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Georgia Southern University Museum Joins National Blue Star Museums Program

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The Georgia Southern University Museum has joined the Blue Star Museums program, along with more than 1,300 museums across the country, to offer free admission to military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2011.

Blue Star Museums runs from May 30 to September 5, 2011. The free admission program is available to active-duty military and their immediate family members (military ID holder and five immediate family members). Active duty military include Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserve members. Some special or limited-time museum exhibits may not be included in this free admission program. A list of participating museums and a map to assist with visit planning may be found at the website, www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.

"We could not be more excited to recognize the hard work and sacrifice of military families by offering free admission as a part of the Blue Star Museums program," said Brent Tharp, director of the Georgia Southern Museum. "We are excited to join more than 800 museums across the country in this program and we are excited to welcome military families to our museum — many of them for the first time."

"Blue Star Museums recognizes and thanks our military families for all they are doing for our country, and simultaneously begins young people on a path to becoming life-long museum goers," said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman. "I cannot imagine a better way to do that than welcoming them in to explore and enjoy the extraordinary cultural heritage our museums present."

Georgia Southern Museum Exhibits

Below are just a few highlights of the exhibits and activities available at the Georgia Southern Museum.

Civil War Camp Lawton

Georgia Southern University is pleased to extend this special exhibit of archaeological discoveries until Dec. 31, 2011. The exhibit features artifacts discovered at the site of Camp Lawton, a former Civil War prisoner of war camp situated in Jenkins County, Georgia. In addition to the ongoing exhibit, archaeologists have included additional artifacts to the display which has attracted visitors from across the country. For more exciting details on this important discovery, visit: www.georgiasouthern.edu/camplawton.

A View from Space

Beginning May 28, 2011, this new exhibit will provide guests the opportunity to explore Earth through views from Earth-orbiting satellites. Visitors are challenged to become scientists, to study satellite images, and to try to answer important questions about the workings of our dynamic planet. In addition, visitors will be introduced to Geocaching. They will learn how this fast-growing hobby is made possible through the use of satellites and also have the opportunity to use a GPS device to solve several museum adventures.

The Hall of Natural History

Features the Mosasaur (*Tylosaurus proriger*) and Vogtle whale (*Georgiacetus vogtensis*). Exhibits on whale evolution, the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary and eocene mammals, as well as a kids' interactive area, explore 80 million years of natural history in the Coastal Plain.

About Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit network of military families from all ranks and services, including the National Guard and Reserve, with a mission to support, connect and empower military families. In addition to morale and empowerment programs, Blue Star Families raises awareness of the challenges and strengths of military family life and works to make military life more sustainable. Membership includes military spouses, children and parents as well as service members, veterans and civilians. To learn more about Blue Star Families, visit www.bluestarfam.org.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion of how art works, visit the NEA at arts.gov.

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