

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

525 Arch Street | Independence Mall
Philadelphia | PA 19106 | T 215 409 6600 | F 215 409 6650
www.constitutioncenter.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Emily Murray
Public Relations Coordinator
215.409.6693

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER KICKS OFF WEEK- LONG CELEBRATION WITH “AMERICA READS THE CONSTITUTION,” DEBUT OF *AMERICAN NATIONAL TREE BOOK*

Philadelphia, PA (September 15, 2004) – In commemoration of the 217th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, the National Constitution Center on Independence Mall will host a week-long celebration of our nation’s founding document during Constitution Week, September 17- 23. The week will feature a variety of activities and programs for visitors of all ages, which are being sponsored by a grant from AT&T.

Constitution Week commences on Constitution Day, Sept 17, at 10:30 a.m. with “America Reads the Constitution,” a public reading of the Constitution from its stirring first words “We the People” to the last word of the 27th amendment (“intervened”). This is the inaugural year of what will become an annual event. The reading will include up to 100 local and national figures, including State Senator Vincent J. Fumo, Judges Dolores Sloviter and Michael Chertoff of the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals, City Councilman Frank DiCicco, Marty Moss-Coane of WHYY’s “Radio Times,” as well as “We the People:” museum visitors, a fireman, a nurse, a teacher, and more.

“Each day during Constitution Week, the Center is featuring an array of programs that celebrate the freedoms the Constitution has given us over the last 200 years,” said the Center President & CEO Richard Stengel. “But, Constitution Week also reminds us that those freedoms rest on our responsibilities as citizens under the Constitution – to vote, to serve on juries, to voice our opinions and make a difference in our country.”

-MORE-

ADD ONE/CONSTITUTION WEEK RELEASE

"The Constitution Center is a national treasure that brings to life our nation's founding document -- not just during Constitution Week but throughout the year," said J. Michael Schweder, president of AT&T-Pennsylvania. "People from around the world strive to learn more about and celebrate the document that ensures liberty and freedom for all Americans. AT&T is proud to be part of the celebration of the document that's the foundation of our nation."

Constitution Day also marks the debut of *The American National Tree*, a book based on the exhibit in the Richard and Helen DeVos Exhibit Hall at the National Constitution Center. The book, which features the stories of Americans who influenced the Constitution, was made possible by a gift from Ed and Margaret Satell. Each unique story relates the ways in which people from all backgrounds and of all ages have had a profound effect on the Constitution, reflecting and embodying tolerance, diversity and opportunity. In addition to chronicling such familiar lives as baseball-great Jackie Robinson's and evangelical minister Billy Graham's, *The American National Tree* also recounts the stories of lesser known, but equally significant, Americans whose dedication, perseverance, and ambition have shaped the nation and how the Constitution is interpreted.

"We as Americans are unique in that we are united not by a common religion, ethnicity, or homeland, but by one Constitution and a shared concept of freedom," said Satell, President of Progressive Business Publications in Malvern. "The *American National Tree* book relates this principle by identifying sixty individuals whose roots come from around the world, but whose stories and contributions are uniquely American."

Visitors can purchase *The American National Tree* book at the Museum Store or online at the Center's website at www.constitutioncenter.org.

-MORE-

ADD TWO/CONSTITUTION WEEK RELEASE

A press conference will be held on Friday, September 17, at 10 a.m. in the Grand Hall Lobby of the National Constitution Center to kick off Constitution Week. "America Reads the Constitution" will follow at 10:30 a.m.

For more information about Constitution Week and a complete listing of programs, log on to www.constitutioncenter.org, or call 215.409.6600.

About AT&T

For more than 125 years, AT&T (NYSE "T") has been known for unparalleled quality and reliability in communications. Backed by the research and development capabilities of AT&T Labs, the company is a global leader in local, long distance, Internet and transaction-based voice and data services.

About the National Constitution Center

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established by Congress in 1988 to increase understanding of the U.S. Constitution and its relevance to the daily lives of Americans. It is the first museum devoted to dramatically telling the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present day through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibit components, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts. The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education and debates; and as a home for visiting scholars and experts. The National Constitution Center is the first museum in the country designated as a member of the National Archives Experience Alliance Initiative. For more information, please call 215.409.6600 or visit the Center's Web site at www.constitutioncenter.org.

###