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**Tennessee Association of Museums Recognizes Excellence at the 2018 Conference**

*Nashville, TN ̶ March 28, 2018 ̶* The Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM) awards recognized outstanding projects and individual achievement at the recent statewide conference in West Tennessee. The awards ceremony took place on March 21 at the Latta Arts Center in Selmer, Tennessee. The TAM Awards of Excellence were presented to statewide museums for exceptional projects and events during 2017.

The purpose of the Excellence Awards is to recognize, encourage, and promote excellence within the activities of the Tennessee museum community. Nominations are made by museum staff and individuals and sent in January to the regional representative. Each entry is presented to the TAM Awards Committee which is composed of six regional representatives, three at-large representatives and the committee chair. The committee makes the final judging and decisions of awards. Awards are based on creativity, originality, resourcefulness, success, support of museum mission statement, and utilization of staff and volunteers.

“Each year TAM recognizes the projects and accomplishments achieved at Tennessee museums during the previous year. Regardless of staff size or budget, our museums are doing wonderful things that need to be recognized and applauded.” stated Tori Mason, Historic Site Manager at the Nashville Zoo, who served as this year’s chair of the TAM Awards Committee. She went on to say: “The awards committee was once again impressed with the creativity, resourcefulness and commitment shown in all of the nominations. Our museums are doing amazing things!

“We are very proud of the exhibitions, events and educational programming that our Tennessee museums are producing,” commented Ken Mayes, Deputy Director at the American Museum of Science & Energy, who serves as the current TAM president. “Our state is fortunate to have so many excellent museums and historic sites that are committed to providing exceptional presentations for visitors to enjoy.”

**Awards were presented to the following TAM members (categories determined by budget size):**

**Category 1 – ($50,000 or less)**

* Granville Museum / Historic Granville – 2 Excellence, 1 Commendation
* Monterey Depot Museum – 2 Commendation
* Tennessee Walking Horse National Museum – 1 Excellence, 1 Commendation
* West TN Regional Art Center- 1 Excellence

**Category 2 – ($50-200,000)**

* Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center / MTSU Public History Program – 2 Excellence
* Cookeville History Museum – 1 Excellence
* Greeneville Greene County History Museum – 1 Commendation
* Heritage Alliance – 1 Excellence
* Reece Museum – 1 Excellence
* Tipton County Museum, Veterans Memorial and Nature Center – 4 Excellence, 1 Commendation

**Category 3 – ($200-500,000)**

* Morton Museum of Collierville History – 2 Excellence, 1 Commendation

**Category 4 - $500,000 - $1 Million**

* Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center – 1 Commendation
* Patsy Cline Museum – 1 Commendation

**Category 5 - $1 Million and above**

* Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage – 1 Excellence
* Birthplace of Country Music Museum – 2 Excellence
* Customs House Museum and Cultural Center - 1 Commendation
* Discovery Center at Murfree Spring – 1 Excellence
* East Tennessee Historical Society – 3 Excellence
* Frist Center for the Visual Arts – 3 Excellence
* McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture – 1 Excellence
* Memphis Pink Palace Museum – 1 Excellence
* Tennessee State Museum – 3 Excellence, 2 Commendation
* Tennessee State Parks – 1 Commendation
* Adventure Science Center – 7 Excellence, 2 Commendation
* Metal Museum – 5 Excellence, 5 Commendation

**TAM also recognized the following volunteers for outstanding commitment:**

Category 1 – Liz Bennett – Historic Granville
Category 2 – Samuel Bowen – Museums of Tusculum, Greeneville
Category 2 – Gwen Dula – Museum of Biblical History, Collierville
Category 3 – Steve Cole – Morton Museum of Collierville History
Category 5 – Youth CR3W at ASC – Adventure Science Center, Nashville

**The following individuals were recognized as Emerging Museum Professionals:**

West TN:
Nur Abdalla, Memphis Pink Palace Museum
Lori Gipson, Metal Museum, Memphis

Middle TN:
Sharon Osofsky, Tennessee State Museum, Nashville

East TN:
Hannah Rexrode, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville

**The President’s Award (Best of Show)** was presented to the Cookeville History Museum, for the temporary exhibit,*Escape the Cookeville History Museum: An Exhibit for Kids.*

**About the Tennessee Association of Museums:**

Founded in 1960, the Tennessee Association of Museums fosters communication and cooperation between museums, cultural societies, and other members on matters of common interest to all. Our goal is to inform the public on the importance of understanding and preserving Tennessee's cultural, historical, and scientific heritage. We also encourage publication and dissemination of information on the state's past as well as the development of professional standards of members who bring that past to the public. The organization is currently comprised of 109 museums and historic sites from across the state.