenges such as climate change, land restoration and water conservation. The National Museum of Forest Service History will be a wonderful repository of the Forest Service’s rich history and commitment to managing our nation’s precious natural resources,” said Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell.

As a showcase for its collection of more than 40,000 objects, the Museum will encourage visitors to explore the cultural, ecological, economic, political, and social history of the lands and people that have defined the nation and gave meaning to the term conservation.

“The best museums of history-through their artifacts and displays-are able to transport us to another time and place. They are designed to help us better understand the people and events that have shaped different aspects of our history and culture. The National Museum of Forest Service History has the potential to become one of those exemplary institutions,” said James Deutsch, Program Curator, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution.

The Museum will feature 24 tall timbers from national forests, private tree farms and a State Forest, each with a story to tell. The facility will include a 3-D object theatre, permanent interactive and traveling exhibits, research and meetings rooms, and a curatorial and collections laboratory. The grounds feature an authentic ranger cabin, a fire lookout, a trail system and a memorial grove. The Museum’s collection and education programs will also be available worldwide through its website and traveling exhibits. The Museum will also collaborate with nationally and internationally recognized museums and universities to support public inquiry and scholarly exploration.

"The museum is a step closer to fulfilling its commitment to honor the conservation work of the thousands of men and women of the U.S. Forest Service. This fine building will be a welcome addition to Missoula and another reminder of the great work we can do together," said John Engen, Mayor of Missoula.

Conservation education will be a strong component of the Museum’s interactive exhibits and the programs will be designed for the curious minds of school groups, while bringing families and friends together through a shared heritage.

“There is no better place in this land for this important new museum to call home! In helping us to better understand and appreciate the history of the US Forest Service, this museum will serve to help guide this country's efforts to insure a healthy future for our public lands,” said Bill Carey, Missoula County Commissioner.

“We are thrilled that the National Museum of Forest Service History is one step closer to developing a permanent facility for its historical collection here in Missoula. This museum will provide an incredible opportunity for thousands of school-age children to learn about the management of public forests and the history of an agency that dates back more than a century. We look forward to our students walking the museum halls in the near future,” said Superintendent Alex Apostle, Missoula County Public Schools.

As a model for best practices in construction and design, the Museum will be an energy-efficient building and is anticipated to achieve the highest level of LEED certification.

“Not only will it provide an interactive setting for learning and research, the Museum is sustainably designed to achieve an anticipated LEED Gold Certification, demonstrating the Board’s commitment to the conservation legacy of the Forest Service,” said Stan Zimet of OZ Architects.

The US Forest Service's deep roots in Missoula date back to 1908 with the designation of the first USFS District Office. Known today as Region 1, the northern region is home to many Forest Service employees, families and retirees. Defined by ridgelines and rivers, the region hosts an array of spectacular national forests, national grasslands, national scenic and historic trails, designated wilderness areas, and is home to the USFS Fire Sciences Laboratory and the headquarters of the Smokejumpers.

"I strongly support the National Museum of Forest Service History and believe it will greatly benefit the people of our state. Montana's past is closely tied to the history of forestry in this country. The Museum will provide fresh opportunities to celebrate our state's cultural and economic heritage and to share it with the nation," said Dave Wanzenried, State Senator from Missoula.

Located on the corridor between Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, Missoula attracts 1.2 million tourists annually with a significant number of visitors from California, Colorado, Idaho, Florida, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oregon, Texas and Utah. The Museum by stature and design will serve to attract destination visitors to Missoula and complement the many cultural, outdoor recreation, and hospitality amenities the community now offers. Likewise, the Board looks forward to expanding its collaboration with state and national parks, forests and recreation areas, and the cultural and educational institutions in western Montana.

"Visitors are drawn to the Missoula valley because of our majestic mountains, forests, rivers, distinctive culture and our commitment to conservation," said Barbara Neilan, Executive Director, Missoula Convention and Visitors Bureau. "This community is home to world-class writers, artists and conservation organizations, such as The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Boone and Crockett Club and The Ecology Center, to name a few. We're thrilled to be adding the National Museum of Forest Service History to that outstanding group and it's our firm belief that it will not only be Missoula's crowning jewel, but a crowning jewel for Montana as a whole."

From the Boone and Crockett Club, founded by Theodore Roosevelt, to the National Wild Turkey Federation, America's sportsmen community has played a leading role in conserving and stewarding our national forests and grasslands. These organizations were among the first to step forward to support the National Museum of Forest Service History. In Montana are also representatives of many of the US Forest Service partners and cooperators from the forest products, mining industries and the ranching community.

"This combination of people and place is the cornerstone upon which the Museum will be built and extend its reach," remarked Gray Reynolds.

"We look forward to welcoming members of the Forest Service family from employees and retirees to partner organizations as visitors, volunteers and active participants in shaping the vision and future of the Museum in the coming years," said Dave Stack, vice president, National Museum of Forest Service History.

The Museum’s public and private partners have contributed more than \$3.2 million to the selection and development of the 36-acre site, development of the architectural plans, acquisition of the great hall’s timber posts and beams, landscape enhancements and the exhibit concept plan. “Once the \$8 million in funding is committed to complete the construction and permanent exhibits, our planning documents detail that construction will take about 9 months,” noted Stack.

“There is urgency in moving forward now to raise the public and private funds for the Museum. Now that we have completed our planning, we can do just that—it is what many of our partners have been eager to see,” stated Gray Reynolds.

“Through this new facility in Missoula, we can assure that the records and objects associated with the breakthroughs and inventions of the US Forest Service Laboratories and those working in the field, as well as the stories of the men and women in the US Forest Service and their cooperators are not relegated to filing cabinets, closets and storage sheds and therefore lost to the inquiring minds of scholars, teachers, students, conservationists and the public,” continued Reynolds.

“The history of the US Forest Service is the very history of conservation. The Museum will serve as a significant repository of knowledge that will help us move forward as a nation to address global warming, land and water management, natural resource policy, renewable energy, loss and fragmentation of wildlife habitat and connecting children to the outdoors,” said Max Peterson, chief emeritus of the US Forest Service.

About the National Museum of Forest Service History

The National Museum of Forest Service History, a national nonprofit organization founded in 1988, is dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting the entire national history of the USDA Forest Service for the education and enjoyment of the general public, scholars, and historical researchers. For more information, visit www.nmfs-history.net
