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For Immediate Release

MS Museum of Natural Science Receives Highest National Recognition *Awarded Re-Accreditation from the American Association of Museums*

Jackson, MS ... The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science (MMNS) has again achieved accreditation by the American Association of Museums (AAM), the highest national recognition afforded the nation's museums. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, to governments, funders, outside agencies, and to the museum-going public. The MMNS was initially accredited in 1982. All museums must undergo a reaccreditation review at least every 10 years to maintain accredited status.

AAM Accreditation brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement. Developed and sustained by museum professionals for 35 years, AAM's museum accreditation program is the field's primary vehicle for quality assurance, self-regulation and public accountability. It strengthens the museum profession by promoting practices that enable leaders to make informed decisions, allocate resources wisely, and remain financially and ethically accountable - all in order to provide the best possible service to the public.

"The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science staff has continued to prove to be good stewards of our resources held in the public trust and is committed to a philosophy of institutional excellence. The staff had worked for over a year on the re-accreditation process and it reinforces our commitment to promote understanding and appreciation of Mississippi's biological diversity through collections, research, scientific databases, education, and exhibits; and to inspire the people of our state to respect the environment and to preserve natural Mississippi", explained **Libby Hartfield**, museum director.

"Accreditation is emblematic of an institution's commitment to public service and to overall excellence," said **Ford W. Bell**, AAM president. "Attaining accreditation involves taking a hard look at yourself, allowing your peers in the field to do the same, and being judged to be superior in all areas. The people of Jackson can take great pride in the fact that their local institution is one of America's premier museums."

Of the nation's estimated 17,500 museums, 775 are currently accredited. The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science is one of only five museums accredited in Mississippi including

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the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, the Manship House Museum, and the Walter Anderson Museum of Art.

“The Museum already has a very good reputation as a museum and scientific research facility,” said **Senator Thad Cochran**. “That reputation has been reaffirmed with its renewed museum accreditation and its expanded research facilities.”

Accreditation is a very rigorous but highly rewarding process that examines all aspects of a museum’s operations. To earn accreditation a museum first must conduct a year of self-study, then undergo a site visit by a team of peer reviewers. AAM’s Accreditation Commission, an independent and autonomous body of museum professionals, considers the self-study and visiting committee report to determine whether a museum should receive accreditation. While the time to complete the process varies by museum, it generally takes as much as three years.

About the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science: The museum is located at 2148 Riverside Drive in Jackson. Call 601.576.6000 or visit <http://www.msnaturalscience.org> for directions, parking and details about this event and other programs offered by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, which is a part of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Museum Hours: M-F: 8am - 5pm; SAT: 9am - 5pm; SUN: 1pm -5pm. Admission: \$6 adults; \$4 children ages 3-18; \$5 senior citizens (60+); free for children under 3; free for Museum Members; school teachers with classes: call for group information. Prices and schedule subject to change.

About the American Association of Museums: The American Association of Museums has been bringing museums together since 1906, helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. With more than 15,000 individual, 3,000 institutional, and 300 corporate members, AAM is dedicated to ensuring that museums remain a vital part of the American landscape, connecting people with the greatest achievements of the human experience, past, present and future. For more information, visit www.aam-us.org.

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