The University of Nebraska State Museum celebrated its 140th anniversary with a kick-off event January 7 at Morrill Hall, hosted by Friends of the State Museum and the University of Nebraska Foundation.

The social hour included appetizers, jazz entertainment by Sarabande and a presentation of the museum's new "Mammoth Mania" dance videos featuring the Archie mascot and LPS students. Guests also enjoyed National Geographic photographer Joel Sartore's new exhibit "Amphibians: Vibrant and Vanishing" in Morrill Hall's Cooper Gallery.

UNL Catering served dinner, and Meier's Cork 'N Bottle provided bar service.

**Congratulations remarks**

After dinner, the following individuals gave remarks congratulating the museum on its anniversary:
- Priscilla Crew, state museum director;
- Bob Phares, chairman, University of Nebraska Board of Regents;
- Ellen Weissinger, UNL senior vice chancellor for academic affairs;
- Chris Beutler, Lincoln mayor;
- Jessica Whalen, community liaison for Congressman Adrian Smith of Grand Island, who read a congratulatory letter from the congressman;
- Roger Lempke, representative for Senator Mike Johanns of Lincoln, who read a congratulatory letter from the senator;
- Matt McNair, UNL campus director of development, University of Nebraska Foundation; and
- Mark Brohman, president, Friends of the State Museum.

**Friends of the State Museum awards presented**

Brohman presented the following Friends awards:
- Anderson Award to Rick Otto, Ashfall Fossil Beds superintendent, honoring his service to the museum;
-Tuttle Award to Mel Thornton, Friends treasurer, honoring his service to the Friends organization.

Associate Director Mark Harris introduced a short video about the museum’s history and directions it plans to take in the future. The museum video was produced by UNL Communications and can be watched at www.museum.unl.edu/140.

Finally, photographer Joel Sartore gave a fascinating presentation about his work for National Geographic, focusing on wildlife and the environment. His exhibit, “Amphibians: Vibrant and Vanishing,” will remain on display in Morrill Hall’s Cooper Gallery through Nov. 30.

“Amphibians” includes more than 70 striking photographs of amphibians that stretch our notions of beauty and shed light on the tragic decline of some of the world’s most magnificent species.

**Anniversary to be celebrated throughout 2011**

The 140th anniversary milestone will be celebrated throughout the year with many new exhibits and hands-on science events, as well as membership incentives and a video campaign featuring the museum’s new Archie mascot and students from Lincoln Public Schools.

Established in 1871 by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, the State Museum has grown into one of the nation’s leading university research museums. After previously outgrowing spaces in University Hall, old Nebraska Hall and the old Museum Building, the museum moved in 1927 into newly constructed Morrill Hall. Today, the museum enriches the lives of more than 100,000 visitors and students each year.

Morrill Hall is open from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday, from 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. on Thursdays, and from 1:30-4:30 p.m. on Sundays. For museum and planetarium admission information, call 472-3779 or visit www.spacelaser.com.

4) The Archie mascot with Priscilla Grew, state museum director. 5) Joel Sartore with one of the 70 amphibian photos in his exhibit. 6) Sarabande performed jazz entertainment for guests during social hour.