



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Howard M. Pollman
Marketing Director, PHMC
300 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0024
(717) 705-8639
hpollman@state.pa.us

Friends of the State Museum Launch Buy-A-Bone Campaign for Mastodon

HARRISBURG – (OCT. 21, 2009) Holiday shoppers looking for something – anything – for that person who has everything can now buy bragging rights to a piece of Pennsylvania’s prehistoric history – one of the 300 bones that comprise a 12,000-year-old mastodon soon to be unveiled at the PA State Museum.

The non-profit Friends of the State Museum is launching the **BUY-A-BONE** campaign at www.pabookstore.com as part of a 12-month year effort to raise funds to reconstruct the mastodon -- first unearthed in 1968 in Monroe County - and to build the massive creature a new home at the museum.

The mastodon is comprised of roughly 263 bones. Donors may purchase a bone for \$25 up to \$25,000 for the animal’s skull. All donors will receive a certificate commemorating their purchase as well as an invitation to a special preview of the mastodon to be held in

January, 2010. In addition, all of the ‘owners’ will be named on a plaque that will hang in the new exhibit hall.

“We know that nobody in the Central Pennsylvania region has ever received a gift like this before. This mastodon is a one-of-a-kind treasure and we want to share this treasure with the hundreds of thousands of visitors who come to the museum every year,” said Ruth Granfors Friends’ president. “You’re literally buying a piece of the past for future generations. It will make for a very unique gift.”

The Friends’ goal is to raise \$250,000 to help defray the extraordinary costs of reconstructing the mastodon and building the new Paleontology Gallery where the mastodon will live.

The new gallery on the museum’s top floor will be comprised of four areas and a series of dioramas with interactive tools for visitors.

The mastodon is being reconstructed by Pittsburgh-based Phil Fraley Productions, one of the leading firms in the world for such work. The mastodon is scheduled to be unveiled in January, 2010. The new Gallery will be completed and opened to the public in December, 2010.

“This really is the most exciting project we’ve undertaken at the Museum in 30 years,” said Museum Director John Leighow. “We’ve got the best specimen of this type of animal anywhere on the east coast. We’ve got the best firm in the world managing the reconstruction. And we have one of the nation’s leading paleontologists on staff here with Dr. Robert Sullivan,” Leighow said.

“All of the ingredients are here for a world class exhibit, Leighow added.

The Marshalls Creek Mastodon was first un-earthed in 1968 in Monroe County, PA. The mastodon is the most complete skeleton of its kind ever discovered in Pennsylvania. Growing to nearly 20 feet long (from rear to tip of tusks) and 9 feet high, the creature weighed 4 to 5 tons.

Buy-A-Bone is just one facet of The Friends' year-long effort to support the new exhibit. The Friends will seek corporate partners interested in sponsoring the four areas and special features in the new gallery space, as well as a series of family-oriented events for the coming year.

The Friends of the State Museum is a non-profit volunteer organization devoted to supporting the exhibits, collections, and programs of The State Museum of Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth's official history museum located in the Capitol Complex, Harrisburg, PA. The Friends are collaborating with the Pennsylvania Heritage Society to conduct the Mastodon Buy-A-Bone campaign. The Heritage Society is another non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining the preservation work of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), the state's official history organization. The State Museum is a bureau of PHMC.

For more information, please visit www.pabookstore.com.

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