Spotlight on Our Historic Lobby

I don’t need to tell you that this coming fall represents an exciting development in the history of the National Postal Museum. I hope you all know by now that the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery will open its doors on September 22, becoming an immediate “must see” destination for all philatelists. But that’s not the only new thing you’ll notice when you visit us this fall.

The museum also will be unveiling a new look to our historic lobby. Not to worry, we haven’t gone back in time to repeat the tile and Formica™ look of the place some of you may remember from the 1970s. We’re keeping this lovely historic lobby in its original splendor, while adding a few new pieces to help people find their way in the museum.

New maps and guides will be needed, however, because as of September, we will no longer be a single-floor museum, but will have space on three separate levels. There remains, of course, the main floor of the museum, centered on our ninety-foot-high atrium. The new stamp gallery will enjoy space on a floor of its own one level above. And finally, an educational mezzanine area will be located above the stamp gallery. We will be adding new banners in addition to video and static image displays to the lobby, as well as moving the information desk to the center of the hall where it will be easier for visitors to spot and use. Video displays will include an impressive array of four video walls stretching the length of the lobby, showcasing ideas and themes related to postal history and to the museum.

Creating maps of the new spaces for visitor use has been harder than you might imagine. One of the trickiest parts? Deciding which floor of a building that has a street entrance on each of two separate levels is the “first floor.” Spoiler alert: We got around the problem by deciding to use “main” and “lower” level instead. The updated historic lobby keeps the grandeur and feel of the building’s original space, while ensuring that the museum continues to appeal to visitors today and well into the future.