

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM AFFILIATION WITH THE IMAGINARIUM SCIENCE DISCOVERY CENTER

OVERVIEW

The Imaginarium Science Discovery Center has entered into an affiliation agreement with the Anchorage Museum July 18, basically merging it into the museum as part of museum's expansion. The museum will assume all management of Imaginarium financial, enterprise, human resources, development marketing and facilities' management responsibilities in collaboration with Imaginarium staff.

Slated for completion in spring 2010, the expansion makes it possible for the museum to expand its Alaskan art- and history-based mission to include science. The Imaginarium, Alaska's only science discovery center for children, will relocate to the museum, bringing its focus on outreach and education to the museum and incorporating experiential exhibits and programs throughout the building.

As a result of this partnership, visitors to the expanded museum will find hands-on exhibits about science subjects ranging from physics and live animals to the solar system. The Thomas Planetarium, a state-of-the-art 530 square-foot planetarium with a high definition digital projection system, will feature Imaginarium presentations that explore the night sky, astronomy and the aurora, as well as digitally produced art, history and ethnography films.

Families with toddlers will enjoy TOTE KidSpace, made possible with support from Totem Ocean Trailer Express Inc. (TOTE), a young learner's discovery hall where everything can be touched and kids and parents can explore art, history and science through play. A BP Kinetic Space Hall, made possible with a science grant from BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc., will explore a range of physics themes including movement, flight, the elements and waves through self-guided exhibit modules. Marine science, geology and other earth and life sciences also will be featured prominently in adjacent halls. The Imaginarium's strong educational outreach to rural Alaska will be a hallmark of the museum's enhanced science programming.

The Imaginarium will close its current Anchorage location on 5th Avenue near G Street in September 2009 as it prepares to move to the museum and reopen in April 2010. The Imaginarium staff will continue delivering science education outreach programming to rural communities throughout Alaska during the facility's closure and will offer science programming for traveling science exhibits housed at the expanded museum through the facility's grand opening.

The museum's expansion project will enhance downtown Anchorage, transform the museum experience and provide space to collect and exhibit the art, history and science of Alaska. The 80,000 square foot addition, designed by internationally acclaimed architect David Chipperfield with the Anchorage firm of Kumin and Associates Inc. will allow the museum to display more of its current art and history collections and bring home to Alaska more than 600 important Alaska Native cultural objects from the Smithsonian Institution.

The new building will make the museum more accessible to passers-by on C Street through a new main entrance and windowed galleries. The vacant two-acre space adjacent the museum will be transformed into a beautifully landscaped public plaza designed by Charles Anderson Landscape Architecture that celebrates the environment while creating an active, vibrant place for both outdoor exhibits and recreation.

The expansion project's anticipated completion date is set for 2010 with a preview of the new wing slated for spring 2009. The \$106 million expansion is funded by both public and private funds. The project was jump-started in 1999 when the Anchorage Museum Foundation received a \$50 million gift from the late Elmer Rasmuson. A successful capital campaign raised the remainder of the project's funds from private, municipal, state and federal sources.

This is the Anchorage Museum's third expansion since it opened in 1968. Today, the museum is one of the ten most visited attractions in Alaska. Its permanent collection holds more than 24,000 objects, 500,000 historical photographs and the largest collection of contemporary Alaska native art in the state. The addition of hands-on science and the Imaginarium will make it the only museum in state with a focus on the art, history and science of Alaska.