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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **60<sup>th</sup> Annual MSA Retail Conference & Expo Coming to Connecticut Convention Center** Event to Bring Nonprofit Retail Professionals to Hartford, Conn.

**HARTFORD, Conn. (Feb. 5, 2014)** – The 60<sup>th</sup> Annual MSA Retail Conference & Expo presented by the Museum Store Association (MSA) will be held April 17-20, 2015, at the Connecticut Convention Center at 100 Columbus Boulevard in Hartford.

The event is the only conference and expo specifically created for retailers at museums, historic sites, botanic gardens, aquariums, zoos, libraries and more. The annual show provides a valuable opportunity for members of the association to network, learn and source vendors and products to complement their institutional collections. The event features hundreds of booths showcasing the unique items for museum store and MSA-represented institutional buyers. According to MSA Meetings & Conference Manager, Jennifer Anderson, “In addition to the expo hall, we’re planning more than 40 hours of seminars by national and regional museum and non-profit retail experts, the MSA membership meeting, an awards ceremony and multiple networking events.”

In recent years the event was held in Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Chicago. Jama Rice, MBA, CAE, Executive Director/CEO at MSA, reflected about the site-selection for the 2015 program: “I’d attended a conference in Hartford years back, and found it to be both charming and intimate.” Ms. Rice, who joined MSA in 2013, continued, “The area offers so many advantages from a rich museum culture to close proximity to both New York and Boston, a convenience for that concentration of institutional members and vendor affiliates across the Northeast. It’s also easily accessible to those traveling from across the country or coming in from overseas.”

Manager of the Museum Shop at the local Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art and MSA Board President Stacey Stachow added, “I was pleasantly surprised and very pleased to learn about the decision to bring the show to Hartford. Connecticut has so much to offer with its rich cultural history, so many museums and things to do that relate to our members.” Other MSA member institutions in the area include the Connecticut Historical Society Museum & Library, Harriet Beecher Stowe House, New Britain Museum of American Art and Friends of Dinosaur State Park and Arboretum.

The four-day event is expected to bring in 900 participants downtown with 1,130 room nights and 360 peak nights. “We are excited to host the Museum Store Association for their 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Retail Conference & Expo next April,” stated Michael Costelli, General Manager for the Connecticut Convention Center. “The program will utilize much of the meeting and exhibit space at the Center and we are confident attendees will appreciate the countless cultural attractions located right here in Hartford.”

### **About Museum Store Association**

Celebrating 59 years, the Museum Store Association ([www.museumstoreassociation.org](http://www.museumstoreassociation.org)) is a nonprofit, international association organized to advance the success of nonprofit retail and of the professionals engaged in it. By encouraging high standards of professional competence and conduct, MSA helps nonprofit retail professionals at museums and cultural institutions better serve their organizations and the public. MSA welcomes museums, institutions, professionals and vendors engaged in non-profit retail.

### **About the Connecticut Convention Center**

The Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford is the state’s premier meeting venue and the largest full-service convention facility between New York and Boston. Overlooking the beautiful Connecticut River, it features 140,000 square feet of exhibition space, a 40,000-square-foot ballroom and 25,000 square feet of meeting space, as well as ample sheltered parking. The facility is served by more than 6,500 local area hotel rooms, including the 22-story Marriott Hartford Downtown, adjacent to the Convention Center. The venue is professionally managed for the State of Connecticut by Waterford Venue Services, an affiliate of Waterford Hotel Group. For more information, please visit [www.ctconventions.com](http://www.ctconventions.com).

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