



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Christine Book for Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau
at 815.592.1460

Bob Navarro, HCCVB President/CEO at 815.588.7940

Mark Bosse, Event Coordinator at 708.551.2509

Heritage Corridor CVB Encourages Family Fun Weekend after Labor Day at "A River Thru History" event in Willow Springs

The Past Comes Alive at Popular Fur Trade Era Reenactment

Romeoville, IL, August, 2013 – Families looking for a variation on the theme of a family activity look no further. Parents, grandparents and kids will enjoy taking a voyage back in time to the era of Fur Traders at the "River Thru History" Des Plaines Valley Rendezvous scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, September 7th and 8th, in nearby Willow Springs. The Rendezvous, which takes place at Columbia Woods in Willow Springs, typically draws more than 3,000 people to the two-day Fur Trade Era Reenactment. Open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, September 7, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, September 8, 2013, the unique event is free to kids under 6 years of age, \$5 for seniors, and \$8 for adults (cash only). A Family Pass is available for \$20. Parking is free at the UPS Employee Parking Lot at 75th and Willow Springs Road (enter off of 75th Street), from where busses transport guests to the Columbia Woods Forest Preserve.

An event like no other, "A River Thru History" recreates the history of the Chicago area during the fur trade era before Chicago became a city. According to Bob Navarro, President/CEO of the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau, "This is one of the best annual events along the Heritage Corridor, as it captures that magical combination of history and entertainment so well." He encourages families, history buffs and educators to take part in this unique reenactment that offers heritage with a twist. "The past comes alive around you in a combination of history, storytelling, music, food and festivities," said Navarro, whose Heritage Corridor CVB is a partnering sponsor. He added, "The location is convenient for folks coming from the City, as well as south and northwest suburbs, and with the weather outlook great, we're expecting a great turnout for a great event."

Participants will meet fur traders, craftsman, pioneer musicians and entertainers as they gather along the banks of the Des Plaines River for this annual American celebration. There will be craft demonstrations, a children's trading post, live animals, storytelling, Native American games, music by Blue Celtic Grass, skillet toss, and fun for the whole family. Food Vendors will be serving a variety of food similar to what was eaten during the fur trade era including kettle corn, wild rice stew and root beer.

Long-time volunteer coordinator, Mark Bosse, who is also part of the Civic Center Authority, has been working with a dedicated team of planners and history enthusiasts to make sure every detail is tended to. "We love watching visitors -- young and old -- take in all that we offer," says Bosse. "We work hard to make sure there is something for everyone as we help the past come alive before their very eyes." Nearly 200 volunteers comprise the 50 camps of historical re-enactors to bring the events of the fur trading era to life. The early history of the 12 towns -- from Lyons to Lemont -- which comprise the I&M Canal Civic Center Authority, are highlighted in a unique fashion that draws thousands each year.

This event is sponsored by the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau, in partnership with the Civic Center Authority, Forest Preserve of Cook County, and the Village of Bedford Park.

For event details, go to www.ariverthruhistory.com or go to HeritageCorridorCVB.com for events year-round offering "heritage with a twist."

BACKGROUND

The Fur Trade era began after the European explorers, Louis Joliet and Father Pierre Marquette, canoed up the DesPlaines River and passed through the Chicago Portage in 1673. It lasted until local Indian tribes left northeastern Illinois after 1833. Rivers were the roads and highways of the continent during those 160 years.

A River Thru History demonstrates what a rendezvous might have been like along the banks of the DesPlaines River before Chicago became a city. Re-enactors portray life on the prairie from the time DuSable opened the first fur-trading post at the mouth of the Chicago River, until the Laughton brothers closed theirs at the Chicago Portage in 1833. Planners and participants strive to highlight the early history of the 12 towns from Lyons to Lemont which comprise the I&M Canal Civic Center Authority.

The rich history and wonderful stories of the region can be discovered during this 2-day event, where participants enjoy a wide range of activities. Frontier crafts are demonstrated, canoes are raced along the river, authentic music delights all ages, real root beer and kettle corn are enjoyed, and guests can feel the hides, pelts, skins and bones of the fur trade.

###