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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: **February 12, 2010**

Winter Events for Families Feature Snow Science Expert

As another Juneau winter begins to fade, you might find yourself wondering why it was so different from last winter. You may learn the answer to that question in addition to appreciating the importance of snow at one of two events scheduled this Saturday, February 27, featuring Fairbanks geophysicist and author, Dr. Matthew Sturm.

The first event will take place at the Alaska State Museum from 1 to 4 p.m. Titled “Chill with the Family: A Celebration of Winter,” it is an opportunity to “chill” with your family and friends and participate in numerous youth-focused hands-on activities related to that most beloved season: winter. Later that day, Dr. Sturm will lecture on the importance of Arctic snow on climate at the UAS Egan Lecture Hall at 7 p.m. Both events are free and are being co-sponsored by JEDC-Springboard and the Friends of the Alaska State Museum.

Dr. Sturm has conducted wide-ranging geophysical studies on snow in high latitudes. His work has taken him from the Antarctic to the Arctic, where he has led more than 30 expeditions. He is based at the U.S. Army Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL), in Fairbanks, and collaborates with a wide range of scientists both at CRREL and elsewhere. His most recent work focuses on the role of snow cover on climate, with particular attention to snow ecology and climate change resulting from snow-vegetation interactions.

He has also recently released a children's science-based book about snow, called “Apun: the Arctic Snow,” along with a companion guide for educators. Copies of the book will be available at the museum store, and Dr. Sturm will be on hand to autograph them.

“Chill with the Family” afternoon events at the museum will focus on children and feature more than a dozen hands-on activities to explore the science and art of winter, as well as opportunities to learn about Arctic culture, wildlife adaptations, and winter safety.

Activities include: “Science on a Sphere” multi-media exploration of winter weather and climate change, viewing ice crystals through polarized light, seeing cold with infrared technology, snowflake formation, art using winter hues and light, Inupiaq snow goggles and other winter survival technology, cold water safety and a visit from PFD Otter, avalanche safety and control, Arctic animal fur identification, and several others, including shaved ice and ice cream!

Outdoor activities and a chance to view equipment used to deal with snow may be present if the weather cooperates.

The museum event is also being co-hosted by Girls Rock Science, with activities provided by Discovery Southeast, The Canvas, US Coast Guard Auxiliary, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game, NOAA, DIPAC, UAS, Alaska Dept. of Transportation, Alaska State Museum, Eaglecrest, Girl Scouts of Alaska, Alaska Avalanche Specialists, and U.S.D.A. Forest Service.

This program is made possible by funding from the U.S. Department of Defense through the Juneau Economic Development Council, and by the citizens of the City and Borough of Juneau through sales tax revenue.

Winter hours at the museum are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Discounted winter admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and under are admitted free of charge. An annual pass that allows unlimited visits to the Alaska State Museum and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka is available for \$15. Assistance is available for visitors with special needs. Please contact Visitor Services at 465-2901 before the visit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Phone (907) 465-2901 Fax (907) 465-2976

www.museums.state.ak.us

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