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MEDIA ALERT

DC AREA MUSEUMS RECOGNIZED AT THE 15TH ANNUAL THEA AWARDS



Washington, DC – Three DC Area Museums received accolades at the 15th Annual Thea Awards Gala on Saturday, March 7, 2009, further solidifying the status of our nation’s capital as a home to must-see museums. Each year the Themed Entertainment Association, a worldwide nonprofit association representing the creators of compelling places and experiences, selects representatives who can publicly exemplify the highest standards of excellence and achievement in the industry. The Nominating Committee evaluated more than 120 nominations to select the final slate of 17 recipients including: the International Spy Museum’s Operation Spy, The Newseum, and The National Museum of the Marine Corps.

The International Spy Museum’s immersive spy adventure, *Operation Spy*, was awarded the Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Museum Exhibit category. *Operation Spy* combines live-action, video characters, role-playing, themed environments, special effects and hands-on activities into an exciting experience. The plot is inspired by actual cases from intelligence files and guests assume the role of US Intelligence Officers and are thrust into the secret world of espionage and special agents. During their experience they penetrate a high-security compound, crack a safe, interrogate a suspect agent and engage in other covert activities in an effort to complete their mission. This unique adventure takes the interactive concept to a new level by combining innovative features of exhibits, movies, computer games, theatrical environments and rides into an exciting experience. *Operation Spy* immerses the guest into active participation and brings to life the complexities and ambiguities of the intelligence world.

The *Newseum* received the Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Museum category. An

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interactive museum of news and journalism, the *Newseum's* stated mission is "to help the public and the news media understand one another better." The *Newseum* presents media in every possible format from panoramic, multi-screen and interactive, to large and small theaters, a 4D presentation, do-it-yourself telecasting and reproductions of daily newspapers' front pages. The overall message of the content is to underscore the achievements of journalists in creating awareness of current events and issues, point out the need for a free press and transparency in reporting, and mark and celebrate great moments in history as documented through the media. The *Newseum* sets a new bar for large cultural institutions in major metropolitan areas.

The *National Museum of the Marine Corps* was also presented with the Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Museum category. The Museum tells the story of the United States Marines through 85,000 sq ft of exhibits that are intended to place visitors in the boots of the Marines while still housing a substantial collection of artifacts. Through a series of immersive, 4-D exhibits, where even the temperature and humidity are altered to enhance the experience, augmented with unique media applications, the story is told through a first-person narrative that transports the visitor into the world of the Marines. A masterful balance has been reached between the theatrical immersive galleries and the surrounding supporting exhibits. Each scene is given its appropriate historical context as well as contemporary relevance that is understandable to lay persons, families and school groups. This museum entralls visitors as well as the Marines, whose 273 years of history is captured here.

About TEA

The TEA (Themed Entertainment Association) is a nonprofit organization representing some 7,000 creative specialists, from architects to designers, technical specialists to master planners, scenic fabricators to artists, and builders to feasibility analysts working in more than 600 firms in 39 different countries. TEA is an international nonprofit organization founded in 1991. It is dedicated to connecting organizations seeking to engage, enchant, educate and entertain their guests and visitors with the creators of compelling places and experiences worldwide. Its members have conceived, designed, fabricated and produced highly successful experience-based museum exhibits, science center interactives, corporate visitor centers, live events and live performance venues, themed entertainment and retail centers, casinos and resorts, themed restaurants, aquariums, zoos, heritage centers, theme parks and more. For more information, visit www.TEAConnect.org.