



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Denise Cartina, 630.305.5250
cartinad@naperville.il.us

The Naperville Heritage Society receives \$749,700 grant for Naper Settlement's Ag Lab

NAPERVILLE, IL — The Naperville Heritage Society, administrator of Naper Settlement, received a \$749,700 grant from the Illinois Public Museum Capital Grants Program, funded through Gov. Pritzker's Rebuild Illinois multi-year state capital program. The grant awarded to the Naperville Heritage Society will go toward the development of Naper Settlement's Ag Lab inside one of the museum's proposed buildings, the Agricultural Interpretive Center.

In late 2020, The Illinois Public Museum Capital Grants Program, administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, awarded grants to 43 Illinois museums to upgrade facilities and create new exhibits. The Naperville Heritage Society's received grant funds will go toward the Ag Lab, which will provide STEM-driven learning opportunities and allow students to get down and dirty in the science of farming and agriculture.

With an anticipated capacity to house 25-30 students at one time and 275-325 per day, the Ag Lab will serve as one of the four educational stops located in the larger capital project known as the Agricultural Interpretive Center. The Agricultural Interpretive Center is a new 6,000 square foot exhibit and programming space that will showcase Naperville's rich agricultural history and connect it to the farming story of the region and the nation. Exhibits and programming will include STEM-based learning opportunities and explore agriculture across centuries.

The Ag Lab will let visitors explore the connection between agriculture and the STEM field. It will connect students virtually with top scientists in Illinois or nationwide working on the biotechnology of food, environmentalists working on producing fertile but sustainable soil, and economists, farmers, and statisticians who calculate the economic and business impacts of how we produce food. These experiential, engaging workshops will open the minds of students, faculty, and parents to non-traditional careers in agriculture.

"Agriculture is the state's number one industry, but careers in the field often go unfilled because students get interested in and make the connection between STEM and agriculture late in the process," said Rena Tamayo-Calabrese, president and CEO at Naper Settlement. "The Ag Lab will help them make this connection and get them excited earlier while providing unique experiences. With 35,000 schoolchildren visiting Naper Settlement each year, we are a great vehicle to help develop, cultivate, and feed a much-needed pipeline. We hope the learning opportunities in the Ag Lab will widen the menu of options for parents and inspire students to pursue careers in agriculture and related fields."

For more information about Naper Settlement's Agricultural Interpretive Center and the Ag Lab, visit www.napersettlement.org/489/Agricultural-Interpretive-Center.

More information about the Illinois Public Museum Capital Grants Program is available at www2.illinois.gov/dnr/grants/Pages/Museum-Capital-Grants.aspx.

About Naper Settlement

Naper Settlement is a nationally accredited, award-winning outdoor living history museum set on 13 magnificent acres in the heart of Naperville. Located 30 miles from Chicago, the museum is home to thirty historical structures dating back as early as the 1830s. Featuring exhibits, special events, educational programming and more, Naper Settlement is where history comes alive and the community comes to connect. For more information, visit www.napersettlement.org or call (630) 420-6010.

About Naperville Heritage Society

Founded in 1969, the Naperville Heritage Society is a not-for-profit organization and administrator of Naper Settlement, the City of Naperville's museum. With a commitment to the community and a focus to the future, the mission of the Naperville Heritage Society is to collect, document, preserve, and support the history of Naperville, Illinois past and present.