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**LT. GOVERNOR MITCH LANDRIEU AND LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM
BOARD PRESENT REPORT ON THE MUSEUM'S GOVERNANCE AND
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT**

New Orleans, LA – Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu and the Louisiana State Museum Board of Directors unveiled the study *Louisiana State Museum Governance Opportunities* which evaluates the Museum's current governance structure. The report, commissioned by the Office of Lt. Governor and Louisiana State Museum, is part of the overall transformation project designed to create a more efficient and entrepreneurial Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

In January 2004, Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu vowed to make the Office of Lt. Governor and the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism a model for a new way of doing business in Louisiana. After an extensive national search, David Kahn was appointed as the Museum's new director in 2005. The LSM has commissioned audience research to help in the creation of a master plan for exhibitions in the French Quarter. A major exhibition about Hurricane Katrina and its impact on the state is currently being developed in addition to traveling exhibitions such as *Gold*, currently on view at the Old U.S. Mint. Facilities have also been enhanced such as the LSM branch in Patterson where a new interactive and multimedia aviation exhibition is scheduled to open in early 2008.

"I am committed to transforming the State Museum into a world-class institution that attracts national and international visitors and tells the story of Louisiana's rich history for our people," said Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu. "We will implement the best practices of the nation's leading museums to make our Museum one of the most efficient and entrepreneurial cultural organizations in the country."

Two firms were retained to carry out the study: ConsultEcon of Cambridge, Massachusetts and Museum Management Consultants of San Francisco, California. The LSM's Strategic Planning Committee composed of board members from the LSM, the Louisiana Museum Foundation, and Friends of the Cabildo, oversaw the project.

Angèle Davis, Secretary of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism worked closely with the committee and its evaluation. "We asked for an evaluation of LSM's current governance structure, research regarding national best practices and a comparison of peer state systems, including successful public-private partnerships. Based on the research, it is clear that our system is under-

funded and under-staffed as compared to our peers. The research supports our goal of pursuing a public-private partnership within an improved governance model."

The evaluation included assessing the LSM's current governance structure and the major issues it currently faces; researching and evaluating the governance experience and related issues of comparable organizations nationally; and making recommendations on the Museum's governance structure that would best support leadership's goal of achieving a true public-private partnership to better achieve the Museum's mission.

The study is based on comparisons of LSM's performance to that of peer state museum systems around the country. In-depth case studies of six state museums were conducted as well as a review of 15 other state museums. The reports finds "Louisiana has a comparable population base, a strong tourism profile and state history and culture that are at least as interesting and important as its peers. However, while having a comparable number of sites, LSM has had fewer attendees and students served, lower operating budgets and fewer employees... operating as a government agency has diminished their ability to compete successfully for attendance, gifts and grants, volunteers, donated artifacts and in providing optimum experiences for users."

A key recommendation is the creation of a public-private partnership to govern, fund and operate the Louisiana State Museum. Other recommendations include aligning authority with responsibility, maintaining state ownership of sites and artifacts, continuing the multi-site system, and the development of a strategic operating plan.

Benefits of a trustee partnership cited by peer institutions include enhanced communication, mutual respect and trust between the public and private sectors, business-like operation and adequate funding, independent operation of the museum system, oversight and authority in an independent board; and executive director who has the flexibility to operate in a private sector environment.

"The Louisiana State Museum has great potential," said Andy Rinker, Chairman of the Board, "However, the Museum's dependence on the state government has discouraged private support and innovative initiatives. The board and I are committed to fostering a better Museum system and raising the much needed private capital."

Public meetings will be held around the state for comments and feedback on the report's recommendations. The full report is available online at <http://lsm.crt.state.la.us>.

The Louisiana State Museum, a complex of national landmarks housing thousands of artifacts and works of art reflecting Louisiana's legacy of historic events and cultural diversity, is part of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, which is overseen by Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu. The Museum network includes five properties in the famous French Quarter: the Cabildo, Presbytere, 1850 House, Old U.S. Mint and Madame John's Legacy. Other sites include Baton Rouge, Patterson, Natchitoches, and Thibodaux.

For more information about the Louisiana State Museum please call 800.568.6968 or visit <http://lsm.crt.state.la.us>.

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