



Gettysburg Foundation News Release

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Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center tops one million visitors in first year

Facility prepares for second summer season with Lincoln-related programs

Gettysburg, Pa. (April 14, 2009) — The Museum and Visitor Center at Gettysburg National Military Park has welcomed 1.17 million visitors in its first 12 months of operation, Gettysburg Foundation officials announced today.

The Museum and Visitor Center, the product of a partnership between the non-profit Gettysburg Foundation and the National Park Service, opened last April. The facility features the conserved Cyclorama painting, a massive 377-foot painting in the round first displayed in 1884; *A New Birth of Freedom*, an exclusive History Channel-sponsored film narrated by Morgan Freeman; and the Gettysburg Museum of the American Civil War, which includes 12 exhibit galleries containing artifacts from the Park Service's large collection, interactive displays and first-hand accounts from the soldiers, civilians and war correspondents. The facility also includes a visitor center, a Refreshment Saloon offering standard Civil War-era fare, a Museum Bookstore, state-of-the-art museum collections storage facilities and the Ford Motor Company Fund Education Center.

Each museum gallery is named for a phrase in Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. President Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg in November 1863, just a few months after the Battle of Gettysburg, to help dedicate the new Soldiers' National Cemetery. The words he spoke during that dedication became the now-immortal Gettysburg Address.

"We are thrilled with the turnout and the positive visitor feedback from the previous year," said Robert C. Wilburn, president of the Gettysburg Foundation. "We are looking forward to the upcoming year, especially as we commemorate the Lincoln Bicentennial. What better place to reflect on President Lincoln's contributions than here at Gettysburg?"

In honor of the Lincoln Bicentennial, the Gettysburg Foundation will launch the David Bruce Smith Education Initiative this year and will engage Gettysburg visitors with a variety of Lincoln-related programs:

- A self-guided walking tour following the path of Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg, including his arrival at the Historic Gettysburg Railroad Station, his overnight stay at the David Wills House—now open to the public as a National Park Service site—and his ride down Baltimore Street to Soldiers' National Cemetery, where the tour concludes. The self-guided tour brochure will be available beginning this spring.
- A Summer Performance Series at the Museum and Visitor Center features theatrical and musical performances.
- Special tours of Soldiers' National Cemetery focus on the "Gettysburg Address" and the circumstances surrounding Lincoln's visit. These cemetery tours will be available in the fall.
- A proposed unveiling of a statue of Abraham Lincoln at the Museum and Visitor Center — which would be the latest in a series of presidential statues created by renowned sculptors Ivan and Elliot Schwartz of StudioEIS in Brooklyn, New York, and funded by Robert H. and Clarice Smith. Others in the series are installed at Mount Vernon, Monticello, Montpelier and the Lincoln Cottage. StudioEIS artists are also well known as the creators of the figures in "Signer's Hall" at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. Gettysburg's proposed sculpture would be unveiled on November 19, the anniversary of the "Gettysburg Address."

The National Park Service recently opened the David Wills House in downtown Gettysburg as a world-class museum experience that tells the story of President Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address and the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg and its effect on the town.

Other programs planned for the year in the Museum and Visitor Center and in the park include "A Night at Lincoln's Ball," which will feature Victorian dance lessons, a "Battlefield Photo Safari," a special "Dinner and a Painting" program featuring the Cyclorama painting, book signings, the popular "A Sacred Trust" lecture series in July, National Park Service ranger-led programs and Civil War living-history.

In addition to public programs and events at the Museum and Visitor Center, the Foundation offers a full schedule of special programs and events for Friends of Gettysburg members.

Visiting Gettysburg

The Gettysburg Foundation's Web site can help visitors plan their Gettysburg Experience. By visiting www.gettysburgfoundation.org, visitors can reserve tickets for the Cyclorama, Film and Museum Experience as well as for battlefield tours. Reservations can also be made for the Eisenhower National Historic Site. Anyone planning a trip to Gettysburg can watch the Foundation's Web site for special online promotions and up-to-date program information. Wills House information is also available.

The Gettysburg Foundation

The Gettysburg Foundation is a private, non-profit educational organization working in partnership with the National Park Service to enhance preservation and understanding of the heritage and lasting significance of Gettysburg. The Gettysburg Foundation raised funds for and now operates the Museum and Visitor Center at Gettysburg National Military Park, which opened April 2008. In addition to operating the Museum and Visitor Center, the Foundation has a broad preservation mission that includes land, monument and artifact preservation and battlefield rehabilitation—all in support of the National Park Service's goals at Gettysburg. For information about the Foundation, including making a donation or about visiting Gettysburg, visit www.gettysburgfoundation.org or call the administrative offices at 717-338-1243. Advance tickets for the Cyclorama, Film and Museum Experience at the Museum and Visitor Center are available at <https://tickets.gettysburgfoundation.org> or by calling 877-874-2478.