

NEWS RELEASE

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The State Museum of Pennsylvania Presents

Tusks! Ice Age Mammoths and Mastodons

January 24 to May 2, 2010

Harrisburg, PA – The State Museum of Pennsylvania will host the traveling exhibition *Tusks! Ice Age Mammoths and Mastodons* from January 24 through May 2, 2010.

This exhibit, created by the Florida Museum of Natural History, tells the story of mammoths and mastodons, extinct relatives of modern elephants who roamed much of North America until the end of the last Ice Age, 10,000 years ago.

These early proboscideans – large beasts with tusks and a long flexible trunk or proboscis – arrived in North America about 15 million years ago. They were giants in an ecosystem populated by a wide diversity of animals and plants.

The exhibition features more than 80 specimens that include extinct proboscideans and some of their Ice Age neighbors, such as carnivores, horses, giant ground sloths and giant armadillos. Colorful interpretive banners feature artists' reconstructions of the animals and photo murals of scientists at work.

The opening of the exhibition marks the debut of The State Museum's remounted Marshalls Creek Mastodon, one of the most significant fossil specimens recovered from Pennsylvania. For years, only half of the skeleton was mounted in a display adjacent to The State Museum's Mammal Hall while the other half was in storage. This full skeletal display will allow visitors to view the entire animal from all sides to get a true sense of its size and beauty. This remount, undertaken by Phil Fraley Productions, Inc. of Hoboken, NJ, will be featured as a centerpiece

of the Tusks! exhibit. Work on the mastodon is taking place at Fraley's satellite studio in Pittsburgh. After the Tusk exhibition closes, the mastodon will move to a new permanent home in The State Museums 3rd Floor Hall of Geology, part of which is currently under renovation. In addition to the dramatically remounted mastodon, additional fossil specimens and new and updated dioramas will create a richer experience for visitors. The gallery is expected to officially reopen some time in the fall of 2010.

Citizens can be a part of the Tusks! experience. The State Museum is looking for volunteers to bring the exhibit to life by interacting with visitors and students with hands-on materials right in the gallery. An on-line application is available at www.statemuseumpa.org by selecting the volunteer tab on the front page. Be sure to check "Tusks! Exhibit Volunteer" under assignment preference. The deadline for submitting volunteer applications is Friday, October 16, 2009.

Inquiries may be directed to Janee Concepcion at (717) 783-5736 or jconcepcion@state.pa.us.

The State Museum of Pennsylvania, located at 300 North Street, is one of 25 historic sites and museums on the Pennsylvania Trail of History®. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 12 noon to 5 p.m. General admission is \$3.00 for adults, \$2.00 for children/senior citizens. Individuals who need special assistance should call (717) 787-6778 or the Pennsylvania TDD relay service at (800) 654-5984. For more information on Tusks! as well as other programs, exhibitions and events at The State Museum, click on www.statemuseumpa.org.