**PRESS RELEASE** (For Immediate Release)              **CONTACT:**           Charlotte Whitted

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**CORN MAZE CELEBRATES CHANGE**

Tazewell, VA—Prepare for a transformative experience at Crab Orchard Corn Maze & Pisgah Pumpkin Patch, opening Saturday, September 14th with a Butterfly Metamorphosis-themed design featuring a caterpillar, a chrysalis, two monarch butterflies and a flower incorporated into the pathways throughout. “We are fortunate to host returning monarch butterflies in the corn, giving us an outstanding opportunity to use the maze as an outdoor classroom,” says Charlotte Whitted, Executive Director of the Crab Orchard Museum, which owns and manages the corn maze. Fourteen checkpoints in the maze highlight museum artifacts related to change. “You might find a map of Virginia which includes West Virginia before the split during the American Civil War in 1863, or a cider press that changes apples to delicious cider, or sheep’s wool carded, spun and woven into a coverlet. We hope visitors will extend their day to include a discounted stop at the museum to look for those artifacts on exhibit as well.”

In its sixth year across highway 460 from the museum center, Crab Orchard Corn Maze was planted on the western end of the property again this year. “Usually we plant the corn ourselves and then bring in Maze Play, Inc. from Idaho just to cut the design into the corn. But this year we brought them in earlier to plant the design using precise GPS with the paths already included. Our hope is to minimize mud and set checkpoints earlier.

The museum planted four acres for the corn maze itself. Seven acres have been cultivated by Stewart Etter’s Greenhouse for the Pisgah Pumpkin Patch to grow 40 varieties of pumpkins and specialty gourds.  There is a wagon ride path around the corn and through the pumpkin patch, with a Kids’ Knoll play area, Punkin’ Chunkin’, parking area, a General Store barn for retail and snacks and a the ticket booth next to the maze entrances so the whole sixteen acres of museum property is used for the event. Fisher & Company Restaurant’s parking lot is fenced and gated so their regular customers may enjoy a delicious meal just as usual. Fisher’s will offer Saturday lunch during maze season along with their regular dinner service on Fridays and Saturdays.

Another change this year is a $5 parking fee per vehicle for on-site visitors. “Gravel, sand, and site maintenance has become very expensive, so the museum board feels that a parking fee is reasonable. However, the parking fee will be waived for those who only want to buy pre-picked pumpkins, gourds, corn fodder, mums, t-shirts, snacks, and souvenirs at the General Store.”

Included with a visit to the Pisgah Pumpkin Patch on site is the Kids’ Knoll, with a corn play box, hop scotch board, corn hole games, three hay slides, painted cut-outs for photo opportunities, a painted tire mountain, a see-saw and more for younger children. Picnicking on the knoll is encouraged.

Guided school and group tours are being scheduled for weekdays, with morning and afternoon sessions available.  “With the weather being uncertain, we encourage groups and school tours to book in September, so we won’t run out of rain dates.  We want to accommodate everyone that wants to come.” For school tour information and reservations, contact Education Director Joan Yates, jyates@craborchardmuseum.com or 276-988-6755.

The event opens to the public on Saturday, September 14th at 10:00 a.m. “We are offering extended evening hours again this year on Fridays and Saturdays to include flashlight tours until 10:00 p.m., weather permitting. There will be nothing haunted or spooky, only family-friendly. Bring your own flashlight or purchase one in the retail barn.”  Public hours for the corn maze are Fridays 5:00 – 10:00 p.m., Saturdays 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. and Sundays 1:00 – dusk.  Admission to the maze is $10 for adults, $5 for kids 5-12, free for 4 and under with an accompanying adult.  Wagon rides are $2 for ages 5 and up, free for 4 and under with an accompanying adult.  Punkin’ Chunkin’ is $10 for 4 pumpkins to fling with a giant slingshot towards a barrel target in the field.  Land one in the “Monarch Butterfly” target and win a $50 gift certificate.

The Pisgah Pumpkin Patch will be open next to the parking area during the same hours as the corn maze.  “Visitors can go out with wagons into the patch to select pumpkins or choose from the pre-picked ones there.”

Groups of 15 or more that pre-schedule a visit on the weekends receive a discount of $2.00 off per admission ticket. “This is perfect for church groups, birthday parties, sports team parties, and company outings. Businesses have brought their employees in past years as a team-building exercise.” Groups looking for a fundraising opportunity, such as Project Graduation or fall sports teams, may sell admission tickets and keep 20%, if they sell a minimum of 15 tickets.  Contact Crab Orchard Museum for more information on group sales.  The museum center will be open on Saturdays 9-5 and Sundays 1-5 through October 27th.

 “Crab Orchard Corn Maze is a Crab Orchard Museum program and event.  Certainly the maze is a fun place to visit, but it also reinforces the museum’s mission to preserve and promote Appalachian cultural heritage.”  During maze season museum admission on weekends for corn maze visitors is reduced to $4 for adults and $2 for kids 7-12.  Kids 6 and under are always free with a paying adult.  Museum hours are also extended during the corn maze season too, Saturdays 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Sundays 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.  Visitors that want to stay overnight may book accommodations in the Cottage at Crab Orchard, 276-988-6755.

All proceeds from Crab Orchard Corn Maze support educational programming year-round at Crab Orchard Museum. The program is possible due to generous sponsorship from WVVA-TV, KICKS Country Radio, A & S Sanitation, Crab Orchard Veterinary Services, Hurst-Scott Funeral Homes, Grants Supermarket, Rod Cury, Wayne Kitts, Meade Tractor, Lynda Stuart, Tazewell County Farm Bureau Federation, Clinch Valley Health, Chick Fil A of Princeton, Kimberly’s Greenhouse at Pisgah, J & R Gold, Shawn McReynolds, Tazewell Carilion Community Hospital, Richlands Garden Club, Four Seasons Garden Club, Tazewell County Fair Association, and Tazewell County. For more information about Crab Orchard Corn Maze and Pisgah Pumpkin Patch, visit [www.craborchardmuseum.com](http://www.craborchardmuseum.com) or contact the museum, 276-988-6755 or info@craborchardmuseum.com. Like and follow Crab Orchard Corn Maze on Facebook for more details.

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