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***HEADED TO THE WHITE HOUSE* EXHIBITION DEBUTS TODAY AT NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER**

Philadelphia, PA (September 17, 2008) – "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." Once every four years, the entire nation has the opportunity to get involved in a single act of citizenship, and then our newly elected president stands before us to declare this powerful oath. But what goes into the exhilarating, and sometimes bumpy, path to the presidency? Students and families now have the opportunity to connect with the excitement, pageantry, and importance of presidential elections with the new exhibition, ***Headed to the White House***, developed by the National Constitution Center. The 3,000 square foot exhibition debuted today, on Constitution Day, and will run through December 14, 2008.

"This exhibition is an engaging and provocative celebration of democracy and the power of 'We the People,'" says National Constitution Center President and CEO Joseph M. Torsella. "The National Constitution Center is dedicated to promoting active citizenship all year long, and *Headed to the White House* provides the perfect opportunity to get Americans discussing, debating, and deciding the future of our nation. It is our hope that families will talk about the election around the dinner table, that students will discuss the process with their fellow classmates, and that friends will engage in debate about the process and the issues at hand after seeing this exhibit."

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ADD ONE/HEADED TO THE WHITE HOUSE

Headed to the White House offers role-playing opportunities and uses multimedia and interactive experiences to convey the importance and excitement of America's fundamental rite. Visitors will learn about the electoral process, the issues and candidates in the 2008 race, and the fascinating history of presidential elections.

Guests will be engaged from the moment they cross the gallery threshold, as they start by viewing events from the 2008 campaign that happened here at the Center, including Barack Obama's speech on race in March, the Pennsylvania Democratic primary debate in April, and John McCain's Town Hall meeting in June. Included in this section is the original signed reading copy of Obama's historic address on race.

The exhibition begins with an overview that takes visitors through the history of elections and how they have changed over time. Three historic elections are featured: 1840 (Martin Van Buren vs. William H. Harrison), 1932 (Herbert Hoover vs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt), and 2008. The stories of these presidential contests are told through songs, slogans, and speeches. In this section, visitors can also see a towering collection of over 200 campaign buttons from throughout history.

The next stop in the exhibit, "You're in the Race," gives visitors an introduction to the players involved in the election process, from the presidential hopeful to the active citizen. Role-playing activity stations and computer interactives allow guests to play the part of a candidate, campaign manager, journalist, or engaged citizen, and place them on the campaign front to learn first-hand the roles and responsibilities of each. Visitors will have the opportunity to practice a presidential speech, star in a campaign commercial, create interview questions for the candidates, and share their opinions about which candidate they are supporting.

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ADD TWO/HEADED TO THE WHITE HOUSE

The next exhibit area, "The Race is On," takes visitors on the journey from primaries and caucuses and the national party conventions to Election Day. Visitors will experience how the official party candidates are chosen and will be given the opportunity to create their own party platform. Potential presidents will have the chance to stand at the podiums where Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama stood during the Pennsylvania Democratic primary debate at the National Constitution Center in April 2008. "The Race is On" also includes a recreation of the floor of a national convention and includes election information from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and the territories, as well as video footage from the recent 2008 Democratic and Republican National Conventions. This section concludes with a dynamic multimedia voting booth, where visitors can cast a vote before the polls close and see the results.

The visitor exhibit experience culminates with a section called "Hail to the Chief," which celebrates the triumph of reaching Inauguration Day. Visitors can stroll along the inaugural parade route featuring a history of presidential celebrations, ceremonies, and galas as they head to the White House and take a seat in the Oval Office, where they can have their picture taken.

After its run at the National Constitution Center, *Headed to the White House* is expected to travel around the country. The exhibit also includes an integrated package of curriculum material and a companion website.

To further augment the exhibition, the Center's education and public programming staff in the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach has developed a variety of resource materials, special programs, and family activities. Also in keeping with the Center's mission to foster discussion and citizen engagement, a variety of evening programs discussing presidential politics are planned.

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ADD THREE/HEADED TO THE WHITE HOUSE

Headed to the White House is \$15 for adults, \$14 for seniors ages 65 and up, and \$9 for children ages 4-12. Active military personnel and children ages 3 and under are free. Group rates are also available. Admission to the Center's main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, including the award-winning theater production "Freedom Rising", is included. For ticket information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

This is the second traveling exhibition created by the National Constitution Center. The Center's first exhibition was *Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War*, which premiered in June 2005 and is now traveling the country.

Headed to the White House is designed by Krent/Paffett/Carney Inc., a museum master-planning and exhibition design firm based in Boston. The project team includes museum consultant Janet Kamien, the exhibit developer and the Education and Exhibitions team at the National Constitution Center under Dr. Steve Frank, Vice President of Education and Exhibitions.

Headed to the White House is made possible through the generous support of The Annenberg Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and is sponsored locally by Pennoni Associates and Beneficial Bank.

CBS 3 is the official media partner for the exhibition. CBS 3 (KYW-TV) and The CW Philly 57 (WPSG-TV) are part of CBS Television Stations, a division of CBS Corporation.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a

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ADD FOUR/HEADED TO THE WHITE HOUSE

powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, “Freedom Rising”. The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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