

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2012

Contact: Ari Geller: 202-265-3000; ari@rabinowitz-dorf.com

Museum of the History of Polish Jews to receive \$7 million grant for exhibition

Koret and Taube Foundation funds crucial to museum's completion

WARSAW – Visitors to the **Museum of the History of Polish Jews** will soon find themselves journeying through forests, navigating bustling streets and strolling past cafes thanks to the \$7 million in collaborative and matching funds awarded by the Koret Foundation and the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture that will allow the museum to move ahead in the development of its Core Exhibition.

Since 2007, the Koret and Taube Foundations have contributed a total of approximately \$16 million to the museum.

“The Koret and Taube Foundation donations are a significant milestone in the development of the museum’s Core Exhibition and are crucial to its completion,” said Marian Turski, an historian, Holocaust survivor and chairman of the Museum Council. “The donations enable the work on the exhibition to enter a new phase – its production.”

Tad Taube, president of the Koret Foundation and chairman of the Taube Foundation, was born in Poland in 1931 and fortunate to leave in the summer of 1939 shortly before the start of WWII. As he built a successful business and philanthropic foundation in his new home in San Francisco, he never stopped caring about his first home.

“Preserving our history and culture is at the core of the future growth and strength of the Polish-Jewish community,” said Taube. “I’ve dedicated my life to ensuring our community has adequate resources and support by encouraging the collaboration of leaders around the world. The Museum of the History of Polish Jews is the embodiment of the work I have undertaken to strengthen the relationship of the Jewish people and our heritage in Poland.”

The exhibition is the heart and soul of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Eight galleries, occupying more than 13,000 square feet of space, will present 1,000 years of Jewish life in Poland. The exhibition brings to life the world of Polish Jews, once the largest Jewish community in the world and a center of the Jewish world.

On this journey through centuries of Polish-Jewish history, visitors will begin in an evocative forest – a space of legend, imagination, sounds, voices and magic. They will stop and admire a scale replica roof of the now lost 17th-century wooden synagogue from Gwoździec, along with its ornamented ceiling, recreated by students using traditional materials, methods and tools. They may also walk down a bustling street, stroll past shops, theaters and cafes and glance at posters heralding the politics of the day.

The exhibition is based on original objects, iconography, documents and multimedia elements forming a chronological and thematic narrative and is the first museum exhibition in the world to holistically address Polish-Jewish history. The exhibition will provide an interactive space for educational, cultural and research programs.

The exhibition will be developed by an international team of historical experts from Poland, the United States, Israel and the museum's curatorial team, headed by Professor Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett of New York University. It was initially designed by Event Communications, an award-winning British firm that specializes in high-impact narrative, multimedia exhibitions. The in-depth design and production has been taken on by Nizio Design International, based in Warsaw.

The Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland is solely responsible for the implementation and financing of the development and production of the Core Exhibition.

The Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which is slated to open in 2013, is the first and only museum to focus on the history of Polish Jews as a whole. Rather than simply a museum, it is intended to be a multifunctional educational and cultural center, and an open meeting place in the heart of what once was the Jewish district of Warsaw.

This interactive, narrative museum will be a center for lifelong education and remembrance for a diverse, global public, its importance reaching beyond Poles and Jews. The millennium of Polish-Jewish culture has left a strong mark on Western civilization, particularly in the United States. In May 2011, while on a trip to Poland, President Obama visited the site of the future museum and met with leadership and staff, noting the project's global significance.

The museum was created in 2005 as an independent entity by three parties: the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland, the City of Warsaw and the Polish Ministry of Culture. It is the first public-private partnership institution of its kind in Poland and is setting an example for cultural institutions all over the country.

The museum will take its place alongside the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem as some of the most important institutions of their kind. The primary difference is that the Museum of the History of Polish Jews will extend the historical narrative beyond the Holocaust to encompass an epic Jewish heritage – from which the majority of world Jewry descends and that, even today, shapes contemporary Jewish life all across the globe. At the same time, it will be Europe's largest Jewish history museum. The museum also will provide Poland's capital city with a new cultural institution that will set a standard for museums internationally.