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Best new attraction in Oklahoma offers free admission on one-year anniversary

OKLAHOMA CITY – Recently named the best new attraction in Oklahoma by the Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Department, the Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum will be open free to the public on Saturday, May 10 in celebration of its one-year anniversary.

From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., visitors will enjoy free admission, light refreshments, meeting notable Oklahomans featured in the Museum and book signings by prominent Oklahoma Heritage Association authors in the Museum Store.

“Offering free admission on our anniversary is our way of saying thanks for the support we’ve received from communities across our state,” said Shannon L. Nance, president of the Association and Museum. “We have had a successful first year of teaching individuals and groups the value of Oklahoma history through the lives of our state’s greatest asset – our people.”

Via high-tech, interactive exhibits, the Museum showcases the state’s history through the lives and accomplishments of its people.

“We have taken great strides to include people from a diverse range of industries, backgrounds, socio-economic status and age so that everyone who comes to the Museum will find someone with whom they can connect,” said Nance. “We are most proud of the energy and effort that has gone into the Museum when a student discovers a new role model or ambition after meeting one of the Oklahomans in our exhibits.”

The Museum’s most popular exhibit, the Oklahoma Through Its People Gallery, celebrates the five characteristics of an Oklahoman – perseverance, pioneer spirit, optimism, generosity and individualism. Custom-designed exhibits were created for each of the characteristics, and each features six Oklahomans, past and present, who have displayed that attribute in their lives.

In Perseverance, a metal tree of 15 various sized screens – some showing video, others showing still shots – visitors meet civil rights activist Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher, rodeo champion Jim Shoulders, prima ballerina Maria Tallchief, medical researcher Dr. Jordan Tang, artist Greg Burns and Pulitzer prize-winning author N. Scott Momaday. In Optimism, visitors use a touch screen to match baby photos to current photos of Oklahomans like country music superstar Reba McEntire, Olympic gymnast Shannon Miller and baseball legend Mickey Mantle.

Other exhibits include the Chesapeake Oklahoma Theater, which plays a 12-minute film about everyday Oklahomans from across the state; the Oklahoma Hall of Fame gallery, where visitors learn fun facts about all 621 inductees via touch screens; and the ONEOK Tell Your Story

exhibit, where visitors share and record stories about their own heritage through video prompters. Visitors can then e-mail the recording to themselves as a memento of their experience.

Though the Museum itself is just a year old, its founding organization, the Oklahoma Heritage Association, will celebrate its 81st birthday this year.

“The development and opening of the Museum has really allowed us to fulfill our mission – preserving Oklahoma history and promoting pride in our state – to its fullest potential,” said Nance. “Through Museum tours, expanded educational programming and special events, we are able to engage adults and students alike in appreciating our past and generating excitement for our future.”

The Museum is located at NW 13th Street and Shartel Avenue near downtown Oklahoma City.

Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors (age 62 and up) and \$5 for students (ages 6-17). Children 5 and under are free, and group rates are available.

For more information on the anniversary celebration, the Museum itself or the Oklahoma Heritage Association, call 405.235.4458 or visit www.oklahomaheritage.com.

The Oklahoma Heritage Association preserves Oklahoma’s history and inspires pride in the state by supporting education, celebrating the accomplishments of Oklahomans and leading the publishing industry in publishing books on Oklahoma history. The non-profit organization is funded entirely by private donations and is dedicated to promoting Oklahoma’s living history through its people.

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