



NEWS RELEASE

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REAL PEOPLE. REAL STORIES.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MUSEUM PRESENTS *FORCES OF NATURE*; SPECIAL EVENTS PLANNED

Public Opening: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Friday, March 21, 2008

Soft Opening and Media Preview – 5 p.m. Thursday, March 20, 2008

TOPEKA, KS—The Kansas Museum of History announced that the next exhibit in its Special Exhibits Gallery will be *Forces of Nature*. The exhibit runs March 21, 2008 – January 4, 2009.

- An exhibit opening event will be held from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Friday, March 21, 2008. This event will include:
 - drawings for giveaways
 - special exhibits in the Museum lobby
 - the debut of weather-related gift items in the Museum Store
 - free admission for those who bring weather photos for donation to the Museum (photos will be on display in lobby throughout the day)
- On Wednesday, March 26, 2008, the National Weather Service will sponsor storm spotter training at the Museum. This program is free and open to the public. The *Forces of Nature* exhibit will be open at no charge from 5 – 7 p.m. and storm spotter training will begin at 7 p.m. Bruce Jones with Midland Weather Radio will be present for radio giveaways.

The *Forces of Nature* exhibit tells the story of how Kansans, like most humans, have reacted to the extremes of climate by trying to control it. This is often unsuccessful, and in recent years many Kansans have begun adapting to nature rather than trying to force it to adapt to them.

The exhibit will be organized into four sections:

Wind: Kansas deservedly has a reputation as a windy state. From tornadoes to wind power, this section of the display deals with Kansans' efforts to cope with and control the wind. See some of the earliest tornado

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photographs on record, and learn how forecasting and storm predicting has reduced the human toll from these powerful events.

Earth: Early explorers called this part of the country the Great American Desert. Although the rainfall is inconsistent, the Plains nevertheless are a major source of this country's agricultural bounty. From drought to irrigation to conservation farming practices, we examine how Kansans have adapted to a dry climate.

Water: When it rains in Kansas, it often pours. This can create major problems, particularly in the spring when much of our rainfall occurs. At one time, people thought dams and reservoirs could eliminate floods, but now we're realizing wetland reserves play an important role, too.

Fire: Prairie fires originally were set by lightning or by Native Americans who understood fire was good for the prairie ecosystem. Then the land became settled and prairie fires too often destroyed crops and homes. Kansans increasingly understand that controlled burns are great for the grasslands.

The *Forces of Nature* exhibit will include a storm shelter and other interactive features and games, as well as many rare objects.

Visitors to the Museum can also tour the Main Gallery, which includes a Cheyenne tipi, a Wichita grass lodge, an 1880s steam locomotive, a biplane, and a 1950s diner.

The Kansas Museum of History is located at 6425 SW 6th Avenue. Hours are 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Tuesday – Saturday, and 1 – 5 p.m. Sunday. The Museum is closed on state holidays. Admission is \$5 adults, \$4 seniors, \$3 students. Kansas residents receive \$1 discount. Group rates are available with prior notice. KSHS members and children five and under admitted free. More information online at kshs.org.

The Kansas Historical Society does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs. The Historical Society requests prior notification to accommodate individuals with special needs or disabilities.