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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl: Home Sweet Home

Mississippi Museum of Natural Science

February 13, 2010 – May 13, 2010

Jackson, Miss. – Two beloved American icons come to life in this educational, interactive exhibit for children, *Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl: Home Sweet Home*, created in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service and sponsored locally at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science by AT&T and the U.S. Forest Service.

The *Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl: Home Sweet Home* exhibit helps bring kids to nature and nature to kids. Families are encouraged to spend time together outdoors and children are inspired to discover and care for the natural resources that sustain our world – our home sweet home. Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl guide visitors through urban, woodland and stream settings featuring a variety of educational activities, props, costumes and puppets that underscore the importance of protecting ecosystems, as well as highlighting ways to reduce, reuse and recycle resources. Exhibit activities will be especially engaging for children ages 2 - 8, providing young children with open-ended play opportunities that help build fundamental academic and social skills.

Grand Opening activities take place from 11am – 3pm on February 13th and include a press conference, appearances by Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl, free tree give-aways (while supplies last), a book reading by Walt Grayson, special activities and live bird demonstrations.

“This exhibit is a natural fit with new programs that our education staff is implementing. For instance, Growing Up WILD is an award-winning early childhood education and training program for educators and caregivers that builds on children’s sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them,” explains Angel Rohnke, Museum Education Coordinator.

The U.S. Forest Service has a long and proud tradition of reaching out to Americans on behalf of conservation. Smokey Bear is perhaps one of the most recognized symbols, by both children and adults, for his wildfire prevention message; while Woodsy Owl's message covers multiple areas of conservation. As Gail Kimbell, former Chief of the U.S. Forest Service notes, "we're working with partners on dozens of projects around the country to get kids away from the TV, away from the computer, away from their PlayStations and out into the forest - face to face with nature, up close and personal."

Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl: Home Sweet Home was created by the Betty Brinn Children's Museum in collaboration with the USDA Forest Service. Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl are protected by Congressional law and are used with permission from the US Forest Service. All Rights Reserved. 16 USC 580p-4 & 18 USC 711a. The exhibit is sponsored locally by AT&T, USDA Forest Service, Anonymous, Dick and Sally Molpus, Feild Cooperative Associates, Inc., Paul T. Benton, Plum Creek, Sanderson Farms, Inc., The Chisholm Foundation, Trustmark National Bank, Dr. & Mrs. Steve Zachow, Family of Catchings B. Smith, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science Foundation and other generous supporters.

The museum is located at 2148 Riverside Drive in Jackson. Call 601.354.7303 or visit www.msnaturalscience.org for more information about this exhibit and other programs offered by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. The Museum is 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: Monday - Friday: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; Saturday: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday: 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. **Admission:** \$5 adults; \$3 children ages 3-18; \$4 senior citizens (60+); free for children 3 and under; free for Museum Members; school teachers with classes: call for group information.

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