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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LASM Expands Blue Star Museums Program to Provide Free Admission Year-Round to Veterans, Active Duty Military, First Responders, and Their Families

BATON ROUGE, LA—Sponsored by Special Risk Insurance, Inc. VFIS of Miss/Lou, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum (LASM) now offers free admission year-round to veterans, active duty military, first responders, and their families as part of the Blue Star Museums program. This free admission program is presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and participating museums across America.

“This free admission program is a small way that we can show appreciation for our nation’s heroes,” stated Serena Pandos, LASM’s President & Executive Director. “LASM has been a long-time participant in the Blue Star Museums program. The generous sponsorship of Special Risk Insurance has enabled us to expand the program this year to include veterans in addition to active duty military, first responders, and their families.”

The Blue Star Museums program typically begins on Armed Forces Day in May and ends on Labor Day in September, serving active duty military, first responders, and their families. At LASM, sponsorship by Special Risk Insurance, Inc. VFIS of Miss/Lou has enabled the program to occur year-round since 2018, and this year’s increased sponsorship has allowed the program to extend service to veterans.

“Over 20,000 veterans live in East Baton Rouge parish – nearly 5% of the parish’s population – and studies indicate that the arts play an important role in improving the health and wellness of this often overlooked and underserved population in our community,” continued Ms. Pandos. “In 2019, nearly 2,000 people received free access to LASM as part of the Blue Star Museums program. In 2020, despite closure, limited hours of operation, and reduced museum capacity, 550 people were served by this program. We hope to welcome increased program participants this year as COVID-19-related visitation restrictions decrease and veterans begin to be served by this program. We are grateful to Special Risk Insurance for their continued generosity and service.”

“We are extremely proud to sponsor this program at LASM,” stated David Stogner, President of Special Risk Insurance, Inc. VFIS of Miss/Lou. “Special Risk Insurance is a nationally-recognized insurer of Emergency Service Organizations and the Regional Director for Volunteer Firemen’s Insurance Services in Louisiana and Mississippi. A service-oriented corporation which was founded on the principle of helping people and organizations involved in the emergency service area of expertise, Special Risk Insurance’s constituents are directly impacted by this free museum admission program.”

LASM is currently open to the public on Thursdays and Fridays from 9:30 AM to 2 PM, Saturdays from 9:30 AM to 5 PM, and Sundays from 1 PM to 4 PM. Sunday admission includes a live, presenter-led

Stargazing program in the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium at 2 PM and 4 PM in addition to unlimited Irene W. Pennington Planetarium shows and admission to the Solar System Gallery and Universe Gallery. Learn more at lasm.org.

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Image caption (1): Veterans, active duty military, first responders, and their families now receive free admission year-round to LASM, courtesy of Special Risk Insurance, Inc. VFIS of Miss/Lou.

Image caption (2): Special Risk Insurance, Inc. VFIS of Miss/Lou logo

Image caption (3): Blue Star Museums logo

About the Louisiana Art & Science Museum

Housed on the banks of the Mississippi River in a historic railway station in downtown Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum believes that art and science shape each other, our lives, and the world. LASM is now open on Thursdays and Fridays from 10 AM – 2 PM, Saturdays from 10 AM – 5 PM, and Sundays from 1 PM – 4 PM. Museum doors open at 9:45 AM for seating in the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium; on Saturdays and Sundays, the last entry of the day is admitted at 4 PM. Admission, which includes unlimited access to all planetarium shows, is free for members and children 2 years old and under; \$10 for children aged 3-12 and senior adults aged 65 and up; and \$12 for adults. Active duty military members, first responders, military veterans, and their families receive free admission with ID as part of the Blue Star Museums program, sponsored by Special Risk Insurance, Inc. VFIS of Mississippi/Louisiana.

The Museum, founded in 1962, is home to the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium, the largest and most advanced planetarium in Louisiana and one of the largest in the southeastern United States; a permanent collection including over 4,000 objects; one of the only permanent ancient Egypt galleries in the southeastern United States, housing an authentic, Ptolemaic-era mummy; and changing displays featuring art exhibitions of local and international acclaim.

Access to the Museum's digital learning platform for at-home art and science experiences is available at virtual-lasm.org. A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the Museum relies on the support of donations to operate; support the Museum's COVID-19 relief fund at lasm.org. Stay in touch at lasm.org and on social media.