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Louisiana Art & Science Museum and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to Provide Environmental Education Programs

Baton Rouge—The Louisiana Art & Science Museum has partnered with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to provide free access to new educational experiences that meet the curriculum objectives and the Louisiana Student Standards for Science for up to 4,800 eighth-grade students.

“The Mississippi River and Gulf Coast are vastly important to Louisiana,” said Serena Pandos, LASM President & Executive Director. “By inspiring students to think critically and respond constructively to local environmental concerns, we are nurturing an educated 21st-century workforce that will carry the torch for future success and sustainability.”

The LASM and the CPRA have developed **The River Dynamics Experience**, a new program for eighth-grade students that will provide a joint visit to both The Water Campus to tour the LSU Center for River Studies and the Louisiana Art & Science Museum. During their tour of the Center for River Studies, participating students will explore a working 3-dimensional physical model of the lower 190 miles of the Mississippi River from Donaldsonville to the Gulf of Mexico. Spanning an area the size of two basketball courts, it is one of the largest river models of its kind in the world.

“We’ve constructed a miniature version of the lower Mississippi River that is fully operational with water and sediment. Essentially, we have shrunk the river and put it in a building,” said Rudy Simoneaux, CPRA’s Chief Engineer and project manager for the model and facility.

This experience is complemented by same-day, hands-on classes at the LASM in which students will design solutions to real-world environmental challenges by engaging with a state-of-the-art stream table. The students will also view a related large-screen educational movie.

“This collaboration will complement the commitment of CPRA to coastal restoration and river management, as together with local educators we cultivate the next generation of engineers, geologists, environmental scientists, and informed citizens,” said Nita Mitchell, the Museum’s Director of Education.

The necessary labor to renovate the LASM Science Station Lab and install the stream table is being donated by Faulk & Meek General Contractors, LLC. The firm’s co-founder, David Faulk, sits on the

Museum's Advisory Council. "We are proud to partner with LASM in this endeavor to help them educate the children in our community," said Faulk. "It is our belief that there is no greater investment that could be made than in children's education."

Along with its colleagues at the CPRA and Faulk & Meek, the Museum also extends its thanks to Advisory Council member Kris Kirkpatrick and Scott Kirkpatrick, the Museum's Immediate Past Board Chair, for their support and commitment to advancing youth education through the LASM and CPRA partnership.

"We are thrilled with this partnership," said Scott Kirkpatrick. "It will allow students to participate free of charge, thereby furthering the mission of LASM to provide equal access and opportunity to visitors throughout the region."

School districts interested in participating in **The River Dynamics Experience** for eighth-grade students should email Nita Mitchell at nmitchell@lasm.org.

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IMAGE: A view of the Mississippi River Model on view at the LSU Center for River Studies, which will play a crucial role in The River Dynamics Experience. Image courtesy of the LSU Center for River Studies.

About 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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