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Media Contact:

Anna Kate Twitty, (803) 348-6010 (c), (803) 898-4948 (o), AnnaKate.Twitty@scmuseum.org

State Museum Education Director Receives Prestigious Science Education Award

South Carolina Science Council presented the Catalyst Award to museum director of education Tom Falvey

COLUMBIA, S.C., Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2014— The South Carolina State Museum is pleased to announce that its director of education, Tom Falvey, recently received the “Catalyst Award” from the South Carolina Science Council (SC)2 at their 37th annual conference, “Growing Teachers One STEM at a Time.”

This prestigious award is given annually to an educator who has acted as a "catalyst" for science education in South Carolina. The recipient is someone who promotes science education either in the classroom, as a consultant or college professor training new science teachers.

“Tom joins a distinguished group of science educators in our state, and he truly, through his work at the State Museum, qualifies as a catalyst,” said Mary Levens, chair of the (SC)2 awards committee and former president and current archivist for the South Carolina Science Council. “We are excited that he received this award at our annual conference of science teachers from across the state. We are honored to work with such an exciting and innovative colleague.”

Falvey has been with the State Museum since 2000 and has been serving in the director capacity since 2005. Falvey was instrumental in the museum’s recent \$23 million renovation and expansion project, in which he served on the Windows to New Worlds Capital Campaign Steering Committee and also served on the museum’s executive project team, which oversaw the project’s contractors, architects and design firms.

A first in the nation, Falvey helped acquire, install and equip the 1926 Alvan Clark telescope, housed in the museum’s new Boeing Observatory, with state-of-the-art equipment enabling real-time distance learning programs to take place remotely in classrooms across the state. In addition, Falvey collected and curated the Robert B. Aial Collection of Historical Astronomy, the museum’s new 6,000 square foot telescope gallery, which has been praised as the best public collection of early American telescopes in world.

“Through Tom’s leadership, the State Museum is now on the cutting edge of education, particularly in the critical areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics,” said museum Executive Director Willie Calloway. “He is a guiding force in the museum’s 21st century education initiatives and is helping pave the way for innovative advancements that will enhance the way we educate students across the state.”

About the South Carolina State Museum: *As the state’s largest and most comprehensive museum, the South Carolina State Museum, offers a unique, entertaining and educational experience to visitors throughout its 225,000 square foot facility located in the heart of downtown Columbia’s Congaree Vista. The State Museum is housed in one of its greatest artifacts, an 1894 old textile mill full of character and charm. In addition to beautiful meeting spaces throughout the facility, guests can explore outer space in one of the largest planetariums in the Southeast, watch an interactive 4D movie and look through a vintage telescope in a one-of-a-kind observatory. These exciting opportunities are all in addition to the four floors of South Carolina art, cultural history, natural history and science/technology that guests can experience. Visit scmuseum.org.*