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**LAKEVIEW AND PRM CEO TO SERVE ON
SMITHSONIAN COUNCIL**

Appointment gives museum greater access to collections

Lakeview and Peoria Riverfront Museum President and CEO James Richerson has been elected to serve on the inaugural Smithsonian Affiliations Advisory Council—an appointment that will give Lakeview Museum and the future Peoria Riverfront Museum greater access to the Smithsonian Institution's vast collection of artifacts.

"I'm very pleased to have been asked," Richerson said. "Out of over 100 Affiliates, they picked me. I hope I represent the Midwest well."

Director of Smithsonian Affiliations Harold Closter said the Advisory Council is a good way to measure the Affiliates program and improve it. "The Council will be giving us advice and feedback on how the Affiliations program is performing and it will help us plan for the future," he said.

According to Closter, the Council is made up of just 10 representatives chosen from over 160 Smithsonian Affiliates. Members were chosen for leadership in the museum field and active participation in the Affiliates program.

"Jim is a proven leader in the museum field in America in general," Closter said. "He has been a very active and thoughtful participant in the program and he's done quite a lot to bring the Smithsonian to Peoria."

Lakeview has been a Smithsonian Affiliate since August 2000. Attaining such an affiliation was one of Richerson's first initiatives when he took over the helm of the museum earlier that year. The program gives the museum access to the nation's largest collection of artifacts and other historical items.

One of Richerson's initial ideas for the Council is a traveling "Smithsonian sampler," a collection of items from each of the 16 Smithsonian museums that would showcase the American story and the artifacts the Institution has collected.

"We could connect it with some social media, have people vote on the coolest object or favorite artifact, and then end the traveling exhibition with a big show in Washington," Richerson said.

Richerson said the biggest advantage his appointment will bring is increased access and awareness of the Smithsonian's collection. "It positions the museum to have greater access to the

America's most prominent collection," he said. "There are over 137 million artifacts in the Smithsonian collection, and having a seat increases my knowledge of what's out there and our ability to tap that collection."

One example of this advantage is the Peoria Falcon, a Native American copper carving the Smithsonian received 150 years ago. After becoming an Affiliate, Richerson was able to go to the Smithsonian and bring that piece of Peoria history back to the city.

Although the Institution had basic information on the Falcon, Lakeview was able to further research this important object and share that information with the Smithsonian.

"It helps Peoria realize that we're part of a global picture," Richerson said. "You have this phenomenal collection, and the whole reason behind the Affiliates is that this is the collection of the people and it needs to be seen outside of Washington."

Richerson's appointment to the Advisory Council isn't just a feather in Peoria's cap; it's a real chance for Peoria to get greater access to America's most prominent collection of historical artifacts and bring more of it to the people of central Illinois.

The Peoria Riverfront Museum is a collaborative effort of Lakeview Museum of Arts & Sciences, Peoria Historical Society, Illinois High School Association (IHSA), African American Hall of Fame Museum, Peoria Regional Museum Society, The Nature Conservancy, Heartland Foundation and Caterpillar Inc. Features include a giant screen digital theater; state-of-the-art planetarium; Illinois River exhibit; Peoria history gallery; children's Discovery Worlds; galleries for fine arts, folk art and international features; and the IHSA Peak Performance Center.

The Smithsonian Institution is a museum and research complex of 19 museums and galleries and the National Zoological Park, as well as research facilities. The total number of objects, works of art and specimens at the Smithsonian is estimated at nearly 137 million, including more than 126 million specimens and artifacts at the National Museum of Natural History. Through the Smithsonian Affiliations program, the institution shares its vast collections and expertise with museum-goers around the country. There are more than 165 affiliates in 41 states, Panama and Puerto Rico.

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