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DELTA BLUES MUSEUM AWARDED
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES GRANT

Substantial funds will help Mississippi's first music museum expand exhibits

[CLARKSDALE, MS - 9 April 2018] **Delta Blues Museum is a recipient of a Public Humanities Implementation grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), awarding \$460,000 in outright funds to the Museum for implementation of its forthcoming exhibit expansion, as the Museum approaches its 40th anniversary year. The NEH award also includes funding for a two-year staff position in Public Humanities.**



Artist rendering of Delta Blues Museum's planned exhibit gallery

The grant will support the creation, fabrication and installation of the Museum's much-anticipated expanded permanent exhibits, designed by Louisville, Kentucky-based Solid Light, Inc. under supervision of Museum Director Shelley Ritter. *The Story of America's Music* exhibits will focus on the people whose music made great societal

changes possible, and the new exhibition will fill nearly 9,000 square feet. New exhibits will transform existing displays into interactive, immersive experiences that connect with a Blues figure and their role in the development of American music culture.

With NEH funding and the anticipation of matching funds from donors and other grantors, Ritter says, the project stands to reach completion by the Museum's 40th anniversary. *"As the world's first museum devoted entirely to the Blues, we have long sought to fully represent the artists at the heart of this important art form," Ritter says, adding, "With NEH funds to support exhibit expansion that includes multimedia displays, we will now be able to give fuller voice to the people behind the music."*

The Endowment awards grants to top-rated proposals examined by panels of independent, external reviewers. NEH grants typically go to cultural institutions, such as museums, archives, libraries, colleges, universities, public television, and radio stations, and to individual scholars. The agency is one of the largest funders of humanities programs in the United States. The Delta Blues Museum grant is one of 199 NEH grants (totaling \$18.6 million) nationwide announced here on Monday, April 9th: <https://www.neh.gov/news/press-release/2018-04-09>.

Delta Blues Museum Board of Directors chairman Jim Herring applauds Ritter's fundraising efforts and says this award comes at a crucial time for the Museum. *"With declining financial support from the city, county and state, and with limited fundraising resources besides, Delta Blues Museum remains dedicated to its mission to preserve the history and heritage of this beloved art form born here in the Delta. That the NEH recognizes the importance of our mission is clear, and their generous funding should send a message to all Mississippians: Delta Blues Museum deserves your support."*

For additional images or information about the Museum's planned exhibits, please contact Museum Director Shelley Ritter.

About the National Endowment for the Humanities

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: www.neh.gov.



About Delta Blues Museum

Established in 1979 by the Carnegie Public Library Board of Trustees and re-organized as a stand-alone museum in 1999, the Delta Blues Museum is Mississippi's oldest music museum and the world's first museum dedicated to the American art form known as the Blues. A 2013 recipient of the IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Services--the nation's highest honor for museum and library service to the community--and a 2014 winner of the National Arts & Humanities Youth Program Award, the Delta Blues Museum is dedicated to creating a welcoming place where visitors find meaning, value and perspective by exploring the history and heritage of the unique American musical art form, the Blues. The Museum is honored to be a Great River Road Interpretive Center.

The "Delta Blues Foundation" is a qualified 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that supports the work of Delta Blues Museum. All funds solicited through the Delta Blues Foundation are raised to benefit the Delta Blues Museum. On-line tax deductible contributions to the Delta Blues Foundation include the Deeper Roots program and the General Fund (a monetarily unrestricted contribution made to the foundation in support of the museum). Memberships and the Buy a Brick program are funded directly to the Delta Blues Museum and are not considered tax deductible.



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