



DENHAM SPRINGS
Main Street
Historic Preservation Volunteers

NEWS RELEASE

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(full version)

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Smithsonian traveling exhibition coming to Denham Springs
Water's environmental and cultural impacts are explored through exhibits and events

From above, Earth appears as a water planet with more than 71 percent of its surface covered with this vital resource for life. Water impacts climate, agriculture, transportation, industry and more - plus it also inspires cultural aspects such as art and music.

The local Denham Springs Main Street volunteer organization, which provides exhibits for the museum in Denham Springs' Old City Hall, is very happy to announce that they are one of only a few museums in Louisiana chosen as a site for the Smithsonian's traveling exhibit, "Water/Ways," which will be in Denham Springs August 11 through September 22, 2018. This exhibit will examine water as an environmental necessity and an important cultural element as part of the Smithsonian's "Museum on Main Street" program.

"Water/Ways" explores the endless motion of the water cycle and water's effect on landscape and people's settlement, migration, culture and spirituality. It also looks at how political and economic factors have long affected control of water resources and how human creativity and resourcefulness provide new ways of protecting such resources, and renews respect for the natural environment.

The Main Street volunteers are adding a local aspect to the exhibit by including information about the devastating flood of August 2016. The group is asking people in Livingston Parish to submit their written flood stories, photographs, art and poems, as well as artifacts, which reflect their personal experiences of the flood. A form with instructions on how to share their flood experience is on the website www.denhamspringsmainstreet.org, and at Old City Hall, 115 Mattie St., Denham Springs. Items must be received by July 15, 2018.

The group is also inviting residents ages 16 and older to participate in the event by volunteering to be a docent (host/guide). You will receive docent training and will be asked to serve one or more shifts of 10am-1:30pm or 1:30-5pm on your choice of dates between August 11 and September 22,

2018. Scouts, clubs and civic organizations are encouraged to volunteer as a service project; friends or family may volunteer together. If you are interested in the docent program, please call Patricia Genre 225-933-2867, or email her at ppgenre@cox.net.

The exhibit is presented in cooperation with Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and will be on view at Old City Hall, 115 Mattie Street, Denham Springs, and will tour five other communities in Louisiana from June 23, 2018 through April 6, 2019.

“Water is an important part of everyone’s life and we are excited to explore what it means culturally, socially and spiritually in our own community,” said, Pat Genre, Project Director and Chairperson of Denham Springs Main Street. We want to convene conversations about water and have developed local exhibitions and public programs to compliment the Smithsonian exhibition.”

Free local events include:

- 8/11/18 – Meet and Greet with first responders, shelter workers, National Guard, Cajun Navy, Cajun Army, and all those who stepped up to rescue, house, feed, and comfort those flooded in the Great Flood of 2016. 10AM - 3PM, Old City Hall, Denham Springs.
- 8/18/18 – “Boat Building” – Presentation by Jules Lambert, a local expert on building pirogues and other primitive sinker-cypress boats common to South Louisiana. 11AM - 1PM, Old City Hall, Denham Springs.
- 8/23/18 – “Station 15” – A Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities film and public discussion about the Great Flood of 2016. 7PM - 8:30PM, Livingston Parish Library, DS/Walker Branch, 8101 US Hwy. 190, Denham Springs.
- 8/30/18 – “Diversions” – A Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities film and presentation by Dr. Craig Colten, LSU and Dietmar Rietschier, Amite River Basin Commission. River Control issues and solutions will be discussed along with Q & A from the audience. 7PM - 8:30 PM, Livingston Library, DS/Walker Branch, 8101 US Hwy 190, Denham Springs.
- 9/1/18 - Adin Putnam, author of “Rising Above – The Great Flood of 2016,” will give a presentation and discussion of his book. 1PM - 3PM, Livingston Parish Library, DS/Walker Branch, 8101 US Hwy. 190, Denham Springs, LA 70726

Main Street’s community partners for the “WaterWays” exhibit are: the City of Denham Springs, the Antiques Village Downtown Merchants Association, Louisiana Main Street, Denham Strong, Livingston Parish Tourism, Livingston Parish Library, Livingston Parish News, Livingston Business Journal, Amite River Basin Commission and the Arts Council of Livingston Parish. Sponsors are Cypress Park Storage and Five Star Printing & Signs. For more information about the local exhibit and activities in Denham Springs, visit www.denhamspringsmainstreet.org.

Designed for small-town museums, libraries, and cultural organizations, “Water/Ways” will serve as a community meeting place to initiate conversations about water’s impact on American culture. With the support and guidance of state humanities councils, these towns will develop complementary exhibits, host public programs and facilitate educational initiatives to raise people’s understanding about what water means culturally, socially and spiritually in their own community.

“Water/Ways” is part of the Smithsonian’s *Think Water Initiative* to raise awareness of water as a critical resource for life through exhibitions, educational resources and public programs. The public can participate in the conversation on social media at #thinkWater.

“Water/Ways” was inspired by an exhibition organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York (www.amnh) and the Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul (www.smm.org), in collaboration with Great Lakes Science Center, Cleveland; The Field Museum, Chicago; Instituto Sangari, Sao Paulo, Brazil; National Museum of Australia, Canberra, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada; San Diego Natural History Museum; and Science Centre Singapore with PUB Singapore.

Museum on Main Streets is a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation, and local host institutions. To learn more about “Water/Ways” and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for 65 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. For exhibition description and tour schedules, visit www.sites.si.edu

Denham Springs Main Street previously hosted the Smithsonian’s “Journey Stories” exhibit in fall 2011. Main Street helped renovate Denham Springs’ Old City Hall in 1990-1998, established its museum and has provided its rotating exhibits for 20 years. Their volunteers also spearheaded the establishment of Sanctuary Park, Driggers Park, Centerville Park and other improvements in the historic downtown Antiques Village. They are part of the state and national Main Street programs.

For more information about the local exhibit, activities, sharing stories and docent opportunities, see www.denhamspringsmainstreet.org, call Old City Hall at 225-667-7512, email oldcityhall@cityofdenhamsprings.com or visit Old City Hall at 115 Mattie St., Denham Springs, LA 70726. The public can participate in the conversation on social media at #thinkWater.

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