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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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WHITE ANNOUNCES ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY TO HOST "ALEXANDER HAMILTON" TRAVELING EXHIBITION

SPRINGFIELD—Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White has announced that the Illinois State Library will host a groundbreaking new traveling exhibition, "Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America" from August 31-October 13, 2006.

"The State Library is honored to be one of only 40 libraries nationwide to host this fascinating panel exhibition about one of the most remarkable and influential figures in American history," said White. "Most Americans know that Hamilton's face is on the ten-dollar bill, and that he died in a legendary duel with Aaron Burr, but there was so much more to the life of this complex and controversial figure. Hamilton's pivotal role in providing a foundation for the society we live in today will be a revelation for many who view this exhibit. I strongly encourage citizens, especially young people, to delve into the life of Alexander Hamilton and make plans to see this exhibition."

Among his greatest accomplishments, Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804) was the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, under President George Washington, at the age of 32. The panel exhibition charts Hamilton's amazing rise in five years from an orphaned, 15-year-old West Indies immigrant to Washington's wartime aide. Hamilton was a complex and controversial figure—a Revolutionary War patriot and soldier, financial and legal genius, and an ardent opponent of slavery. He was the chief architect of many of the financial, political and legal institutions so familiar to Americans today.

Hamilton's journalistic campaign, through the *Federalist Papers*, to convince the American people to ratify the Constitution equals in importance his creation of the Bank of the United States and the New York Stock Exchange and his pioneering efforts in the area of constitutional law. The young Treasury Secretary's economic strategies saved the country from staggering Revolutionary war debts. By the time Hamilton retired in 1795, the United States was fiscally sound and poised to become a major world economic and political leader. In the opinion of many historians, Hamilton made the early republic work and set the agenda for the nation's future.

"Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America" was organized by the New-York Historical Society, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and the American Library Association, and has been made possible in part through a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The exhibition is based on the New-York Historical Society's exhibition commemorating the 200th anniversary of Hamilton's death, as well as the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Society in 1804.

The exhibition looks at Hamilton's life and death through the relationships he forged with important people in politics and government, and through his ideas—ideas that often clashed with those of other prominent national figures. Hamilton and George Washington agreed on many issues, but Hamilton argued with Thomas Jefferson about the character of the young republic. Jefferson favored an agrarian society of small towns, prosperous farms, and state self-government, while Hamilton argued that manufacturing and commerce, a strong central government, and cities populated by people of diverse talents and backgrounds were the future.

The exhibition will be held in the library's first floor atrium. The Illinois State Library, Gwendolyn Brooks Building, is located at 300 South Second Street in downtown Springfield. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Entrance is through the north door only. For more information about the exhibit or the State Library, call 217-782-2994.