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Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau

Promotes December Destinations for History Lovers and Hikers

~ LaSalle's historic Hegeler Carus Mansion Hosts 1887 Holiday Dinner, and Starved Rock State Park, Offers New Guided Tours and Trolley Tours ~

November 30, 2012, Romeoville, IL – Just an hour's drive in December can bring great holiday adventures for History Lovers and Hikers, and the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is encouraging persons interested in historical mansions, as well as nature and hiking, to hit the road for fun this month. Among many options for travelers along the Corridor this holiday season, two unique outings are specifically designed for those who love either history or a good hike.

During four days in December, the keepers of the Hegeler Carus Mansion in LaSalle encourage visitors to step into a Holiday Party set in 1887. Take the short one hour drive to LaSalle (I-80 to Exit 351 South to Seventh Street 3 blocks), and visit the stately mansion for a Holiday dinner party that will have guests feeling they've been travelling back in time. Those participating will be special guest of the Edward and Camilla Hegeler family along with the many other famous characters from 1887, including Governor and Mrs. Oglesby, Mark Twain, John Muir, as well as Frederick and Frannie Matthiessen. Enjoy traditional music, Victorian parlor games, and celebrate the engagement of Mary Hegeler to Paul Carus.

"A Hegeler Carus Christmas 1887" ~ December 13, 14 and 15 at 7:00 p.m., or Sunday, December 16 at 2:00 p.m., located at 1307 Seventh Street in LaSalle, IL \$30 per person (\$25 before 12/4). Reservations are required. Call 815.224.5895, or visit www.hegelercarus.org.

The stately Hegeler Carus Mansion, a recipient of National Historic Landmark status, is also on the National Register of Historic Places. Virtually unaltered since its completion more than a century ago, the Mansion is at once a family home, an example of high artistic achievement in architecture and interior design, and the site of historic accomplishments in industry, philosophy, publishing and religion. Visitors today experience the grandeur of a bygone era and the heritage of a fascinating family whose history is woven tightly with that of the Illinois Valley and the United States, as well as internationally. The Mansion is open for tours year round Wednesdays - Sunday on the hour: Noon, 1:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

This Architectural Gem is an Important Piece of History. As well as co-founding what was to become the largest zinc smelting operation in the United States, Edward Hegeler launched Open Court Publishing to foster the discussion of philosophy, science, and religion. He and his wife, Camilla Weisbach Hegeler, commissioned W. W. Boyington to design their 57 room Mansion and employed August Fiedler to design its interior. Boyington also designed Water Tower Place in Chicago and the Joliet Correctional Center.

Starved Rock New Guided Winter Hikes on Winter Weekends, and Historic Trolley Tours on Sundays in December

Nature lovers and those interested in one of the State's most scenic wintertime vistas are encouraged to consider heading to Illinois' Fan Favorite, Starved Rock State Park in Utica. The Park and Starved Rock Lodge are now offering new Guided Winter Hikes on Weekends from December thru March, as well as Historic Trolley Tours on Sundays in December.

Starved Rock State Park's new Guided Winter Hikes are offered every weekend from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., where guests are asked to meet in Lodge Lobby at 10:45 a.m.). The Guided tours are \$12 per person. The 4.5 mile winter hikes are new this year and include the possibility of frozen waterfalls, snow-covered canyons and eagles in flight along the path from the Lodge to LaSalle Canyon, plus incredible views of the scenic Illinois River Valley. Come prepared for the weather; dress in layers with traction devices for shoes, hats, gloves or mittens and water bottles.

In the event of ice and snow, YAKTRAX are recommended for extra traction. Included are a homemade granola bar, bottled water, "Starved Rock" backpack and voucher for small hot chocolate or coffee at the Starved Rock Cafe upon your return. Advance reservations are required.

Historic Trolley Tours are available on Sundays in December, at Noon and 1:30 p.m. for \$12 per person; \$10 for persons over 60. Those interested in Historic Trolley Tours can board a trolley outside of the Great Hall area of the Starved Rock Lodge. Enjoy a historic trolley ride with stops at the Starved Rock State Park Visitor Center, where you will see a short video of the area. You will also travel to the Illinois Waterway Visitor Center where you will see Starved Rock from across the river and watch as the river traffic lock through the locks. You will also travel through the village of Utica and hear about the Illinois and Michigan Canal. While aboard, the driver will narrate the history and legends of the area.

Both the Hegeler Carus Mansion and Starved Rock State Park and Lodge are two of the nearly 200 member partners of the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). Covering more than 90 miles along the historic Illinois & Michigan Canal, the Heritage Corridor stretches from the Chicago Portage region thru Bolingbrook and Romeoville, Lemont, Lockport and Joliet, into Wilmington, the greater Morris area, beyond LaSalle County into Putnam County. For more information about the Heritage Corridor CVB and its members, log onto its website at www.HeritageCorridorCVB.com, or call (800) 926.CANAL (2262).

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