

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER AWARDED INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES GRANT FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT *Grant Will Support Franklin Exhibit Programs*

Philadelphia, PA (August 19, 2005) - The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has awarded a grant to the National Constitution Center for outstanding achievement in the category of Museums for America. This grant, in the amount of \$150,000, will be used to support programs being implemented during the world premiere showing of the international traveling exhibition "*Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World*" at the National Constitution Center from December 15, 2005 through April 30, 2006.

The Museum for America grant is given in support of the role of museums, like the National Constitution Center, serving the public more effectively by continuing high priority activities, research, programs, and technological advances while continuing to celebrate culture, heritage, and life-long learning.

The IMLS grant will help the Center to implement the following programs: a volunteer fair celebrating volunteerism as a valuable part of civic participation; a symposium on "blogging" and other popular forms of self-expression in recognition of the important role of Poor Richard's Almanac in Franklin's day; workshops for regional high school teachers using Franklin as a laboratory for studying civic leadership; and a nationwide web contest that calls for middle school students to nominate a modern-day Benjamin Franklin.

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“Museums for America grants help museums position themselves to play a vital role in the development of strong learning communities,” said the Institute’s Acting Director Mary Chute. “The museums will match the federal dollars to fund educational and cultural exhibits, digitize and integrate collections for greater access, work with schools to develop curricula and programs, and conduct research that will encourage civic participation, build 21st century skills, invest in our youth, and reach out to seniors. The grants are investments in museums and in America.”

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent Federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities. This year, the IMLS received 543 applications requesting over \$50 million dollars, and was able to award 169 grants totaling \$16.8 million. As IMLS’ largest grant program, Museums for America provides more than \$16 million in grants to support the role of museums in American society. Museums for America grants strengthen the ability of museums to serve the public more effectively by supporting high-priority activities that advance the institution’s mission and strategic goals. The flexible grants can be used by a museum for ongoing activities, research, planning and behind-the-scenes work, new programs, the purchase of equipment or services, or technology upgrades to improve overall institutional effectiveness.

Located at 525 Arch Street on Philadelphia’s historic Independence Mall, the National Constitution Center is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and its relevance to Americans’ daily lives. Opened on July 4, 2003, the museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, “Freedom Rising”. The Center is open seven days a week, and admission is \$9 for adults and \$7 for seniors ages 62 and up, and children ages 4-12. Tickets for the *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World* exhibition, which also includes regular museum admission, are \$14 for adults; \$12 for children ages 4-12, seniors, and college students; and \$8.50 for groups of 20 or more. For more information, call 215.409.6600 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World is the centerpiece of *Ben Franklin 300 Philadelphia*, a year-long celebration of Benjamin Franklin's 300th birthday in Philadelphia and Its Countryside™. The celebration is led by the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary, a non-profit organization supported by a lead grant of \$4 million from The Pew Charitable Trusts and established to reaffirm Franklin's enduring legacy in his 300th birthday year. For more information about the exhibition, related programs and traveling to Philadelphia, visit www.gophila.com/ben.

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