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Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum opens with four-day public celebration

New attraction reinvents the presidential museum with unparalleled size, originality and educational promise

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced the schedule of activities for the grand opening of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, which compellingly recreates “The Great American Story” of Abraham Lincoln’s life through immersive exhibits that employ state-of-the-art technology never seen before in a presidential museum.

Four days of activities will mark the museum’s arrival, culminating in a public dedication April 19 attended by the Governor and other prominent state and national figures.

“The debut of this new world-class institution and the exploration of our shared national history give Springfield and Illinois ample reason to celebrate,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “These festivities offer a tremendous opportunity to showcase the new museum for a national audience—and to raise the Land of Lincoln’s profile in the process.”

The museum joins the already-open library as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM) complex in Springfield. Museum opening events begin on April 16 with “Looking for Lincoln,” a two-day historical block party in downtown Springfield. The celebration will feature Lincoln era re-enactors, music, theater troupes, church choirs, folk dancers and artists from throughout Illinois. Most events are free to the public; the full schedule is available at www.alplm.org.

Some of the other major activities planned for the grand opening include:

- **Scholarly Conference “Lincoln in the Twenty-First Century”**– (April 17 and 18, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library) – A two-day Lincoln Scholarly Conference will examine Lincoln, from his attitude toward race and his domestic life to his wartime leadership and assassination. The conference will conclude on the 18th with a panel hosted by C-SPAN founder and CEO Brian Lamb and will feature three generations of the world’s foremost Lincoln scholars –David Herbert Donald, Harold Holzer and Matthew Pinsker.
- **Interfaith Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Abraham Lincoln** – (April 17, 11 a.m., Union Square Park) – The community will come together and find strength in the celebration of religious diversity in a public service led by various community religious leaders.

- **Recreation of Lincoln’s Farewell Address and Torchlight Parade**– (April 17, 6:30 p.m., Old Train Depot to Union Square Park /ALPLM)
- **Outdoor Concert, Fireworks and Laser Spectacular** – (April 17, 8 p.m., Union Square Park) – A public concert by the 312th Army Band.
- **Recreated Lincoln White House State Dinner** – (April 18, 7:30 p.m., Springfield Renaissance Hotel) – This fundraiser for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation will feature a Lincoln-era menu and 19th-century music courtesy of the 312th Army Band. The first David Herbert Donald Prize for Excellence in Lincoln Studies will be presented to its namesake, the author of the definitive one-volume Lincoln biography.
- **Public Dedication** – (April 19, 11 a.m., Union Square Park) – Gov. Blagojevich and other prominent leaders will speak at this hour-long event signaling the official opening of the museum, with music provided by the 312th Army Band. In addition, the winner of a student essay contest sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and C-SPAN will read his or her modern-day version of the Gettysburg address to the crowd.

The museum’s grand opening will follow the dedication, giving the public the opportunity to experience firsthand the museum’s 40,000 square feet of permanent exhibits – twice the size of any other presidential museum. The galleries, which employ 21st-century technology to make the 19th century live again, are the result of a collaboration among the State of Illinois, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA), Burbank, Calif.-based BRC Imagination Arts, and a distinguished panel of renowned historians.

“The opening of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum will be a popular celebration of public history at its best,” said Richard Norton Smith, the museum’s executive director. “Just as the exhibits inside invite visitor participation, so will the events outside. Like the Museum, they will recreate another time, even as they remind us of what is timeless. It will be, literally, a time to remember.”

For more information about the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, or about the slate of opening activities, visit www.alplm.org.