



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Nicole Everhart, Marketing Team

319-362-8500

neverhart@ncsml.org

NCSML Kicks Off 50th Anniversary Year with dynamic weekend

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (April 24, 2024) – The year 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, a Smithsonian Affiliate, which will be recognized and celebrated all year long.

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library will host an Economic Summit, diplomats, a renowned Czech Opera vocalist, two exhibit openings and a gala next weekend while kicking off their 50th Anniversary Year celebration. These special events will provide a unique opportunity for community members to attend alongside national and international visitors to Cedar Rapids from May 2 - 4. The exhibits will be open throughout the fall and will be complemented by engaging events throughout the year.

Special guests include **Ambassador Radovan Javorcik, Slovak Ambassador** to the U.S. and top diplomatic officials from the Czech Embassy to the U.S.

“We are proud to present this extraordinary programming, giving leaders and Iowans the opportunity to take part in important conversations, reflect on their past, and learn about the future,” said President and CEO Cecilia Rokusek. “We are grateful for this community’s unwavering support for the last 50 years and we look forward to the many years ahead.”

Economic Summit, May 2-3

A unique forum for delegations from the USA, Czech Republic and Slovakia building on the consequences of modern history related to the period of WWI, WWII, 1968, 1989 and the recent times. This gathering will provide an opportunity to learn more about the present-day possibilities related to specific industry clusters, university research areas, topics of freedom, democracy and immigration in the concerned states and regions. The Economic Summit will be joined by other high level American, Czech and Slovak business leaders, university leaders, state policy makers, local policy makers, governmental representatives, politicians, artists, scholars

and educators visiting the area. Registration is required, please read more at <http://ncsml.org/event/economic-summit/2024-05-02/>.

Exhibit Opening: Alphonse Mucha: Master of Art Nouveau, Saturday, May 4, 10:00 a.m.

Back by popular demand, the Alphonse Mucha exhibit returns to Cedar Rapids with this dynamic art nouveau collection. Presented are 75 works including rare original lithographs and proofs, paintings, drawings, posters, books, and portfolios from the Dhawan Collection, one of the finest private collections of Mucha's works in the U.S. Mucha is most often remembered for the prominent role he played in shaping the aesthetics of French Art Nouveau at the turn of the 20th century. Don't miss this exhibit in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, from May 4 – September 1.

Exhibit Opening: Vaclav Havel From Dissident to President, Thursday, May 2, 5:00 p.m.

The exhibit chronicles pivotal moments in the life of Václav Havel as a pre-revolutionary dissident, playwright, and as the first President of the Czech Republic following the collapse of the communist regime after the Velvet Revolution of 1989.

Grand Opening: Furdek Special Collection, Friday, May 3, 5:30 p.m.

Join Ambassador Radovan Javorcik, Slovak Ambassador to the U.S., NCSML President & CEO Cecilia Rokusek, and others for the grand opening of the Furdek Special Collection in the Reverend Jankola Library. Light refreshments will be served.

The Furdek Special Collection is part of an NCSML acquisition of the **Reverend Matthew Jankola Library** based on the existing agreement between The Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Danville, PA, and the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, IA. Read more at <http://ncsml.org/event/furdek-special-collection-grand-opening/>.

Concert: An Evening of Opera with Ester Pavlu and Ahmad Hedar, Friday, May 3, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an evening of opera with Ester Pavlu and Ahmad Hedar to celebrate both the Year of Czech Music and 50 years of NCSML's rich history. **Cost:** Free with suggested donation of \$20.

Groundbreaking Ceremony: NCSML Clocktower Renovation, Friday, May 3, 1:00 p.m.

Join us for a groundbreaking ceremony near the NCSML clock tower to officially kick off its renovation. The renovated NCSML clock tower will incorporate an astronomical clock (orloj) from the Czech Republic and figurines made in Slovakia. This major tourist attraction for the entire historic and cultural district will uniquely share universal themes of culture, freedom, democracy, and immigration. The NCSML orloj will be modeled after the famous Prague orloj that is attached to the Old Town Hall in Prague, remaining the oldest functioning astronomical clock in the world dating back to the 15th century AD. Learn more at <https://ncsml.org/ncsml-orloj-clock-tower/>.

Saturday, May 3 is also First Free Saturday for Students. The museum and library are open daily, offering a variety of events, exhibits and group tours for school-aged and the public.

###

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, engages the global community with unique Czech, Slovak, and American stories to inspire individuals with universal themes of culture, freedom, democracy, and immigration. The NCSML is an innovative leader in lifelong learning, community building, and cultural connections. We encourage self-discovery for all ages so that the stories of freedom, identity, family, and community will live on for future generations.

The NCSML was accredited by the American Alliance of Museums in November of 2008. The NCSML became a Smithsonian Affiliate in 2019. For more information, visit **ncsml.org** or call (319) 362-8500.