Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

NEWS

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Cahokia Mounds welcomes 10 millionth visitor since achieving world heritage status

Waterloo resident receives personal tour, $100 gift certificate

COLLINSVILLE, Ill. – Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site on Tuesday welcomed its 10 millionth visitor since achieving the rare distinction of being designated a world heritage site.

Visitor No. 10,000,000 was Michelle Miller of Waterloo, IL. She was accompanied by her mother, Lorraine Novak; daughter Gabrielle Miller; and her daughter's friend Keira Schmitz. Miller received a personal tour of the site and a $100 gift certificate from the Cahokia Mounds Museum Society.

Miller couldn't quite believe she was the 10 millionth visitor. "Is this for real?" she asked. Miller and her family are huge fans of Cahokia Mounds and visit the site often from their home about 25 miles away. She said her daughter practically knows the exhibits by heart.



Cahokia Mounds was declared a world heritage site in 1982 in recognition of its unique role in history. The site once served as the civil and religious center of the sprawling Mississippian Culture. Thousands of people fished, farmed, worshipped and traded with other cultures.

The site is dotted with mounds – including 10-story Monks Mound – that Native Americans built for burials, religious ceremonies and other activities.

Operated by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the site welcomes visitors from every state and about 80 foreign countries each year. After being named a world heritage site, it took Cahokia Mounds five years to reach its one millionth visitor. It hit five million after 16 years and 10 million after 31 years.

“Walking and climbing among the mounds helps visitors connect with a civilization that resembles our own in some ways and yet was very different. It’s a unique experience,” said Amy Martin, director of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. “No wonder it attracts people like the Millers and others from across the world.”

Cahokia Mounds is just eight miles from St. Louis, in Collinsville, Illinoi , off Interstates 55/70 (Exit 6) and I-255 (Exit 24) on Collinsville Road . For details and hours, call 618-346-5160 or go to http://www.cahokiamounds.org/.

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