

Institute of Texan Cultures

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TUSKS! ICE AGE MAMMOTHS AND MASTODONS

Traveling exhibit focuses on Ice Age elephants

SAN ANTONIO – The Institute of Texan Cultures will host Tusks! Ice Age Mammoths & Mastodons, a travelling exhibit from the Florida Museum of Natural History, Sept. 12, 2009 to Jan. 3, 2010.

In an exciting summer that saw the premier of a new Ice Age movie and the discovery of mammoth bones at San Antonio's Fort Sam Houston, Tusks! is an opportunity to delve deeper into the fascinating world of prehistoric elephants and their relatives.

The exhibit features 80 fossil specimens, replicas and artifacts from Florida Museum of Natural History collections, thematically organized to show the process of science, from discovery, to research, to exhibition. Tusks! includes graphic panels, murals and "hands-on" exhibit and video interactive modules.

From 15 million years ago until the end of the last Ice Age, 10,000 years ago, elephants and their relatives (proboscideans) inhabited prehistoric North America. Proboscideans, large beasts named for their long, flexible trunks, (proboscises),

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originated in Northern Africa and Southern Asia. The first proboscideans to arrive in North America 15 million years ago included mastodons, shoveltuskers, spiraltuskers and gomphotheres, with mammoths arriving only 3 to 4 million years ago.

The rich fossil deposits throughout North America preserve an extraordinary assemblage of these fossil proboscideans, including "shovel-tuskers," mammoths and mastodons. The exhibit includes unique specimens such as the extinct 10-million-year-old shovel-tusker and other animals that lived with the proboscideans. "Tusks! Ice Age Mammoths and Mastodons" is the first exhibit to assemble such a large collection of North American proboscidean and other Ice Age fossil specimens.

Visitors can experience the scientific method with hands-on activities in the Texas Archaeology Lab, featured on the exhibit floor. They will learn how to study bones, analyze and catalog artifacts, and use math and science skills to form their interpretations.

Special events are planned to celebrate Texas Archaeology Month in October. A complete schedule, pre-visit lessons and downloadable activities will be posted at [TexasArchaeology.com](http://www.texasarchaeology.com) prior to the exhibit opening.

Tusks! is sponsored by the Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville. For more information, visit <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/tusks/>.

The Institute of Texan Cultures is located on the UTSA HemisFair Park Campus, 851 E. Durango Blvd. (physical address), a short distance from the Alamo and the River Walk. Regular hours are 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday; noon to 5 p.m.

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Sunday; closed Monday. Admission is \$8 for adults (12-64); \$7 for seniors (65+); \$6 for children (3-11); free with membership, UTSA or Alamo Colleges identification. For additional information, call (210) 458-2300 or visit TexanCultures.com.

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The Institute of Texan Cultures is an agency of the Vice President for Community Services at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). The mission of the institute is to engage lifelong learners in the understanding and celebration of Texas cultural heritage. Located on the UTSA HemisFair Park Campus in downtown San Antonio, the 182,000-square-foot complex features 65,000 square feet of interactive exhibits and displays that tell the stories of Texans. The institute develops quality, accessible resources for educators and lifelong learners on topics of cultural heritage and strives to develop a rich and vibrant culture in the arts and humanities that will expand the community's awareness and appreciation of Texas through an engaging series of exhibits, programs, and special events. Resources for multiple audiences are available at the institute's Web site, TexanCultures.com.