FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2011

CONTACT:
Bonnie Styles (217) 782-7011
TTY: (217) 782-9175
director@museum.state.il.us

ISM’S NEW PLAY MUSEUM OPENS MARCH 26

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois State Museum will celebrate the grand opening of the Mary Ann MacLean Play Museum, an all-new children’s area for kids ages 3-10, on Saturday, March 26 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at 9:30 a.m. to officially open the new Play Museum.

The new, kid-friendly Play Museum is designed for children to learn through play what it is like to work at a museum. In the Play Museum children can excavate Mastodont bones, load a jeep for an expedition, crawl through a cave, touch animal skulls, frame and display art, explore fantastic objects in the collections and much more.

The entire museum will be full of exciting activities for the whole family during the grand opening celebration on March 26. Magicians, jugglers, face painters and storytellers will entertain children throughout the day. Brian "Fox" Ellis will help children create their own museum stories; Cathy Mosley will be telling animal tales; Troy and Eldon Roark will be roaming the museum performing great feats of juggling and magic. Visitors will have the opportunity to make a museum diorama, create a nature poster, participate in a time-travel matching game and contribute to a memory book commemorating the grand opening.

The Mary Ann MacLean Play Museum is a brand new, colorful and engaging space where children will be able to learn...and play. It is replacing the popular A Place for Discovery, which has served children and families for nearly 30 years. The new Play Museum encourages open-ended, multi-generational play and incorporates new approaches in education and medicine that recognize the importance of play to learning, health and well-being. It invites children to explore the natural and cultural world to provide a foundation for understanding and stewardship.

The Mary Ann MacLean Play Museum is made possible through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and generous contributions from individuals, businesses and foundations. The Play Museum is named as a tribute to Mettawa resident Mary Ann MacLean in recognition of her extraordinary contributions to the Illinois State Museum. During her 32 years of service on the
Illinois State Museum Board, she has challenged, inspired and opened many doors for the museum as a passionate advocate for the important role museums play in education.

-more-

303**11
The space previously dedicated to *A Place for Discovery* will become the *Mary Ann MacLean Resource Center*, which will have classroom space for hands-on educational programming and a public area with books and other educational resources for families to enjoy in conjunction with experiencing the *Play Museum*. In addition, thanks to support from Barry and Mary Ann MacLean, there will be a Mary Ann MacLean educator to sustain innovative educational programming and benefit current and future generations.

For more information on the *Play Museum*, contact Bonnie Styles at (217)782-5993. For details about the grand opening celebration, contact Elizabeth Bazan at (217) 782-5993 or ebazan@museum.state.il.us. More information is also available on the Illinois State Museum’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/IllinoisStateMuseum and Web site at www.museum.state.il.us.

The Illinois State Museum promotes discovery, learning and an appreciation of Illinois’ natural, cultural and artistic heritage. The museum’s extensive collections and research activities provide the foundation for exhibitions and public programs that tell the story of the land, life, people and art of Illinois. The Illinois State Museum is located at 502 S. Spring St. (corner of Spring and Edwards Streets) in Springfield and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, noon to 5:00 p.m. Sunday. The *Mary Ann MacLean Play Museum* will be open daily: Monday through Saturday 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. and Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m. Admission is free. Parking is available nearby, and the building is ADA accessible.

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”
– George Bernard Shaw

# # #