EXHIBIT FACTS – ALCATRAZ: LIFE ON THE ROCK

INTRODUCTION: *Alcatraz: Life on the Rock* is a traveling exhibition that tells the legendary Alcatraz Island story through rare artifacts and interactive displays. Guests walk through re-created prison cells, watch historic footage and view authentic memorabilia as they explore the island’s military, cultural and natural history. The modular, ADA-accessible exhibit, which can be configured to fit a variety of venue layouts, also introduces parts of the island not normally open to visitors.

CREATED BY: Alcatraz Cruises, the National Park Service authorized concessioner of ferry service to Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay, created the exhibit in partnership with the National Park Service. Alcatraz Cruises is a subsidiary of Hornblower Cruises & Events, a charter yacht and dining cruise company that operates more than 50 vessels and the first Hybrid ferry in the United States. Academy Studios of Novato, Calif., provided design and construction services.

EXHIBIT OVERVIEW: *Alcatraz: Life on the Rock* includes four main displays and several ancillary components. The “How Do You Know Alcatraz?” section offers an interactive introduction, complete with a touchable model of the island, a look at The Rock’s place in pop culture and a walk-through sally port (cell doors) opening to the main exhibit.

From there, guests explore the island’s history from four angles. “Preserving the Rock” looks at Alcatraz as a national park, highlighting natural features and current preservation efforts through two 8- by 12-foot murals, detailed models and stand-alone information panels. “Strength: The Native American Occupation” uses video clips, artifacts and graphics inspired by real artwork to chronicle the 19-month takeover of Alcatraz by a group of
Native American activists. Guests step into a replicated prison cell in “Life on the Inside,” a display that looks at the living conditions, rules and routines endured by Alcatraz inmates. Here, murals and artifacts give additional context to life behind bars. “Military History” showcases the island’s role as a west coast Gibraltar and, later, a military prison. In a recreated citadel cell block, visitors use a black light to search for carvings made by inmates on a brick wall. This part of the exhibit offers a behind-the-scenes peek at a part of Alcatraz Island not open to visitors.

Additional exhibit highlights include an “Escape Attempts” display, where guests peek into a cell wall hole similar to those dug by prison escapees, and a theater area featuring an Alcatraz Island video created exclusively for this exhibition. A visitation booth is the central piece to the “Notorious & Infamous Inmates” display, which invites visitors to grab a phone and hear stories told by former inmates and guards. Graphic panels introduce well-known criminals Al Capone and George “Machine Gun” Kelly, along with less famous but, in some cases, more dangerous inmates such as James “Jimmy” Grove.

**RARE ARTIFACTS:**
- An original letter written by Robert “Birdman” Stroud when he was an Alcatraz prisoner
- A baseball with initials and other smears written in blood, found near the Alcatraz exercise yard
- An Alcatraz shank, made from a butter knife and wrapped in electrical tape, which was taken from a prisoner in a shakedown
- A cookbook that Alcatraz Women’s Club sold to families on the island (owned by Ira Bowden, who was the general foreman on Alcatraz from 1958-1960)
- An original brass key to an Alcatraz visiting room door.
- Original movie posters from films featuring Alcatraz Island

**INTERACTIVE FEATURES:**
- A walk-through sally port at the exhibit entry simulates the prison cell experience
- Two video screens feature historic footage and stories from Alcatraz residents, administrators and historians
- The “Escape Attempts” exhibit shows how prisoners broke out of Alcatraz, complete with a peek-through replica of the tunnel escapees dug to reach the outside
- In the visitation booth, guests pick up a prison phone to hear narrated stories and view inmate images
- In a Civil War-era cell, visitors use a black light to search for prisoner numbers carved in a recreated brick wall
- A touchable model of Alcatraz Island introduces the island’s layout and buildings

FUN FACTS:

- The Alcatraz light tower has operated continuously for more than 155 years, except during the island’s Native American occupation.
- The army first brought soil to rocky Alcatraz Island in the 1800s. Today more than 145 plant species grow there.
- During the prison years, ferries regularly ran between Alcatraz and San Francisco so that families living on the island could attend school, work and activities.
- The so-called “Birdman of Alcatraz,” inmate Robert Stroud, raised birds at Leavenworth Penitentiary but never at Alcatraz.
- Film crews were not allowed on Alcatraz while the federal prison was in operation. Still, Hollywood fueled myths about the island in 19 different movies.

EXHIBIT CONSTRUCTION:

Academy Studios of Novato, Calif., designed and constructed Alcatraz: Life on the Rock using light, durable materials with eco-friendly highlights. Modular components and cabinetry are made from plywood and resawn lumber that joins existing wood scraps into usable pieces. Lightweight aluminum and steel add structural integrity and allow for easy set up and take down at each exhibit venue. Touchable models constructed with high-density foam and long-lasting epoxy allow for a hands-on experience yet stand up to wear and tear.

PORTABILITY:

The exhibit requires at least 2,800 square feet of space (12- to 14-foot ceiling height) and includes 11 free-standing sections with graphics, memorabilia, video (screens and equipment included) and interactive elements. Flexible arrangement options mean the four main displays and supporting components can fit into a wide variety of room layouts. Innovative design features include modular walls, a snap-lock flooring system that separates into individual panels, select components that adjust for different ceiling heights, and others that can stand alone or hang from above. Each display breaks down for easy storage and transport in wooden crates that meet standard shipping guidelines.

PUBLIC INFORMATION:  www.alcatrazcruises.com/exhibit
TO BOOK THE EXHIBIT:  Call Denise Rasmussen at 415-438-8320

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**Alcatraz Cruises** is the National Park Service concessioner of ferry service to Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay. Alcatraz Cruises hosts nearly 1.5 million visitors annually. In addition to ferry service to the island, Alcatraz Cruises also offers seasonal bay cruises and private charters. Alcatraz Cruises designed, built and operates the first hybrid ferry in the United States. The Hornblower Hybrid’s revolutionary design has reduced fuel consumption by 75% and has already begun to be implemented in other parts of the country. For more information visit: [www.alcatrazcruises.com/pressroom](http://www.alcatrazcruises.com/pressroom).