FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Watch & Clock Museum Gets Ready to Fall Back

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Columbia, Lancaster County – The National Watch & Clock Museum is ready to set its timepieces back one hour on November 1, 2026. Daylight Saving Time (DST) will begin again on March 14, 2027, when clocks will spring ahead one hour.

Visitors often ask how the clocks are adjusted for time changes. When we need to "fall back," the clocks are simply stopped for one hour and then restarted. With thousands of clocks and watches in the collection, only a small percentage are wound on a daily or weekly basis.

Museum visitors also ask why clocks must spring forward and fall back each year. Ideas about the best use of summer's longer days go back more than 100 years. Benjamin Franklin satirically suggested in 1784 that high-society Parisians could save money on candles by changing their sleeping habits to socialize earlier in the day while the sun was shining. In 1895, New Zealand entomologist George Hudson proposed moving clocks two hours earlier during the summer so that more daylight leisure time could be enjoyed after working hours—and so he had more daylight time to study bugs. Then in 1907, British builder William Willet crusaded for a one-hour time change to start the workday earlier during the summer to end *The Waste of Daylight*, as the title of his pamphlet emphatically stated.

In 1908, the British government studied the possible pros and cons of changing clock time during the summer. Potential benefits were cited as having more daylight recreational opportunities in the evening, more exposure to fresh air after work, and reduced risk of poor eyesight, anemia, and consumption from working indoors with poor air quality and artificial light. Critics of changing clock time noted the disruption of the body's natural rhythms of sleeping, waking, and eating. Many believed that disrupting sleep patterns to arise an hour earlier could cause health problems and affect productivity.

In 1916, Germany was the first country to implement daylight saving time, and the UK and other nations involved in World War I soon followed, aiming to lengthen the workday and conserve fuel. DST was established in the US with the adoption of the Standard Time Act on March 19, 1918. The law was repealed after World War I, only to be reinstated during World War II, and then from 1945 until 1966 was implemented by some states but not others. The Uniform Time Act of 1966 established DST for the entire country but allowed local exemptions. Currently in the US, Arizona, Hawaii, and US territories do not participate in DST.

(continued on page 2)

The annual time change is still a topic of discussion today. Many view DST as a disruption to the body's natural rhythms, as pet owners will testify when their cats and dogs maintain standard time for breakfast regardless of what the clock says. Others point to the potential for electronic communications to be disrupted by time changes in some locations and not others. Some see DST's additional daylight in the evening as a way to reduce the use of electricity, increase public safety, and promote more recreational and commercial activity. The debate about the actual benefits of DST began over 100 years ago and seems likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

The museum houses approximately 13,000 timepieces, many of which are the most culturally and historically valuable examples of their type in the world. Recently updated and expanded displays include the Public Time gallery, the Hamilton and Bulova exhibits, and the Asian Timekeeping gallery. The museum is run by the National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors (NAWCC), a nonprofit member organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the art and science of timekeeping.

The National Watch & Clock Museum is located at 514 Poplar St., Columbia, and its seasonal hours will begin on November 1: Thursday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, visit museum.nawcc.org or call 717-684-8261.

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