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October 2, 2006

Contact: Rhonda Hoyt
517-787-2320 ext.239

ELLA SHARP MUSEUM OF ART AND HISTORY RAISES \$5 MILLION

...Single largest fundraising campaign in Jackson's history...

JACKSON, MI -- On October 1st, the Ella Sharp Museum of Art and History opened to the public the expansion project funded by the *Celebrate the Ella!* 40th Anniversary Campaign. The \$5 million raised, marking the most successful capital campaign in Jackson County history, is for the expansion, facility improvements, and the endowment.

"Museum planners, community focus groups, and campaign leadership looked carefully at what we needed to keep the Museum relevant," said Lynne Loftis, Museum President. "The community responded generously."

Jackson History Gallery

A distinctive swooping on the Fourth Street façade of the Museum is the addition of a 1,800-square-foot Jackson History Gallery. This gallery will be filled with the Museum's extensive collection of local history artifacts and objects such as a Mastodon jaw found in the Horton area and the table on which the resolution document which formed the Republican Party was drafted and signed in 1854.

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Andrews Gallery of Wildlife Art

Another new 1,200-square-foot gallery has been added to house one of the premier collections of wildlife art in North America. The generous donation of the Andy & Sandy Andrews' collection of paintings, sculptures, carvings and taxidermy is the core of the Andrews Gallery of Wildlife Art. The inaugural exhibit includes 62 artworks showcasing 28 artists.

“The collection is immense,” states Loftis. “The exhibit will change twice per year and even at that rate, it will bring a new gallery experience for years to come.”

Community Room

Reservations for the new 3,000-square-foot Community Room started months before completion. With a full catering kitchen and outdoor patio, the room is designed to accommodate a wide variety of uses such as receptions, galas, theatrical productions, lectures, films, and more. A huge curved window looks out onto the surrounding park and a mid-19th century log house.

Education Resource Center

The new Education Resource Center is home to the Museum's existing and developing educational programs. Through in-house and outreach programs, studio classes, workshops, lectures, and tours the Museum educates and entertains seniors, adults, children, and even infants and toddlers. The new Education Resource Center is already checking out materials to community volunteers, training new guides and presenters, and booking field trips and group tours.

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Donor Lounge

An original Philip C. Curtis painting, *Memorial*, will hang in a new donors' lounge. Curtis is a Jackson native and founder of the Phoenix Art Museum. The lounge will feature the Curtis painting and a Secret Sound DVD presentation. Future significant donations to the Museum's permanent art collection will also be showcased here.

Amenities

Other additions and improvements to the Museum ground floor include visitor amenities to accommodate larger tour groups and functions, a larger Friends Gift Shop and an accessible office for Museum administration.

The Museum's storage capacity has also been significantly improved and expanded to house their growing collections. These areas are specifically designed to meet the field's preservation standards. Proper archival storage is necessary to meet the expectations of traveling exhibits from other museums and are an aid in obtaining grant funding. Grants have already been awarded allowing, for example, the Museum textile collection to be correctly stored with the latest in appropriate archival materials.

More improvements, restorations, and changes are planned on the Museum's campus which includes Ella Sharp's Hillside Farmhouse, seven historic buildings and the Hadwin Center which now houses five art and history galleries.

For more information about the Ella Sharp Museum of Art and History contact the Museum by phone at (517) 787-2320, by visiting at 3225 Fourth St., Jackson, MI 49203, or on the web at www.ellasharp.org.

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