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NEW EXHIBITION EXPLORES BOTH ENDS OF THE EARTH Feb. 9 – April 27, 2008

PHILADELPHIA —The Arctic and Antarctic are more than melting icebergs and international land claims. A new exhibition opening Feb. 9 at The Academy of Natural Sciences explores Earth's extreme – and extremely fragile – polar ends with stunning vistas, massive polar bears, comical penguins and brave explorers.

“Ends of the Earth: From Polar Bears to Penguins” is a hands-on, family-friendly exhibition that also faces head-on the serious threats of climate change and endangered species in a way that non-scientists can understand. Interactive games, fascinating videos, mounted penguins and polar bears, animal skulls and authentic artifacts encourage visitors to explore the unique nature of Earth's spectacular polar regions. Visitors will follow the harrowing journey of an Arctic tern, the only animal that migrates from pole to pole; walk and slide like a penguin; learn how massive icebergs form; and compare their weight to that of a polar bear, the largest of all bear species.

The Explorers Theatre tells the compelling stories of survival through the adventures of some of the greatest explorers in history: Roald Amundsen, Captain Robert Scott and Admiral Robert Peary. A related display of memorabilia from the Academy's Ewell Sale Stewart Library features artifacts from Peary's Academy-sponsored 1891 expedition to Greenland, 18 years before he laid claim to being the first to reach the North Pole.

Polar regions in the news

Visitors also will be treated to the first permanent display of *Tiktaalik roseae*, the 375-million-year-old Arctic fossil that is an evolutionary transition from fish to limbed animals. The 2006 announcement of the fossil's discovery by Academy paleontologist Dr. Ted Daeschler and his team, made international headlines, and the fossil was displayed briefly in the museum. Now, a cast of the creature, with both fins for swimming and limbs for moving on land, will be on permanent display as part of the museum's “Science at the Academy” exhibit, which features

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research and discoveries by the Academy's modern-day explorer-scientists. "Science at the Academy" is located down the hall from the Changing Exhibits Gallery where "Ends of the Earth" will reign through April 27.

While few people have ever been to the Arctic or the Antarctic, or even think about them much, these extreme regions have been making news headlines on a regular basis, mostly due to the effects of global warming. Collapsing ice sheets are driving up ocean levels at both ends of Earth while polar bears and penguins watch their habitat melt away. Russia's claim last year to a huge chunk of the Arctic pointed again to the region's vast potential oil, gas and mineral wealth. "Ends of the Earth" addresses some of these issues in a way the general public will understand.

"This white-cold exhibit is fun, informative and engaging, and our members and visitors will love it," said Academy President and CEO William Y. Brown. "Furthermore, it puts the impact of global warming into focus. Fire and ice might work in romance, but they are a rough prescription for the earth."

"Ends of the Earth" is also timely because it falls within the International Polar Year (March 1, 2007–March 1, 2009) as designated by the International Council for Science, a non-governmental organization representing a global membership of science councils and other science bodies. Also The Academy of Natural Sciences is one of several organizations to host North by Degree: An International Conference on Arctic Exploration, May 22–24, 2008. The conference will focus on cultural, technological and other issues involved in exploring the Arctic in the period 1850 to 1940. For more information, see <http://www.ansp.org/research/Arctic/index.php>.

"Ends of the Earth" runs from Feb. 9 through April 27, 2008, and is **free** with museum admission. For more information, go to www.ansp.org/polar. "Ends of the Earth" was produced by Science North in Sudbury, Ontario, and was made possible with support from Quark Expeditions.

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The Academy is located at 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekends until 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for children ages 3-12, college students and seniors, and free for Members and children under 3. There is a \$2 fee for "Butterflies!"

The Academy of Natural Sciences, the oldest natural history museum in the Americas, is a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.