



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

5th Annual Star Wars Day Planned for Downtown Joliet

Joliet, Illinois, May 15, 2014 – From the Joliet American Legion Band to the Klingon Band, more than 80 costumed characters, featured artists and a full day of activities are coming to the Joliet Public Library and Joliet Area Historical Museum soon. Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 7, from 11 am - 4 pm. The expected result: a record-setting number of Star Wars Day visitors to downtown Joliet the first Saturday in June. Attracting participants from Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan and Ohio, the increasing popularity of the 5-hour event, now in its fifth year, is hardly a coincidence, according to local tourism leaders. Instead, it is an outcome of good planning and partnership that prove to be a powerful "force" to draw visitors, according to local tourism leaders.

For its part, the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) has been working to attract attention to the event, which is a great example of local partnership among tourism sites in the area. The CVB, as it has for the past four years, supported Star Wars Day promotion at the recent Chicago Comic and Entertainment Expo, known as C2E2, at McCormick Place. "In the past, visibility at 'Chicago's pop culture show' has helped to bring positive attention to this hugely popular one-day event," according to Bob Navarro, local CVB President. Promotional cards have been produced and distributed at local venues for the past month, and information has been included on the website (www.HeritageCorridorCVB.com) and through social media, as well. Even the Joliet Route 66 Diner will have a special Star Wars menu for Star Wars loyalists. "Tourism teamwork like this helps bring new visitors to downtown Joliet, and lets key sites and businesses spotlight the best we have to offer," said Navarro.

Joliet Public Library Youth Services Librarian, Roger Burns, is once again working with Mike Brick from the Joliet Area Historical Museum to plan another hugely successful event. "Libraries are about community, and this event brings together a large community of people with shared interests and passion which extends beyond geography," said Burns. "It's very nice to be working in collaboration with the Joliet Area Historical Museum, the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Friends of the Joliet Public Library," he said. The City of Joliet and D'Arcy Buick GMC are local sponsors, as well. Working together, we've developed what is now a prominent midwest regional Star Wars celebration," he added. Burns noted that the 501st Legion and the Rebel Legion are tremendous groups who also deserve credit for bringing attention and guests to the event.

Planned for guests of all ages, a wide range of activities will be featured on June 7th at both the downtown Library and the Museum from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Star Wars Day in Joliet will begin with a literal bang -- on the drum. Beginning at 11:00 a.m., the (Joliet) American Legion Band will lead a parade from the Joliet Area Historical Museum to the Joliet Public Library to kick off another Star Wars Day in downtown Joliet. The parade route will go from Ottawa Street, left on Clinton to Chicago Street, according to Burns. Planners have worked with the Joliet Police Department to shut down part of Ottawa Street for the day to make for safer and more convenient passage back and forth from the Museum to the Library throughout the day. Parking is available in the Ottawa Street Parking Deck. The Joliet Area Historical Museum will be offering free admission for the entire day on June 7, with support from Exxon and NRG Energy. For its part, according to Mike Brick, the Museum will feature some exciting highlights to this year's Star Wars Day.

- Light Saber Duel Reenactment by costumed professional swordsmen in the Museum's Indoor Auditorium (2 shows)
- R2D2 Robot Races and Demonstrations in the Museum Welcome Center
- Games for kids at the Museum include: Jedi Light Saber Training and Star Wars Action Figure Scavenger Hunt
- Presentations in the Indoor Auditorium by: Star Wars Documentary Film Maker Chris Macht, Droid Builders, 501st Legion
- Star Wars displays situated throughout the Museum featuring costumes, Lego displays, droids, etc.
- Life-sized 6' tall "Rancor" monster head exhibit
- Star Wars costumed characters walking around Museum all day available for photo opportunities
- Giant "Wookiee" footprints will be painted on the sidewalks to direct guests from the Joliet Public Library to the Museum

At the Joliet Public Library, the following events will take place. In addition to themed games and prizes, another popular children's activity is LegoLand, which will have several tables of building blocks for children. Separately, LegoLand Star Wars exhibit from private collections will be on display. Entertaining guests of all ages will be the il Troubadore Klingon Music Project. "Wookiee on the Cello was quite a hit, so the entire band will be in costume this year," said Burns. An Artist's Gallery will feature three skilled illustrators whose Star Wars related work has been shown in national and international magazines. Dave Dorman (Carpentersville), Steve Palenica (Worth), and Mike Babinski (Kankakee), as well as Tara Schile and Jim Haase from Chicago. Proceeds from a prize drawing of Babinski's body of work will support Big Brothers Big Sisters.

In speaking to the immense popularity of the Star Wars Day event, Joliet Public Library's Burns said, "With *all* due respect, we are in the 'Golden Age of the Geek and the Nerd' which explains the cross-generational appeal of these type of events." From young children to adults, all of whom take part in Annual Star Wars Day fun, it is a great experience for everyone, he added.

For additional information on Star Wars Day in Joliet, contact any of the participating locations, including: Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800.926.CANAL (2262), the Joliet Public Library at 815.740.2260 (www.jolietlibrary.org), or the Joliet Area Historical Museum at 815.723.5201 (www.jolietmuseum.org).

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