



## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA DONATES \$75,000 TO NATIONAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

**Lake Charles, LA May 7, 2014** – The Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana announced a \$75,000 donation to the [National Hurricane Museum & Science Center](#) (NHMSC), dedicated to developing a first-of-its-kind national education initiative focusing on weather, water, and wetlands. This educational initiative will fully utilize new learning and communication technologies to reach learners across the country.

The National Hurricane Museum & Science Center (NHMSC) is dedicated to understanding hurricanes, investigating their scientific character, and demonstrating their impact on the lives and living systems and coastal resources at risk in their path. In addition to being a world-class educational facility located in Lake Charles, Louisiana, the NHMSC aspires to be a national educational force using severe weather and coastal restoration and protection as powerful motivational themes to teach math and science. The relevance and functional, real-world applications of this science and education content will motivate students to want to learn.

*Weather, water and wetlands* are subjects that will dominate national headlines and impact every Gulf and East coast community for decades to come. The themes of weather, water and wetlands have far-reaching relevance to scientific disciplines ranging from biology, meteorology, engineering, physics, and geography to medicine and sociology, and therefore can provide wide-ranging content and learning experiences.

“The Board of the Community Foundation is pleased to provide this grant from the Fund for the Future of the Gulf,” said Sara Judson, President/CEO of the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana.

“Hurricane education enables adults and children to make informed decisions about critical social, scientific, and economic issues and set the groundwork for permanent, positive change,” she continued. “This certainly supports our mission of connecting human and financial resources to effect permanent, positive culture change,” she added.

The NHMSC will be a hub in a national digital learning network, informing the public about the weather, water and wetlands issues that impact their lives every day. Through exhibitions, programs, symposia, webinars, mobile device applications, web sites, and social media, the NHMSC will be a forum bringing together scientists, technologists, and engineers with the public, creating a scientifically literate, engaged and activated citizenry.

“This gift from the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana is really an investment in a new way of digital learning, and will enable the NHMSC to reach millions of students all across the nation even before the physical doors open to the center," said Gray Stream, NHMSC Board Chairman. “In addition, having the support of our local community foundation and their parent organization, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, underscores the value of the NHMSC to this region and the nation.”

Today’s gift from the Community Foundation matches \$75,000 awarded by the Pinnacle Entertainment Foundation in 2012, also earmarked for the national educational initiative.

The NHMSC is expected to attract 220,000 visitors to Southwest Louisiana each year and have a \$63-million total annual economic impact. Visitors to [www.nhmsc.com](http://www.nhmsc.com) can learn more about the \$68-million facility and preview exhibits planned for the museum and science center. The website also features information on the origins and background of the project and videos of the iconic building design.

#### [About Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana \(www.foundationswla.org\)](http://www.foundationswla.org)

The Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana serves Calcasieu, Beauregard, Allen, Cameron and Jefferson Davis parishes, and its fund donors provide financial support for charitable, social, educational and human services programs.

The Community Foundation does two things. One, it connects generous fund donors who establish charitable funds at the Foundation with the causes they care about. Fund donors open accounts and receive tax deductions for investments in the accounts, then rely on the Foundation to manage their charitable dollars and make grants to nonprofits. Two, the Foundation takes on civic projects for improving the quality of life for everyone. The Foundation is working on a bike and pedestrian path across the proposed Contraband Bayou Bridge and has been the financial intermediary for projects like the rebuilding of Millennium Park and the 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Douglas B. Fournet statue at Veterans Memorial Park.

About NHMSC ([www.nhmsc.com](http://www.nhmsc.com))

The National Hurricane Museum & Science Center (a 501c-3 non-profit), as its name suggests, is a hybrid organization: part museum because it will chronicle the history and social meanings of hurricanes through collections and archives; and part science center because it will use interactive and immersive educational experiences to explore the science and impacts of hurricanes as powerful forces of nature. To be located on the waterfront of Lake Charles, Louisiana, this center will be an irresistible destination for the entire Gulf region. Utilizing the science of hurricanes, the NHMSC will work with K-12 schools to stimulate the learning of basic math and science. Through practical and engaging education, the NHMSC will tell the natural and social story of hurricanes and the wetlands environment while delivering memorable experiences to thousands of visitors. For more information visit [www.nhmsc.com](http://www.nhmsc.com).

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