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**Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum Remodel**

In 2002, the museum first opened its doors to the public, offering a glimpse into the rich maritime history of the North Carolina coast. The state took over the museum's management in 2007, bringing it under what was then the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources (now the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources). Over the years, the museum garnered support from various sources, including a significant \$4.2 million from the state in 2021 for renovations, along with contributions from Dare County, the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau and others.

The remodeling process began in late 2022, with Riggs Ward Design contracted to create a comprehensive design plan. Collaborating closely with state staff members specializing in maritime history — including exhibit designers, collections specialists and historians — in every step of the design process and the installation, they were able to help shape the exhibit narratives and support them with objects we had in our collection, as well as finding other objects to help tell a fuller and accurate history of our area.

The revamped museum boasts an array of interactive experiences, from touch screens to holographic video displays, providing visitors with engaging ways to delve into the region's maritime heritage. Children, in particular, can enjoy scavenger hunts and tailored programs designed to both educate and entertain.

Notable highlights of the museum include a Monomoy surf boat, a first-order Fresnel lens from the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, and interactive displays showcasing shipwrecks off the coast. The exhibition covers periods from pre-colonial times to the present, offering a comprehensive journey through the region's history.

As visitors step into the museum's lobby, they are greeted by a visually striking space, with a redesigned welcome desk relocated to the center of the room. A curved wall behind the desk helps separate the space and lead visitors into the gallery experience. The rooms off to the right after entering the lobby are being reworked into a library/education space separate from the main gallery. And the Meekins Chandlery Gift Shop, also located off the lobby, was redesigned to add an entrance

from the gallery directly into the shop. Outside, the familiar museum design remains unchanged, with the exterior evoking the timbers of a shipwreck and helping to inspire the interior redesign.

The museum shares so much history related to the North Carolina coast, and staff and volunteers are excited to share these stories with the public. The design is set up so that the space can be adaptable and updated to make it a new experience. The displays themselves aren't just static; they're designed so people can interact with them to form a deeper connection. Educational programming that enhances the main exhibits and allows visitors to explore new activities and ideas will be scheduled throughout the year. These objects on display, the interactive elements and the public programming work together to help connect the state's maritime history to coastal life today.

This reopening marks the beginning of a new chapter for the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in exploring and celebrating the rich maritime heritage of the North Carolina coast. There are so many interesting stories that are a part of our shared history. It's a great opportunity to explore more about the region and learn just what makes us so unique — and have fun while doing so.