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CANTIGNY PARK BEGINS FIVE-YEAR REVITALIZATION PLAN

*Project New Leaf will update and enhance gardens, grounds and museums;
An “investment in the community” by the Robert R. McCormick Foundation*

Wheaton, Ill., February 23, 2017 — The Robert R. McCormick Foundation and Cantigny Park today unveiled plans for Project New Leaf, a five-year revitalization effort, aimed at delivering a n even more extraordinary guest experience for Cantigny’s nearly 400,000 annual visitors and ensuring the park’s vitality for future generations.

“Our purpose is clear and simple: to make this special place even better for current visitors, their children and their grandchildren,” said David Hiller, President and CEO of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, which oversees operations at Cantigny Park. “This project is transformational, and a long-term investment in the community.”

The Park will remain open during the multi-million-dollar project. A full calendar of events is planned for 2017 as well as weddings, banquets and other private functions.

Sasaki Associates, an award-winning landscape design firm based in Boston and Shanghai, is leading the design aspects of Project New Leaf, planning for which began in 2014. The Park will select a general contractor in March and break ground on the project in April. Construction will be in phases with completion expected in 2021.

“We’ve done our homework, including trips to other public gardens across America,” said Matt LaFond, Executive Director of Cantigny Park. “Now comes the fun part. We’re putting years of strategic thinking into action, implementing the best ideas and building a bright future for the park.”

Gardens & Grounds

The Park’s revitalization includes some of the most dramatic landscape changes since Cantigny Park opened in 1958. New display gardens will be created and existing gardens renewed. Some will even be relocated. Enhanced vistas and sightlines will “open up” Cantigny and unify its elements.

The project calls for new pathways for easier and safer navigation around the Park. Directional signage will be improved and outdoor lighting added.

Cantigny’s parking areas will also be upgraded for the convenience and safety of guests. An expanded south parking lot will accommodate more visitors on busy days. In that same area, near the First Division Museum, an orientation pavilion with restrooms is planned. Improvements to the picnic grove, playground and Visitors Center are slated as well. Outside the Visitors Center, a spacious arrival plaza with perimeter seating and park information will provide a central gathering place for guests.

A key feature, scheduled for 2018, is the Red Oak Colonnade—parallel rows of trees extending from the front of the Visitors Center all the way south to the First Division Museum. The civic-scale Colonnade will offer a dramatic and unifying landscape element for the park.

First Division Museum

Work inside Cantigny's renowned military museum is well underway—the First Division Museum's first major update since the current building opened in 1992. A new gallery will highlight the history of the "Big Red One" since Vietnam, including the Army unit's current missions around the globe. Interactive exhibits with cutting-edge storytelling techniques will provide a powerful multimedia experience for visitors.

The First Division Museum plans a Grand Reopening for August 26, 2017, coinciding with the 1st Infantry Division's centennial.

Exhibits in the main gallery are being updated and refreshed with more artifacts, better lighting and added digital technology. The main lobby will have a completely new design and floor plan.

Luci Creative from Lincolnwood, Illinois, is designing the new and re-conceptualized exhibits. Pepper Construction is the general contractor.

Outside the museum, the iconic U.S. Army tanks are getting a refresh too. Each of the 11 tanks will be cleaned and painted with historically correct colors and markings. (Yes, visitors will still be allowed to climb on them.)

McCormick House

Changes inside Robert R. McCormick's and Joseph Medill's former residence so far include new exhibits and self-guided tour options. Greater emphasis is on making Colonel McCormick's legacy relevant to today's visitor, including the thousands of students who visit the mansion on field trips every year.

Structural work on the historic home, built in 1896, will accelerate under Project New Leaf. The newly renovated staircase on the north portico is just one example of Cantigny's commitment to preserving one of Wheaton's most significant historic landmarks.

Longer term, Cantigny envisions McCormick House being more than a historic home museum. Ideas under review include spaces for meetings and receptions, and creating opportunities for civic learning and social engagement. All are in keeping with the McCormick Foundation's mission of fostering communities of informed, educated and engaged citizens.

Cantigny Construction Highlights (since park opening in 1958)

- 1960 First Division Museum opens (in what is now the Visitors Center)
- 1967 Formal garden construction begins under Franz Lipp, landscape architect
- 1989 Cantigny Golf opens
- 1992 New First Division Museum opens
- 1995 Cantigny Youth Links opens
- 2008 Remodeled Visitors Center opens (Le Jardin and Bertie's Café)
Cantigny Golf Academy opens

- 2010 Cantigny Education Center opens
- 2014 Remodeled front entrance on Winfield Road opens
- 2017 Project New Leaf begins

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About Cantigny Park

Cantigny Park, part of the Robert R. McCormick Foundations, is the 500-acre former estate of Col. Robert R. McCormick located in Wheaton, Illinois. It is home to the McCormick Museum, First Division Museum, formal gardens, picnic grounds, walking trails and a Visitors Center with banquet and dining facilities. More information, including hours, directions and upcoming events, is online at www.cantigny.org. Cantigny Golf, adjacent to the park, features a 27-hole championship golf course, a full-service clubhouse, Cantigny Golf Academy and the 9-hole Cantigny Youth Links. For more information, visit www.cantignygolf.com.

About the Robert R. McCormick Foundation

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation's mission is fostering communities of educated, informed and engaged citizens. Through philanthropic grant-making and Cantigny Park, the Foundation works to make life better in Chicagoland. The McCormick Foundation, among the nation's largest foundations with more than \$1.5 billion in assets, was established in 1955 upon the death of Col. Robert R. McCormick, the longtime editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*. Find out more at www.mccormickfoundation.org.

ATTENTION EDITORS: Please CLICK HERE to access Project New Leaf artist renderings and the project logo.
