

Media Release

1 Thunderbird Circle * Hobbs, New Mexico 88240
(575) 492-2781 * Fax (575) 492-2732
sfine@nmjc.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 16, 2021

Western Heritage Museum Will Reopen April 21

(Hobbs) The Western Heritage Museum and Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame on the campus of New Mexico Junior College will be reopening to the public on Wednesday, April 21. The Museum will have limited hours and the staff asks that you make a reservation for your visit. Hours will be Wednesday-Friday from 3pm-7pm and Saturday from noon to 5pm. Reservations can be made online at www.nmjc.edu/museum. Health mandates require that masks be worn within the building, and that attendance be no more than 25 people at a time to ensure proper social distancing. Sanitation guidelines are also in place.

Along with the reopening, the Museum will be premiering *Megalodon: Largest Shark that Ever Lived*. At 60 feet long, Megalodon was the largest shark that ever lived and a dominant marine predator. Though Megalodon vanished 2 million years ago, its fascinating story inspires lessons for science and shark conservation.

The exhibition features a 60-foot long walk-through sculpture and highlights the evolution, biology and misconceptions regarding giant prehistoric sharks. “The Megalodon exhibit gives us the chance to showcase current museum research and our extensive paleontology collections,” said Florida Museum Director of Exhibits and Public Programs Darcie MacMahon. “Who can imagine a 60-foot shark cruising all the world’s oceans? The evolution and extinction of this giant beast capture our imaginations and inspire us to learn about shark evolution in general and the importance of shark conservation today.”

As unique as Megalodon was, so too is the exhibition that tells the story of this enormous creature. The exhibition showcases both fossil and modern shark specimens as well as full-scale models from several collections. Visitors enter a full-size sculpture of Megalodon through massive jaws and discover this

shark's history and the world it inhabited, including its size, structure, diet, lifespan, relatives, neighbors, evolution and extinction.

“We are so excited to share this exhibit with our patrons,” stated Erin Anderson, Executive Director of the Western Heritage Museum and Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame. “Some Museum operations, such as limited attendance or mask requirements, will seem different and maybe even frustrating, but we ask that you bear with us and respect the procedures as set forth by the state of New Mexico and New Mexico Junior College.”

Megalodon: Largest Shark that Ever Lived was produced by the Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, with support from the National Science Foundation. The Western Heritage Museum and Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame will display the exhibition through Summer 2021. Check out the website, www.nmjc.edu/museum, or follow the Museum on Facebook for up-to-date information.

Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for seniors and children. Museum members get in for free and family and individual memberships are 25% off until June 30. Make your reservation: Wednesday-Friday from 3pm-7pm or Saturday noon-5pm at nmjc.edu/museum. The Western Heritage Museum and Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame is located on the campus of New Mexico Junior College.