

**Illinois State Museum  
502 S. Spring Street  
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[www.museum.state.il.us](http://www.museum.state.il.us)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM RECEIVES  
HIGHEST NATIONAL RECOGNITION**  
Awarded re-accreditation from the American  
Association of Museums

Springfield, Illinois — The Illinois State Museum has received its fourth accreditation by the American Association of Museums (AAM), the highest national recognition afforded the nation's museums. Ford Bell, AAM President, presented Museum Director Bonnie Styles,

Board Chairman R-Lou Barker, and Museum Society Board Chairman Mary Jo Potter with the accreditation certificate at a special legislative reception for Illinois Museum Day at the Illinois State Museum in Springfield on March 24. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, to governments, funders, outside agencies, and to the museum-going public. The rigorous accreditation process examines all aspects of a museum's operations and includes an intensive, year-long self study, a site visit by a team of peer reviewers, and a final review by the AAM Accreditation Commission. All museums must undergo a reaccreditation review at least every 10 years to maintain accredited status. Accreditation is an elite status for museums. Only 24 of the over 1,000 Illinois museums are accredited, and only about 775 of the approximately 17,500 museums across the country are accredited.

The Illinois State Museum was accredited as a museum system in recognition of its outstanding public museum facilities across the State. The Illinois State Museum has six facilities including the Illinois State Museum and Research and Collections Center in Springfield, Dickson Mounds Museum in Lewistown, the ISM Chicago Gallery and Illinois Artisans Shop in Chicago, the Lockport Gallery in Lockport, and the Southern Illinois Art and Artisans Center in Whittington.



L-R Ford Bell, AAM President; Bonnie Styles, ISM Director, R-Lou Barker ISM Board Chair, Mary Jo Potter ISM Society Board Chair.

Through its exhibitions, programs, and other educational resources, including a content-rich Web site ([www.museum.state.il.us](http://www.museum.state.il.us)), the Illinois State Museum facilitates exploration of the land, life, people, and art of Illinois.

In a recent letter to Dr. Styles, Ford Bell commented “Through your participation in the accreditation process, you demonstrate that you, your staff, and Trustees are publicly committed to upholding and sustaining the highest standards and practices in the museum community. You are a leader in the field in providing the best possible museum services and experiences, reminding both your peers and the public how much museums really matter to communities.”

Founded on May 25, 1877, the Illinois State Museum is a dynamic and stellar institution that has long played a leadership role in the state and the nation. The American Association of Museums first accredited the Illinois State Museum in 1971, making it one of the first museums in the country to hold this status. The Visiting Committee report for the current accreditation concluded that “The Illinois State Museum is a well-run institution that is clearly meeting its mission: The Illinois State Museum promotes discovery, lifelong learning, and stewardship of the natural and cultural heritage of Illinois. The Museum integrates its original research to advance knowledge and create thought-provoking exhibitions, programs, and resources. These offerings engage people of all ages in their own discovery and lifelong learning about the natural and cultural heritage of Illinois and its place within the world.”

**Opportunities for Interviews:**

Dr. Bonnie Styles, Director of the Illinois State Museum (see contact information above), and Ford Bell, AAM President, are available for interview. To arrange an interview with Ford Bell, please contact Dewey Blanton, Media Relations, American Association of Museums, Tel: 202-218-7704, E-mail: [dblanton@aam-us.org](mailto:dblanton@aam-us.org).

*High resolution image available on request.*