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Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village Opens New Season on May 3 *-The National Historic Landmark welcomed a near-record crowd in 2013-*

PITTSBURGH, April 30, 2014 – Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, the oldest site of human habitation in North America, will kick off its 2014 season this Sat., May 3, at noon.

Meadowcroft, part of the Senator John Heinz History Center's museum system, was recently named one of the "Five Great Places to See Evidence of First Americans" by Smithsonian magazine. The site has become an international destination and last season, nearly set an attendance record with over 17,000 visitors from 41 U.S. states and 17 countries.

The National Historic Landmark, located in Avella, Pa. in Washington County, features a massive, 16,000-year-old rock overhang used by the region's earliest inhabitants for shelter.

Traveling forward through time, Meadowcroft offers visitors the chance to experience what everyday life was like for Upper Ohio Valley inhabitants over the past 400 years.

Visitors to the 16th century Eastern Woodland Indian Village can step inside a wigwam, pound corn into meal, or try their hand at throwing the atlatl, a spear thrower used by prehistoric hunters.

Two new 1770s era structures help to spotlight the similarities and differences between the everyday lives of European settlers and American Indians in the Upper Ohio Valley. An open-sided log shelter represents the initial home and trading post of European settlers, while a log cabin shows how late 18th century American Indian families adopted European building techniques.

The Historic Village recreates all of the charming qualities of an Upper Ohio Valley Village from the mid-19th century. Visitors will come face-to-face with elements of everyday family life, such as watching a blacksmith forge red-hot iron or enjoying a lesson in a one-room schoolhouse.

In addition to experiencing 16,000 years of history at Meadowcroft, a variety of special events highlight the 2014 schedule:

- **Season Opening, May 3:** Enjoy opening day at Meadowcroft and be among the first visitors to enjoy the Rockshelter and historic villages this season.
- **Atlatl Competition, June 21:** Visitors can try their hand using the atlatl, a spear-thrower used by prehistoric hunters. This contest, which is sanctioned by the World Atlatl Association, is open to all ages and is free to enter with Meadowcroft admission.

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- **Independence Day Celebration, July 4:** Meadowcroft will celebrate the spirit of 19th century rural America with old-fashioned summer games, open hearth cooking demonstrations, and a pie-eating contest on the Fourth of July.
- **Insider Tours of Meadowcroft Rockshelter:** On select dates throughout the 2014 season, visitors can enjoy exclusive Insider Tours with James M. Adovasio, Ph.D., who achieved international acclaim with his archeological excavation of the Rockshelter in 1973. Dr. Adovasio will present a lecture and lead a special tour of the site on June 28, Sept. 13, Oct. 11, and Nov. 8. For reservations, please contact Frances Skariot at 724-587-3412 or frskariot@heinzhistorycenter.org.
- **American Indian Heritage Weekend, Sept. 27-28:** Visitors exploring Meadowcroft's recreated Indian Village during this special weekend will encounter native artisans dressed like their ancestors as they demonstrate skills of everyday life. Visitors can also explore the interior of a wigwam, inspect carefully recreated prehistoric artifacts, learn about American Indian agriculture, and try their hand using an atlatl, a prehistoric spear thrower.

Later this summer, Meadowcroft will open a newly renovated gallery in the Miller Museum to the public, featuring a variety of vehicles from the 19th century, including a sleigh, buggy, hearse, and a Conestoga Wagon, along with artifacts from this important era in American transportation. Renovations to the Miller Museum are expected to be completed by June 2014.

Also planned for this summer is a special 19th century baseball game featuring rules and equipment from the deadball era that will be played on Meadowcroft's property. More details about the game will be released in the coming weeks.

Throughout May, Meadowcroft is open Saturdays, noon to 5 p.m. and Sundays, 1-5 p.m. From Memorial Day through Labor Day, Meadowcroft is open Wed.-Sat., noon to 5 p.m., and on Sundays from 1-5 p.m. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$11 for senior citizens, and \$6 for children ages 6-17. Children under 6 and History Center members get in free.

For more information on Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, please visit www.heinzhistorycenter.org and click on the Meadowcroft tab or call 724-587-3412.

Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village operates in association with the Senator John Heinz History Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian in Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania's largest history museum. Meadowcroft, a National Historic Landmark, is the oldest site of human habitation in North America and features a massive, 16,000-year-old rock overhang used by the region's earliest inhabitants for shelter. Meadowcroft's 19th century village features a covered bridge, one-room schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, church, and two log houses that create a charming country village setting. The 16th century Indian Village includes wigwams, recreated prehistoric artifacts, and hands-on activities related to American Indian agriculture. Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village is located in Avella, Pa., Washington County, within an hour's drive of Pittsburgh, Wheeling, W.Va., and Steubenville, Ohio. For more information, please visit www.heinzhistorycenter.org and click on the Meadowcroft tab.

Photos of Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village:



Meadowcroft Rockshelter is a National Historic Landmark and the oldest site of human habitation in North America.



At Meadowcroft's annual Atlatl Competition on June 21, visitors can try their hand using the atlatl, a spear-thrower used by prehistoric hunters. This contest is free to enter with Meadowcroft admission, for all ages, genders, and skill levels.



Visitors can explore Meadowcroft's recreated Indian Village and encounter native artisans demonstrating everyday life skills at the popular American Indian Heritage Weekend on Sept. 27-28.



This one room schoolhouse is part of Meadowcroft's Historic Village, which recreates all of the charming qualities of an Upper Ohio Valley Village from the mid-19th century.

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