

Discovery Museum

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In the fall of 1993, three friends with a dedicated interest in children's education who had traveled to discovery museums in other cities decided to create a new discovery museum to serve their town and region.

The Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum, an independent, nonprofit educational organization, was formed and a board of directors was appointed.

The original mission for the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum continues to be its purpose today: to ignite creativity, spark curiosity and inspire learning in children of all ages by providing a rich variety of interactive, hands-on exhibits and programs that focus on the sciences and mathematics, the humanities and the arts.

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Since the museum's founding, the most significant inhibitor to realizing the full scope of its vision has been the facility - a 7,500-

square-foot rented space at 54 S. Loudoun St. on the Old Town Mall in Winchester.

Recognizing the museum's contribution to the cultural vitality of the region and as a magnet for tourism, the City of Winchester extended the opportunity to build a new and environmentally responsible facility on 3 1/2 acres of land given to the museum by the Winchester City Council and the city's Jim Barnett Park.

A new 26,000-square-foot building will be constructed on the site. Additional outdoor space will be used for environmental and art exhibits.

The new museum building will accommodate greatly expanded permanent exhibits.

The new gallery for temporary exhibits will offer variety for returning visitors. After-school programs, adult hands-on activities in the evenings, an augmented menu of guest presenters and expanded teacher in-service training for the surrounding school districts will be accomplished with additional staff that a larger building will allow.

In the new Discovery Museum, children and their parents will see the possibilities of environmentally responsible construction methods. All the elements of nature - sun, wind, earth, water and gravity - will be interpreted in the new structure.

Visitors will be able to see how a building can employ natural elements in its structure through solar, geothermal and wind energy, and storm and wastewater cleansing, purification and recirculation.

The Discovery Museum's building committee and board will create an environmentally sustainable, platinum-level Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEEDS)-certified building. Today, there are only five platinum buildings in the nation.

Technologies to be incorporated:

- ▶ Ecological site design: on-site erosion control, water purification/pollution reduction and storm-water management
- ▶ Transportation: promoting bicycle, pedestrian and transit use
- ▶ Intensive and extensive green roof technology
- ▶ Waste reduction: building use, job-site recycling and efficient use of materials.
- ▶ On-site management of sewage and organic wastes
- ▶ Energy conservation: efficient thermal envelopes, efficient space and water heating, lighting, controls and monitoring, appliances.
- ▶ Renewable energy: photovoltaic cells, geothermal heating and cooling, wind turbines, microturbines and fuel cells
- ▶ Water efficiency, both domestic and irrigation, including rainwater harvesting for irrigation and toilet flushing

Materials and resources:

- ▶ Durable building envelopes and long-lived materials or assemblies

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- ▶ Recycled-content materials
- ▶ Use of Forest Stewardship Council-certified woods and safer, less-toxic materials, such as alternatives to Chromated Copper Arsenate-treated wood
- ▶ Appropriate use of natural materials, such as straw, earth and other composites
- ▶ Indoor environmental quality, pollution reduction, worker and occupant safety, air cleaning, humidity control and thermal comfort
- ▶ Monitoring of energy, water, waste, air quality and transportation use
- ▶ Resource-efficient building operation practices

While other children's museums teach

and inspire through various learning environments, this museum's innovative structure will be one of its permanent exhibits.

The Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum is just beginning the intermediate phase of the capital campaign. Approximately 30 percent of its \$8.4 million goal has been reached. Throughout the remainder of the year, lead donors and major gift sponsors will be sought.

Beginning in 2006, the public phase will start with a direct-mail campaign and several fund-raising events.

Plans call for breaking ground by mid-2006 and be in the new facility in 2007.

For more information, call Dee Dee Barbour, capital campaign director, at 540/722-2020.