

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Andrew E. Masich
President & CEO

"The Smithsonian's Home in Pittsburgh"

Founded in 1879, the History Center is proud to be Western Pennsylvania's oldest cultural institution. And for the past 10 years, our partners at the Smithsonian tell us the History Center has been their "model" affiliate.

What exactly does it mean to be the top performing Smithsonian-affiliated museum? It means the History Center has a contract with the largest museum in the world to have Smithsonian artifacts on exhibit at all times and collaborate on a wide variety of exhibitions and public programs.

Over the past 10 years, the History Center has hosted Smithsonian traveling exhibitions, including the popular *First Ladies* exhibit, and developed exhibitions, such as the *Clash of Empires*, that were later shown at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

Dozens of History Center staff members have participated in training programs at the Smithsonian, in areas ranging from collections management to museum marketing, and the History Center regularly collaborates with Smithsonian staff on innovative educational programs, such as "Ability Pittsburgh" and the "Freedom Riders Teen Town Hall."

Every new exhibition at the History Center, such as this fall's *Stars & Stripes: An American Story* exhibit, includes artifacts on loan from the Smithsonian's collections.

In addition to the Smithsonian affiliation, over the past decade the History Center has continued to grow through strategic partnerships.

In 2000, the History Center merged with Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, the oldest site of human habitation in North America, located in Avella, Pa. This National Historic Landmark attracts visitors from around the world to learn what life was like for the first immigrants to our region 16,000 years ago.

In 2004, the History Center opened the Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum and then the following year, brought the George Westinghouse Museum under its wing, consolidating two great Westinghouse collections and focusing unparalleled attention on a Pittsburgh innovator who helped change the world.

Last year, the History Center entered into a long-term agreement with the state of



Andy Masich at the raising
of a 36-foot American flag
at Point State Park.
Both HHC.

Pennsylvania to manage the Fort Pitt Museum in historic Point State Park. Visitation has more than doubled in the past 12 months, as the Fort Pitt Museum has hosted a variety of new exhibits and public events, while unfurling a 36-foot American flag in cooperation with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the State Park partners.

Currently, the History Center is working with the Pittsburgh Police Historical Association to help preserve and display an incredible collection of items representing

more than 100 years of local police history, including everything from a Tommy gun to mug shots, log books, and police badges.

Throughout each of these partnerships, the History Center's "museum system" has helped to engage a large and diverse audience with links to the past, understanding in the present, and guidance for the future.

In the past year, nearly 300,000 people visited the History Center museums—they saw history in the making at the "Smithsonian's home in Pittsburgh."