



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 12, 2017

Contact:  
Emma Vodick, 630.305.5250  
vodicke@naperville.il.us

523 S. Webster St. • Naperville, Illinois 60540-6517  
P: 630.420.6010 • F: 630.305.4044 • W: NaperSettlement.org

“I ask you to make a difference. To go forth from this place determined to make some mark in the Book of Life that says, ‘I made a difference. I helped. I was here. I gave.’” – *Michael Birck, Commencement address at Benedictine University*

**The Naperville Heritage Society receives \$1,000,000 for Naper Settlement’s Heritage Gateway**  
*New welcome center will feature digital and interactive exhibitions*

**Naperville, IL** – The Naperville Heritage Society (NHS), administrator of Naper Settlement, has received a generous combined grant award and gifts totaling \$1,000,000 in support of the museum’s Heritage Gateway and Innovation Hall. The proposed state-of-the-art welcome center will host digital and interactive exhibitions that will tell the dynamic history of Naperville’s growth in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. The NHS received a \$500,000 grant from the Tellabs Foundation, and gifts totaling \$500,000 from Christopher and Christine Birck and The Birck Family Fund at The Chicago Community Foundation.

“Naper Settlement is moving into the future and this generous gift could not have come at a better time,” said Naper Settlement’s CEO and President, Macarena Tamayo-Calabrese. “The Heritage Gateway is only the beginning in creating a museum that reflects the best of our past and the best of the future –it’s relevant, interactive and dynamic.”

The Tellabs Foundation and the Birck Family’s generous gifts will assist in creating the \$3.7 million visitor’s center that will share stories and ideas to advance the museum’s content and programming into the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. The center will create a living legacy that looks forward, and inspire current and future generations to steer in the path of a better tomorrow.

The center’s exhibition space, Innovation Hall, will have an interactive, digital wall that will be a repository for stories, files, photos and archive which will allow visitors to upload their own story through a crowd-sourced mechanism for public and self-curated experiences, to share how they have made their own mark in history. The digital wall will tell important community narratives, such as the impact the I-88 high-tech corridor had on our communities, state and nation.

“Naper Settlement has always been a very special place for me,” said Christopher Birck, General Partner at Oak Street Investments, L.P., Advancement Committee Chair of the NHS Board of Directors and member of the Board of Directors of the Tellabs Foundation. “Preserving our community’s stories and memories have become very important to me and my family, and the Heritage Gateway’s cutting-edge technology will be the ideal way to accomplish this and project the museum into the future, because this is our legacy - sharing the lives, experiences and work of our community.”

“Naper Settlement plays a vital role in collecting and sharing the region’s history, and we are pleased to support the museum in its creation of a visitor’s center that will feature digital exhibitions sharing the personal stories of those who shaped Naperville’s high-tech corridor,” said Tellabs Foundation Executive Director, Carol Gavin. “This project will inspire and educate many from young to old, and will show visitors the impact the community’s tech-based companies had on Chicagoland’s suburbanization, diversity, and educational systems.”

Naper Settlement welcomes more than 340,000 annual visitors, including over 35,000 school children from 112 area school districts. A key learning objective when designing the Heritage Gateway is to deepen the visitors' understanding of the contributions that Chicago's Western Suburbs have made, and offer a place to discuss topics of contemporary interest. The exhibits will focus on relevant topics such as corporate growth and responsibility, community development, demographic change and how the technical corridor helped to shape area school systems. The intent is to have digital exhibits available for schools that will complement their educational programming.

"The technology corridor is a major part of the story of Naperville's growth and success and these gifts will assure that Naper Settlement can incorporate this history into the exhibits of the planned Heritage Gateway," said Naperville Heritage Society's Board Director and Capital Campaign co-chair, Dave Kelsch, who is also the founder and CEO of Advanced Data Technologies.

"We are very excited about the Heritage Gateway and the impact that this project will have on our ability to create engaging experiences for area students and teachers," said the Naperville Heritage Society's Board Director and Capital Campaign co-chair, and retired Indian Prairie District 204 superintendent, Kathy Birkett. "The educational content will be greatly enhanced as we honor Naperville's past and address its future in the most innovative ways."

The Heritage Gateway will be located off of Aurora Avenue within the Naper Settlement museum campus and will feature a more visitor-friendly entrance point. The new visitor center will be an investment in education and cultural tourism.

"I'm very proud of the Naperville Heritage Society's Capital Campaign, *Never Settle*, and the outpouring of support we've received so far," said Naperville Heritage Society's Board Chair, John Koranda. "On behalf of the Naperville Heritage Society and Naper Settlement, we want to thank the Tellabs Foundation, the Birck Family Foundation and Christopher and Christine Birck for their generous gifts."

### **About Naper Settlement and the Naperville Heritage Society**

Naper Settlement is a nationally accredited, award-winning history museum, and includes the Martin Mitchell Mansion (Pine Craig) listed on the National Register of Historic places. The museum is set on 12 magnificent acres in the heart of Naperville, where history comes to play and community comes to connect. With a commitment to the past and present, and a focus on the future, the mission of the Naperville Heritage Society, administrator of Naper Settlement, in partnership with the City of Naperville, is to collect, document, preserve, support and tell the history of Naperville, Illinois. For more information, visit [www.NaperSettlement.org](http://www.NaperSettlement.org) or call (630) 420-6010.

###