

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Cedarhurst Receives Highest National Recognition
Awarded Re-Accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums**

MT. VERNON, IL April 7, 2026 – Cedarhurst Center for the Arts has again achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, the highest national recognition afforded to the nation’s museums. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, to governments, funders, outside agencies, and to the museum-going public. Cedarhurst has been accredited since 2016. All museums must undergo a reaccreditation review at least every 10 years to maintain accredited status.

“This is a wonderful achievement, well deserved by the staff and volunteers. They really set Cedarhurst apart,” said Susan Hughey, Chair of the Board of Trustees. “I was happy to see the AAM Commission spoke so highly of our people, as well as the role Cedarhurst plays in our community.”

Alliance Accreditation brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement. Developed and sustained by museum professionals for over fifty years, the Alliance’s museum accreditation program is the field’s primary vehicle for quality assurance, self-regulation, and public accountability. It strengthens the museum profession by promoting practices that enable leaders to make informed decisions, allocate resources wisely, and remain financially and ethically accountable to provide the best possible service to the public.

“Accreditation is a monumental achievement,” said Marilyn Jackson, AAM President & CEO. “The process demonstrates an institution’s commitment to best practice and is flexible enough to be accomplished by museums of any size.” Of the nation’s estimated 33,000 museums, roughly 1,100 are currently accredited.

“We know our commitment to excellence, but this shows the world,” said Executive Director Hillary Esser. “Accreditation puts us on the same level as the most prestigious institutions in the country - museums like the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C. and The Met in New York City. “Accreditation makes Cedarhurst a point of pride for our entire region.”

Accreditation is a very rigorous but highly rewarding process that examines all aspects of a museum's operations. To earn accreditation, a museum first must conduct a year of self-study, and then undergo a site visit by a team of peer reviewers. AAM's Accreditation Commission, an independent and autonomous body of museum professionals, considers the self-study and visiting committee report to determine whether a museum should receive accreditation. "The reaccreditation process was long and time-consuming, but we got a lot out of it," Esser said. "We know our infrastructure is solid and our leadership team is aligned, which is a wonderful place to be as we head into the Strategic planning process this year."

Cedarhurst is sharing highlights from the Accreditation Report through a weeklong social media campaign and inviting members to Sip, Stroll, and Celebrate at Cedarhurst from 11am to 1pm on Friday April 10.

About Cedarhurst Center for the Arts: Opening in 1973, the Mt. Vernon, IL museum and nonprofit celebrates the arts year-round with exciting visual/performing arts, galleries, outdoor sculptures, classes, music, and other special programming. It services the 40 most southern counties in Illinois through its mission to generate enthusiastic participation and support for the arts, and provide opportunities for enjoyment, increased awareness, understanding, and appreciation for the arts.

About the American Alliance of Museums

The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) is the only organization representing the entire museum field, from art and history museums to science centers and zoos. Since 1906, we have been championing museums through advocacy and providing museum professionals with the resources, knowledge, inspiration, and connections they need to move the field forward. For more information, visit aam-us.org.

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