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**THE CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM CELEBRATES THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration to kick off in 2009 with support of Exelon

CHICAGO (October 21, 2008) – The year 2009 marks the bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States of America. The Chicago History Museum is proud to play a major role in presenting a year-long celebration of his life highlighting his historic contributions to America. The Museum’s celebration will begin on his birthday, February 12, 2009, and conclude on President’s Day, February 15, 2010 with exhibitions and programming throughout the year.

The programs and exhibitions throughout the celebratory year will engage visitors to explore the qualities that make Lincoln familiar and meaningful for Americans today. Programming will include holiday celebrations, lectures, and tours, many of which will be enhanced through partnerships with organizations such as the Chicago Bar Association, Seventh Circuit Bar Association, Chicago Public Library, The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, and the National Museum of Mexican Art. “Our leadership in city-wide efforts will help to make Chicago one of the most important national sites for celebrating the Lincoln Bicentennial,” stated Gary T. Johnson, Chicago History Museum president.

On February 12, 2009 the Museum will kick-off the bicentennial celebration with a day of Lincoln-inspired activities and the opening of the exhibition, *Lincoln Treasures*. The Chicago History Museum holds one of the foremost collections on Abraham Lincoln in the United States. *Lincoln Treasures* will highlight key artifacts and documents from the Museum’s Lincoln collection that will rekindle visitors’ emotions and excite memories about the man and his legacy. “We want to use our collection to build on the existing knowledge and interest in who Lincoln was in a way that is relevant to people today,” said Johnson. The exhibition will run from February 12 through August 16, 2009.

The second exhibition on Abraham Lincoln, opening October 10, 2009 is *Abraham Lincoln Transformed*. This exhibition will explore the 16th president’s changing views on slavery and the Union, which ultimately liberated four

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million African American slaves and transformed his life and the nation. Lincoln's posthumous role as an American icon will also be addressed. *Abraham Lincoln Transformed* will showcase more than two hundred artifacts from our collection and will close on April 4, 2010.

The Museum will not only present a new, broader perspective on Lincoln, but will also examine one of Lincoln's contemporaries, Benito Juárez. This exhibition, *Benito Juárez and the Making of Modern Mexico*, is co-curated with the National Museum of Mexican Art and will be on display from October 10, 2009 through April 4, 2010. The first civilian president of Mexico from 1858-72; Juárez was devoted to making Mexico a modern Republic with just laws, equal citizenship rights, and economic development. The two leaders had many similarities – they dealt with national crises, sparked controversy during their lifetimes, and became larger-than-life national heroes after death. “Looking at history from a global perspective, both men played a critical, transformative role that respectively changed the United States and Mexico into modern nations,” stated Olivia Mahoney, chief curator of the Chicago History Museum.

An exhibition opening on July 4, 2009 in the KPMG and Katherine and Paul Snyder Community Gallery will look at the Lincoln Park neighborhood. The Museum will offer neighborhood walking tours through Lincoln Park to compliment this exhibition.

To help connect Lincoln's legacy to high school students, the Museum will facilitate a Teen Council that will be comprised of students from three Chicago Public High Schools. Five 10th and 11th grade students from each school will conduct research; serve as a liaison between their school, community, and the Museum; and develop a joint project with a media component to compliment the exhibitions. In fall of 2009, the Museum will offer an educator open house that will introduce the exhibition and curriculum resources for the classroom. Invitations will be sent to principals and teachers in the neighborhoods of Mid-South, Pilsen, and Austin to ensure awareness of the exhibitions. The Museum will also offer student and teacher workshops exploring the historic and contemporary symbolism and meanings of Lincoln monuments.

Chicago-based Exelon is the presenting sponsor of the Lincoln Bicentennial celebration. “Exelon is pleased to be the presenting sponsor of Chicago's Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration. I am especially proud of the leadership of the Chicago History Museum in celebrating the achievements and legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

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It is an opportune time to reflect on the blueprint left by one of our country's greatest presidents," said John W. Rowe, chairman and CEO of Exelon and board chair of the Chicago Historical Society.

In the last five years, Exelon's corporate citizenship program, "Energy for the Community," has donated nearly \$115 million to charitable organizations like the Chicago History Museum. That commitment has helped Exelon earn recognition as one of the nation's "most admired" electric and gas utilities by FORTUNE magazine. One of the company's highest priorities in community involvement is to encourage and support the development of educational and environmental opportunities in the communities it serves.

Additional support has been provided by the Crown Family and Gordon and Carole Segal. The Museum thanks the Motorola Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, The Chicago Community Trust, Joyce Foundation, The Guild of the Chicago Historical Society, and American Airlines for their support of this celebration.

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The Chicago History Museum, a major museum and research center for Chicago and American history, is located at 1601 N. Clark Street. The Museum can be reached by CTA buses 11, 22, 36, 72, 151, and 156. Parking is conveniently located one block north of the Museum at Clark and LaSalle Streets (enter on Stockton Drive). Admission to the Museum is \$14 adults with audio tour, \$12 seniors/students with audio tour, free for children 12 years and younger. General Admission is free on Mondays. Please call 312.642.4600 or visit us at www.chicagohistory.org. The Chicago History Museum is affiliated with the Chicago Historical Society and acknowledges the Chicago Park District's generous support of all the Museum's activities.