

# Illinois State Museum to reopen to the public

February 8 2016 5:08 PM



## Director Rosenthal Announces Sustainable Model to Prepare the ISM System for the Future

**SPRINGFIELD – Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Director Wayne A. Rosenthal** announced today that an agreement has been reached to reopen the **Illinois State Museum** to the public. IDNR has worked closely with Governor Bruce Rauner's office to develop a new, more sustainable model for operating the museum that will save about \$1 million per year by closing two museum branches, consolidating human resources and accounting functions within IDNR, and by development of a new management and organizational structure. The museum will also seek to improve revenue by charging an admission fee, and increase fundraising efforts through an improved partnership with the Illinois State Museum Society.

The timeframe for reopening will depend upon the Illinois General Assembly taking up the amendatory veto (AV) of SB 317 and implementing the suggested changes.

Governor Bruce Rauner's AV asks that the authority to charge an admission fee be placed in statute so it can be implemented immediately upon the acceptance of the amendatory veto.

"If the General Assembly acts quickly on the Governor's amendatory veto, we believe we could reopen the museum in a matter of weeks," said IDNR Director Wayne Rosenthal. "Without the General Assembly's support, it could take months to get the museum reopened."

Michael Wiant will become interim director of the Illinois State Museum immediately. Rosenthal will ask the Illinois State Museum Board to begin the search for a new director. Rosenthal also will ask the Museum and Society boards to call emergency meetings so work to reopen the museum can begin immediately.

"With challenge comes great opportunity, and the museum staff is grateful for this tremendous opportunity to continue to share the art, history and culture of Illinois with its citizens," said Dr. Michael Wiant, Interim Director of the Illinois State Museum.

"I applaud the Governor's action as it creates a realistic path forward to reopening the Illinois State Museum," said State Rep. Tim Butler (R-Springfield). "Reopening the museum is vital to our community and the plan announced today will provide for the long-term viability and growth of the museum system. I look forward to working with the community, legislators, and the Governor as we again open the doors on a wonderful asset of our State."

"I am encouraged that the Governor took careful steps in adjusting this legislation while maintaining the ultimate goal of allowing our State Museum to resume its important work. We all want to see those doors open to the public once again, and this compromise could make that happen," said State Rep. Sara Wojcicki Jimenez (R-Springfield).

"The Illinois State Museum Society is looking forward to the challenge of becoming a stronger partner and playing a greater role in the success of the Illinois State Museum," said Karen Westbrook of the Illinois State Museum Society.