



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Jewel Cave
National Monument

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Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

Release Date: **May 18, 2012**

For Immediate Release

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Jewel Cave Celebrates 40th Anniversary of Scenic Tour Route

JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT, S.D. – Combined with the honor of Memorial Day Weekend, Jewel Cave National Monument invites visitors to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Scenic Tour Route, May 26 – 28, 2012.

The Scenic Tour route opened to the public on May 28, 1972, and it offered visitors a chance to explore the cave by following a moderately strenuous, paved trail. The route provided a one-half mile loop trail into areas of the cave previously inaccessible due to the complexity of the cave environment. Prior to the opening of the Scenic Tour, visitors were restricted to the historic entrance. Although both routes showcase crystal formations, the Scenic Tour includes soda straws, flowstone, popcorn, and an assortment of other speleothems. Perhaps most popular along the route is a ribbon drapery that stretches over 23 feet in length, commonly known as “The Cave Bacon.”

Superintendent Larry Johnson states, “Memorial Day Weekend signals the beginning of the summer season. As the Black Hills witness a surge in visitation over the next few weeks, we hope to encourage our local park enthusiasts to visit the Monument and take part in a cave tour. Many of our local visitors have not been to the cave for ten, fifteen, or even twenty years. The holiday weekend makes for a great opportunity to reacquaint oneself with the cave.”

This upcoming Memorial Day Weekend, visitors may choose the Scenic Tour or Discovery Tour. Scenic Tours are offered at 9:20 AM, 10:00 AM, 10:40 PM, 11:20 AM, 12:40 PM, 1:20 PM, 2:00 PM, 2:40 PM, 3:00 PM and 3:40 PM; each tour provides an opportunity to view a variety of beautiful, colorful, and rare cave formations for which Jewel Cave is famous. This one-half mile tour is moderately strenuous, following a paved, lighted trail with over 700 stair steps and lasting approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes.

The Discovery Tour is conducted at 9:35 AM, 11:35AM, 1:35 PM, and 4:25 PM and includes a 20-minute introduction to the cultural and natural heritage of Jewel Cave. This wheelchair and stroller accessible program is conducted in one large room of the cave. The Discovery Tour accepts the Annual, Military, Access, and Volunteer Passes.

Due to the popularity of the cave tours, tickets are limited, and reservations are strongly recommended. The cave temperature is approximately 49 °F. A light coat or sweater and sturdy walking shoes are suggested. All tours begin at the visitor center.

To make a reservation, contact Jewel Cave National Monument at 605-673-8300 and select Option 1. For more information on the Monument, visit online at www.nps.gov/jeca.

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