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Contact: Sharon Gang (CVC)
(202) 225-9443
Eva Malecki (AOC)
(202) 228-1793

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CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS ANNOUNCE OPENING DATE
FOR CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

WASHINGTON -- The four top Congressional leaders, Speaker of the House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, and House Republican Leader John Boehner, have announced today that the official public opening date for the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center will be December 2, 2008. This is a significant date in the history of the U.S. Capitol as it was on December 2, 1863, that the Statue of Freedom was placed atop the Capitol Building to signify the completion of construction of the new dome.

“The plaster model for the Statue of Freedom stands before the entrance to the Exhibition Hall, where carved into the white marble walls are the words, *Out of Many, One*. The bronze Statue of Freedom stands atop the Capitol Dome on a cast-iron globe encircled with the national motto, *E Pluribus Unum (Out of Many, One)*. The connection between the Capitol Building and the new Capitol Visitor Center is natural and powerful. We look forward to the historic opening of the Visitor Center on the historic day of December 2,” said Stephen T. Ayers, AIA, Acting Architect of the Capitol.

Ms. Terrie Rouse, CEO for Visitor Services for the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, summarized some of the exciting new features of the Capitol Visitor Center, “The Visitor Center will be a place of civic engagement that will enhance the visitor’s experience at the Capitol Building with an inspiring 13-minute orientation film and an informative exhibit that tells the story of representative democracy in the United States along with the building of the Capitol. Visitors will have the opportunity to tour the Capitol and see the Legislative Branch in action. We hope to make it more comfortable for them by providing amenities such as a dining facility, gift shops, and the chance to make advance reservations for their tour times.”

As the largest expansion of the U.S. Capitol, the Visitor Center will provide numerous amenities to visitors. It features two large orientation movie theatres and an Exhibition Hall that will include rarely-seen documents and artifacts from the National Archives and the Library of Congress that relate specifically to the duties and responsibilities of Congress. The Visitor Center is located on the east side of the Capitol and was constructed underground so as not to detract from the appearance of the Capitol or its grounds. The planting of nearly 100 new trees, the restoration of historic fountains, lanterns, and seat walls, and the addition of several water features across the East Front Plaza will serve to revitalize the historic landscape designed in 1874 by Frederick Law Olmsted.

More information regarding details of the December 2, 2008, opening activities, how to book tours, and the Visitor Center itself will be forthcoming over the next several months.

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