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Fort Mackinac, Mackinac Island State Park Visitor's Center Open May 3

MACKINAC ISLAND — Iconic Fort Mackinac, located on the bluff overlooking downtown Mackinac Island, and the Mackinac Island State Park Visitor's Center, located inside the former Mackinac Island Coast Guard Station on Main Street, both open for the 2024 season May 3 at 9:00 a.m.

“After a busy winter, we are excited to begin welcoming guests back to our sites,” said Mackinac State Historic Parks Director Steve Brisson.

The season will kick off at Fort Mackinac with a bang, as reigning Lilac Festival Queen Isabella Nitzschke will fire the opening cannon.

At the fort, guests will discover two new programs this season : “Medicine at Mackinac,” where interpreters will provide the history of Army Surgeons and how the Army began changing military medicine in the 1880s. In addition, a Guard Mount Program will show guests how soldiers would conduct this complex military ceremony. Other programs at the fort include a walking tour about the changing face of Fort Mackinac, an exploration of the people who lived and worked at the fort, how the Army of the 1880s conducted itself, a look at Mackinac's time as a national park, a program showcasing the equipment a soldier was issued, and an exploration of what happened at Fort Mackinac after the sun set. In addition, the classic rifle and cannon firing demonstrations will both feature refreshed presentations.

“2024 will be an exciting year because we are continuing to expand the programs we offer as well as adding greater depth to our classic programs, creating a fun and educational experience for anyone

coming to Mackinac Island,” explained Jack Swartzinski, Mackinac State Historic Parks’ Interpretation Coordinator.

The Tea Room at Fort Mackinac, operated by Grand Hotel, has new menu items for the 2024 season, and, as always, features one of the most stunning views in Michigan. Perhaps the way to make a Fort Mackinac visit most memorable is firing the opening cannon salute, which is available to one guest daily. More information can be found [here](#).

Starting May 10, a ticket to Fort Mackinac also includes admission to Biddle House, featuring the Mackinac Island Native American Museum, the Benjamin Blacksmith Shop, and The Richard & Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum.

The Mackinac Island State Park Visitor’s Center, located across from Marquette Park in beautiful downtown Mackinac Island, is the place to start your journey through Mackinac Island State Park. Here, knowledgeable representatives can point out popular trails on the island, provide information on Fort Mackinac, and discuss popular events taking place in the state park. In addition, the Visitor’s Center is home to the Official State Park Store. Restrooms are also located at the Visitor’s Center.

The rest of Mackinac State Historic Parks’ historic sites begin opening on May 8.

Mackinac Associates, friends preserving and sharing Mackinac’s heritage, provide financial support. Visit mackinacparks.com for a complete listing of updates and projects at Mackinac State Historic Parks, hours of operation, daily events, special events, and more. Additional pictures available upon request.

Mackinac State Historic Parks, a family of living history museums and parks in northern Michigan’s Straits of Mackinac, is an agency within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Its sites—which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums—include Fort Mackinac, the Biddle House, The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, Historic Downtown Mackinac, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City. Mackinac State Historic Parks is governed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, established in 1895 to protect, preserve and present the parks’ rich historic and natural resources for the education and recreation of future generations. Visitor information is available at (231) 436-4100 or on the web at www.mackinacparks.com.

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