



9/16/20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Frances Lee, Director of Communications, 225.344.5272 x 112, flee@lasm.org

LASM Premieres Awe-Inspiring New Film *In Saturn's Rings* in the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium on September 26, 2020

BATON ROUGE, LA – The Louisiana Art & Science Museum (LASM) will premiere the groundbreaking giant screen film *In Saturn's Rings* on National Astronomy Day – Saturday, September 26, 2020 – in the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium. *In Saturn's Rings* is generously sponsored by the Charles Lamar Family Foundation.

Written, produced, and directed by innovative filmmaker Stephen van Vuuren, *In Saturn's Rings* takes viewers on a 14 billion light-year journey of the mind, heart, and spirit from the Big Bang to the conclusion of the Cassini-Huygens Mission at Saturn. Narrated by *Star Trek: The Next Generation* actor and *Reading Rainbow* host LeVar Burton, *In Saturn's Rings* utilizes no CGI effects or 3D modeling of any kind. Instead, over one-hundred volunteers painstakingly integrated more than 7.5 million still images taken during the Cassini-Huygens Mission, Sloan Digital Sky Survey, Hubble Telescope time-lapses, and more to create this film. Many of these images have never been seen by the public.

"The Irene W. Pennington Planetarium has anxiously awaited the release of *In Saturn's Rings* since its planning was first announced in 2014," said Sheree Westerhaus, LASM's Director of Operations & Planetarium. "Though we hoped to begin showing the film earlier this year, the COVID-19 pandemic had other plans. We decided to delay the premiere until Louisiana moved into Phase 3 so that as many people could experience this film as possible. We know *In Saturn's Rings* will offer an experience unlike any other for our audience and can't wait to share it!"

In Saturn's Rings will be shown at 11 AM, 12 PM, 2 PM, and 4 PM during its September 26 premiere. The showings are included in general admission, which will be paid at the door on a first-come, first-served basis. Capacity in the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium is limited in order to ensure that social distancing guidelines of 6 feet are adhered to. Masks are required and will be provided free-of-charge to visitors who arrive without them.

"Considering the community involvement and scientific effort it took to create this amazing film, LASM sees *In Saturn's Rings* as a perfect melding of art and science, representing the

curiosity and passion for discovery that we seek to foster in our visitors,” stated Serena Pandos, LASM’s President & Executive Director. “We strive to create a community of lifelong explorers inspired by art and science, much like the volunteers who came together to create this stunning program.”

“At a time like this, thinking about subjects much larger than ourselves can be healing,” continued Pandos. “This program exploring the cosmos allows LASM to educate students and the general public on subjects of science, astronomy, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics while also being entertaining. We cannot thank the Charles Lamar Family Foundation enough for their investment in LASM by sponsoring this innovative new program!”

###

Image: The rings of Saturn are the most extensive ring system of any planet in our Solar System. They consist of countless small particles of ice and rock, ranging in size from a grain of sand to a semi-trailer truck. This image was taken by the Cassini Orbiter on October 6, 2004.

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. The Museum is currently open for modified operating hours: Thursdays & Fridays from 9:30 AM – 2 PM and Saturdays from 9:30 AM – 5 PM. Active duty military members, first responders, 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 displays changing 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/give**. Stay in touch at **lasm.org** and on social media!