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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Public Museum to Host Firefighters Appreciation Day August 21, 2008**

Grand Rapids, MI (August 18, 2008) – Grand Rapids Fire Department firefighters and their family members will be “warmly” welcomed by Public Museum staff members on **Firefighters Appreciation Day** Thursday, August 21, 2008. The Museum will be free to all GRFD crews and their family members, along with Days Hotel staff members and their families, as a thank you for their prompt and professional service during the afternoon of July 17, 2008.

On July 17<sup>th</sup>, roofing contractors replacing the 15-year old roof at the Van Andel Museum Center accidentally set off the blaze – and the fire alarms - just before 1:30 p.m. The building was evacuated quickly and calmly by some 300 visitors, summer campers and staff members as several GRFD aerial trucks and fire rigs under Acting Grand Rapids Fire Battalion Chief Tim Szotko responded to the scene. The fire was quickly put out but C Shift fire crews stayed on the scene for several hours monitoring hot spots in the roof and walls. Some of the summer campers stayed cool and entertained in the Days Hotel lobby. Displaced Museum visitors were offered return visits or ticket refunds. The fire caused little damage to the structure and none to the priceless Museum exhibits.

Museum staff would like to invite fire fighters back to the Museum under more desirable circumstances to see the inside of the building and its amazing contents! GRFD members and Days Hotel employees need only show their badge or hotel ID at the Public Museum front desk on August 21<sup>st</sup> for free admittance to the Museum along with that of up to five immediate family members. Guests can enjoy the exhibits, the carousel and the 2 pm planetarium show. The Museum will also have on display a 1937 American LaFrance pumper from its collection.

The Public Museum’s hours are Monday – Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., and Sunday 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. The Public Museum is a collections-based educational organization that explores and celebrates the world and our place in it. Inquiries should be directed to the Museum’s main number, 616.456.3977.

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