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NEWS RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Tracey Munson, Director of Marketing
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
410-745-4960
tmunson@cbmm.org

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Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum receives high ratings on visitor survey

Results from a nationally recognized visitor survey conducted during OysterFest '09 and again in the spring and summer of '10 report the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (CBMM) in St. Michaels, MD as having high marks in meeting and exceeding visitor expectations.

Designed and compiled by the Center for Nonprofit Management and administered through the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), the *Visitors Count!* survey asked about visitor attitudes and opinions regarding the visitor experience, museum media and communications, customer service, exhibits, and facilities, as well as demographics.

The survey benchmarks the average rating among similar institutions. Benchmarks for CBMM's visitor survey were based on comparisons of other accredited, similar-sized private, nonprofit history and maritime museums in the Mid-Atlantic. Gold standard benchmark ratings indicate how the top three museums fared among peers.

In comparison to 114 other peer museums, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum received top marks and gold standard ratings for *making a big difference in the community's quality of life*, as well as the *trustworthiness of the Museum's exhibit and program information*. Survey results also indicate visitors feel *the Museum provides an environment conducive to exploring difficult historical issues* and provides an *excellent opportunity for visitors to connect with each other for a memorable experience*.

The peer survey also identified challenges that the Museum is already addressing. "We've been working on ways to make it easier to find your way to the Museum," said Chief Curator Pete Leshner, citing the Museum's average ratings regarding ease of finding your way around the Museum's 18-acre waterfront campus, visitor services and awareness of Museum in the media.

"We had a hunch on what the survey would confirm. Fortunately, we've already taken steps in creating a better visitor experience in these regards. We're also ramping up our visitor services and communication activities."

The survey also revealed the issues most strongly related to the visitor's overall impression of the Museum, including the degree to which the exhibits are thought-

provoking and eye-opening; the Museum as a good value in terms of time, effort and cost; and the exhibits presented in an understandable way. Visitors also feel they can connect with the past at CBMM; and that the Museum makes a difference in the quality of life in its community.

“We’re pleased to be rated with such high regard, especially in comparison with other like museums,” commented CBMM President Langley Shook. “The results show we are fulfilling our mission to inspire an understanding of and appreciation for the rich heritage of the Chesapeake Bay and the connections between this place and its people.”

Established in 1965, CBMM started as a one building museum along the St. Michaels Harbor. Now with a full calendar of special events and a fleet of historic vessels maintained and restored in the public eye, the Museum has ten exhibit buildings for members, tour groups, and visitors from throughout the United States to enjoy.

For more information, visit the Museum in St. Michaels or on the web at cbmm.org.

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About the American Association for State and Local History

The American Association for State and Local History is a national organization that provides leadership and support for 6,300 members who preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful to all Americans. AASLH began in 1904 under the wing of the American Historical Association. More than 100 years later, AASLH is still the only comprehensive national organization dedicated to the field at large. From its headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, AASLH is proud to provide a home for those who work and volunteer in the field of state and local history. Programs and services include workshops (both on location and online), an annual conference, affinity groups, mentoring, publications, and more. Visit our web site at www.aaslh.org.

The Center for Nonprofit Management

The Center for Nonprofit Management is a twenty-year-old management service organization located in Nashville, Tennessee. CNM provides consulting, training, research, evaluation and recognition for nonprofit agencies in Middle Tennessee and around the country. With a staff of seven and a team of consultants, CNM assists more than 500 nonprofits each year. CNM offers evaluation and performance measurement services to associations, groups, and individual nonprofits as a way of assisting them in determining needs and priorities. For more information, visit www.cnm.org.