



ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

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**Gov. Blagojevich names renowned history museum  
veteran as new Director of the Abraham Lincoln  
Presidential Library and Museum**

*Rick Beard brings years of museum leadership to  
America's newest and largest Presidential museum*

**Springfield, Ill.** Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today appointed renowned history museum veteran Rick Beard, former director of several major history museums and head of a nationwide Civil War Sesquicentennial observance effort, to be the new Director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM) in Springfield, Illinois.

"Rick Beard's impressive experience at museums in New York and Atlanta and at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery, as well as his national efforts to recognize the Civil War Sesquicentennial, make him a perfect fit for America's newest and largest Presidential Museum," said Gov. Blagojevich. "Over a year ago, we opened the Lincoln Presidential Museum, introducing Illinois' favorite son to the world. Hundreds of thousands of visitors from nearly every country have traveled to Springfield to meet Mr. Lincoln — a man born in modest surroundings who led our country through what was arguably its most turbulent period in history. It's now time for the Presidential Library and Museum, under Rick Beard's leadership, to enter its next important phase — preparing for the Lincoln Bicentennial in 2009 and the Civil War sesquicentennial shortly thereafter."

"I am thrilled that Governor Blagojevich has offered me the opportunity to lead the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. The trustees' vision of the institution as the national and international leader in telling the story of America's most essential president is one I embrace with great enthusiasm. I look forward to working with the excellent staff to build on the phenomenal success the museum and library has enjoyed since it opened," said Beard.

Beard is President of Civil War 150: The Sesquicentennial Initiative, a nationwide effort to mark the 150th anniversary of the Civil War from 2011 — 2015. He will retain this position while heading the ALPLM. He has been an independent consultant the past two years for museums and historical societies along the east coast and in the Midwest, including the Chicago History Museum Society. His previous museum experience includes:

- Chief Operating Officer of the New York Historical Society, 2002 — 2004. Negotiated the gift of the internationally celebrated Here is New York collection of 9-11 photography to the Society.
- Executive Director of the Atlanta Historical Society, 1992 — 2002. Oversaw the grand opening of the Atlanta History Museum that drew more than 12,000 visitors in two days. Raised over \$35 million for capital expansion and doubled institutional budget.
- Associate Director of the Museum of the City of New York, 1985 — 1992.
- Associate Director and Director of the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers, New York, 1982 — 1985.
- Design & Production, Inc., senior exhibit planner, 1981 — 1982.
- Coordinator, Yale University Center for American Art and Material Culture, 1977 — 1980.
- Research Historian, Office of Small Exhibits, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1974 — 1977.

Beard was recommended for the position by a seven-member search committee formed in March 2006 by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation. Gov. Blagojevich reviewed the committee's recommendation and named Beard to the position. Beard was also recommended by the committee to serve as the Foundation's new Executive Director, a position that would allow him to build upon the fund raising experience he has developed over his 30+ years of professional experience. Beard is currently in negotiations with the ALPL Foundation Board. The Foundation board will act on the issue at its winter meeting. Beard will assume his new duties for the state in November.

"Rick Beard is an accomplished fundraiser, as well as a first-rate museum professional," said Jim Edgar, former Illinois Governor and President of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation. "We look forward to working with him to take the Foundation to an international level of support."

Beard, 59, graduated with honors from Juniata College in 1969 with a degree in history. His post-graduate studies include a master's degree in 1972 and a Ph.D. in American Studies in 1981 from Emory University. He currently serves as a national council member for the American Association for State and Local History, and is also an active member of the American Association of Museums.

Beard is writing a book about the history of presidential campaigns. He has written, co-authored or edited numerous articles about social, political and medical history. Beard has also developed many museum exhibits during his career, including several about the American South, presidential campaign memorabilia and portraits of Abraham Lincoln that will serve him well in his new position.

Beard replaces Richard Norton Smith, who served as the Library and Museum's founding executive director from October 2003 to March 2006 and who coordinated the October 2004 Library and April 2005 Museum openings. State Historian Tom Schwartz has been serving as Interim Executive Director since Smith departed. Beard's appointment requires Senate confirmation.

Beard takes the helm of the nation's most successful Presidential Library and Museum complex. Nearly one million people have visited the downtown Springfield attraction since the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum was opened by Gov. Blagojevich and President George W. Bush on April 19, 2005. In addition, Beard will be an active member of the Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, which was formed

by Gov. Blagojevich earlier this year to plan the state's observance of Lincoln's 200th birthday, with the Library and Museum as the centerpiece.

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