Media Release

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Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2026

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HISTORIC SARANAC LAKE ANNOUNCES GRAND OPENING OF THE EXPANDED MUSEUM

Saranac Lake, NY, March 25, 2026 **—** Historic Saranac Lake announced the Grand Opening of their expanded museum campus, with two events scheduled for August. All members of Historic Saranac Lake and those who have contributed to the museum expansion project at any level will be invited to the ribbon-cutting on August 15. A community-wide celebration will take place the following Saturday, when the doors to the Trudeau Building will be thrown open for a free Open House.

Historic Saranac Lake (HSL) purchased the former home and medical office of Dr. E. L. Trudeau in 2019 to preserve the historic building and utilize the additional space for expansion of their Saranac Laboratory Museum. $5.5 million was invested in the rehabilitation of the building, and construction was completed in 2025. The historic building will open in August with new exhibits interpreting the history of the Saranac Lake region.

The expanded museum campus—which consists of the completely restored Trudeau Building and HSL's neighboring Saranac Laboratory Museum—promises to be a centerpiece of Saranac Lake's historic downtown district. Several years of careful exhibit designs are complete, and exhibit fabrication is underway. The entire first floor and substantial sections of the second floor galleries will be ready to open in August. The new exhibits were supported by a $250,000 Museums for America grant from the Institute of Museums and Library Services.

Exhibit design has been led by Travis Wood and Bart Hayes of the Exhibits Department, a small team of award-winning experts who are deeply involved in the exhibits field. "The exhibit team has been terrific to work with," said Executive Director Amy Catania. "Many people have been working very hard on this project, from our design consultants, to HSL staff, to volunteer exhibit committee members like our area experts, Caroline Welsh, Ted Comstock, and Kevan Moss. We really appreciate everyone's commitment to the project."

HSL selected Apogee, fabricator of museum and trade show exhibits in upstate New York, to bring the new exhibits to fruition. Catania said, "Mark Taylor, the President and CEO of Apogee, demonstrated a real commitment to get the exhibits done right at a great price." The firm is expanding their work in museum exhibits with their recent acquisition of Exhibits and More, based out of Syracuse. Related to the local Munn family, Mark has deep family roots in the area, and he enjoys vacationing at his camp in the Adirondacks.

Both buildings are intimately connected to Saranac Lake's unique history as a center for tuberculosis

research and patient care. But the story of Saranac Lake extends beyond the borders of the village and stories of tuberculosis. The new museum provides the space to present the rich history of the Saranac Lake region, encompassed by the boundaries of the sprawling Saranac Lake school district. History of Indigenous peoples will be introduced in collaboration with David Kanietakeron Fadden, director of the Six Nations Iroquois Cultural Center in Onchiota.

“The overarching story of the expanded museum is the relationship of residents and visitors to the natural environment of the Saranac Lake region,” stated Program Coordinator Alex Krach. “The Adirondack mountains and waterways sustained Indigenous people and attracted health seekers. Today the natural world continues to drive local economies and draw people seeking recreation. We are excited to welcome local residents, school groups, and visitors into the museum to find out more and to share what they know.” Thanks to a grant from the Stewart’s Foundation, the exhibits include interactive exhibit elements designed to capture the interest of children and visitors of all ages.

Historic Saranac Lake is planning a number of preview events this spring to give people a sneak peek at the building. On March 26 at 6 pm, Archivist and Curator Chessie Monks-Kelly will host an open house in the Trudeau Building’s new Research Room. Chessie will start the event with a brief presentation, highlighting some of the resources available in the new research space. Attendees can also view some research items from HSL’s collection and attend an open house of the rest of the Trudeau Building. “We are thrilled to have a dedicated space where the public can access the collection,” said Chessie Monks-Kelly. The collections wing was dedicated in the memory of Dr. David V. Pecora by Dorothy, his wife of 70 years. Dr. Pecora served as chief of surgery at the Ray Brook State Tuberculosis Hospital until 1965.

There is still time to support the project with a donation of any size to be invited to the August 15 event. One way to get involved is to dedicate a paver on the walkway in front of the Saranac Laboratory. The deadline for paver orders is May 1. Pavers can be ordered online at https://historicsaranaclake.org/pavers. HSL is also offering the opportunity to dedicate a theater seat in the new film room. Eleven original seats from Saranac Lake’s old Pontiac Theatre are being refurbished for installation in the film room, along with two original Art Deco lights from the Pontiac. Each seat and light can be dedicated with a donation of $1,000. A small plaque will recognize each donor. Businesses and individuals interested in participating as sponsors in the August opening events are welcome to contact HSL to find out more.

With the museum campus opening in August, HSL is turning its focus to a final capital project to link the two buildings for all visitors with a new accessible entrance and handicap lift at the Saranac Laboratory. About $425,000 has been raised, and HSL continues to seek grants and donations to complete the project.

Board President Lisa Lauroesch underlined HSL’s excitement about the August events, saying, “We can’t wait to open the doors of the new museum this summer. It’s an opportunity to invite the whole community to come be a part of Historic Saranac Lake. There is something in the new museum to interest everyone. Now more than ever, this is the community’s museum.”

Founded in 1980, Historic Saranac Lake is a not-for-profit architectural preservation organization that preserves and presents area history and architecture to build a stronger community. The Saranac Laboratory Museum is open year-round, Tuesday-Saturday, from 10 am to 5 pm.

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Images, courtesy of Historic Saranac Lake:

1) Historic Saranac Lake Logo

2) Trudeau Building Museum Rendering

3) Exhibit Rendering: Doonesbury Gallery

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