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LASM Releases Community Impact Report for 2018-2019

BATON ROUGE - The Louisiana Art & Science Museum has released a Community Impact Report for 2018-2019 that illustrates the community impact, educational impact, and economic impact of its wide range of public and school programs. The data was collected and compiled by the Museum's staff, and is available in full on LASM's *About* page at lasm.org.

In 2018, the Museum welcomed 171,000 program participants through its doors; around 10,000 of these visitors were admitted free-of-charge as part of LASM's First Sunday program. While attendance numbers from this year are still being compiled, preliminary attendance data from May through September 2019 shows that 40 percent of LASM's visitors during that time were from East Baton Rouge Parish, 42 percent of visitors were from surrounding Louisiana parishes, and 18 percent were from out of state.

"We've begun collecting ZIP codes from our visitors to better track how far LASM's reach extends and to demonstrate our ability to bring visitors not only to downtown but also to the state of Louisiana," said LASM's President & Executive Director Serena Pandos. "We have data from the American Alliance of Museums that supports the fact that museums serve as major economic engines in their respective communities. In Louisiana alone, museums added \$562 million to the state's economy last year. We're taking the next steps to show what LASM, in particular, has to offer."

Just over 57 percent of the Museum's attendance, around 98,000 visitors, comes through its school programs, which served students from 41 parishes and five counties in Mississippi. Through its educational outreach program, the Discovery Dome Portable Planetarium, the Museum reached an additional 3,000 children in East Baton Rouge and surrounding parishes. LASM provides over 50 in-house program options for school groups, including hands-on classes, planetarium shows, guided tours and explorations, and interactive educational theatre presentations. More than 2,300 students participated in BASF Kids' Lab hands-on chemistry workshops designed for schools.

"Thanks to generous sponsorships and community partnerships, LASM has created a vibrant and impactful education program that has enhanced art and science learning in Baton Rouge and beyond for decades," said Pandos. "The perfect example of this is The River Dynamics Experience, which launched just this year. Through our partnership with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, we have been able to offer this exciting and vital program free-of-charge to eighth-grade students, preparing

them to tackle problems that threaten our coastline. This important program, which includes a tour of the LSU Center for River Studies and a hands-on class featuring a state-of-the-art stream table at LASM, is available to all eighth-grade students, regardless of their ability to pay.”

In terms of public programming, the Museum presented 272 programs in 2018, including Engineering Day, Dino Day, Art After Hours, and The Traveling Trunk Show. This figure includes 120 sessions of BASF Kids’ Lab, in which 2,000 public visitors participated. This year, the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium welcomed its one-millionth visitor since its opening in 2003.

“LASM’s mission is all about providing access,” said Pandos. “Through our public programs, our multigenerational audience is afforded opportunities to explore their universe, expand their creativity, and have conversations with artists and scientists normally outside of their usual circles. On First Sundays, we offer free admission and discounted planetarium shows to those who may not have the opportunity to visit the Museum otherwise.”

The Museum, which has been accredited by The American Alliance of Museums since 1972, is currently preparing for its 2020 re-accreditation evaluation. Accreditation, which is the highest national award that a museum can receive, is a rigorous professional peer-review program designed to ensure alignment with best museum practices, and is awarded to only six percent of museums nationwide. As part of these preparations, LASM will undergo a Museum Assessment Program, a federally funded organizational assessment.

For more information on the Louisiana Art & Science Museum and its programs, visit lasm.org. You can support these programs by becoming a Member of the Museum or donate by texting GIVE to 225.351.9662.

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Image: Founded in 1960, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum is located in a 1925 historic railway station on the banks of the Mississippi River in Downtown Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The Museum features five engaging art & science galleries, two hands-on galleries for children, and one of the largest and most advanced planetariums in the southeastern United States.

About the Louisiana Art & Science Museum

A nonprofit organization housed on the banks of the Mississippi River in downtown Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum enhances the understanding and appreciation of art and science for general audiences and students by presenting unique, educational and entertaining experiences that encourage discovery, inspire creativity, and foster the pursuit of knowledge. More information about the Art & Science Museum is available at lasm.org.

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