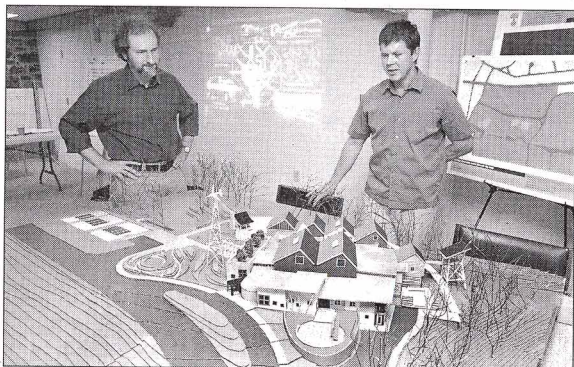


# Area

The Winchester Star  
Friday, September 2, 2005  
Section B



Star Photo by Rick Foster

Architect Chuck Swartz and landscape designer Pete O'Shea look over a model of the new Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum during a planning session Thursday at the Kurtz Building in Winchester.

## New Discovery Museum Kind to the Environment

By ERICA M. BUSH  
The Winchester Star

The new Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum is sure to be unlike any other building in Winchester.

With an outdoor classroom, a wind garden, and trees growing on the rooftop, the museum — which will be built on 3½ acres north of the Christianson Familyland playground area in Jim Barnett Park — is unique.

Those participating in the development process for the new Discov-

ery Museum gathered Thursday at the Kurtz Building to discuss how the design elements of the building will be integrated.

The 20,000-square-foot museum will be a platinum LEED-certified green building.

LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a green building rating system created by the U.S. Green Building Council as a national standard for developing buildings with features such as water

## Museum

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savings, energy efficiency, and indoor environmental quality.

Roofs that collect solar energy and features to collect water runoff are among the efficiency strategies the museum will integrate.

The LEED rating system is cost effective, said Marcus Scheffer of 7group, a member of the U.S. Green Building Council that consults on LEED designs.

But with a plant garden, a field that can be used for sports or other activities, a parking lot that will be turned into an exhibit itself, and the possibility for an outdoor amphitheater, visitors to Jim Barnett Park will be able to enjoy the museum without ever having to step inside.

"We're trying to make building a good thing," said Chuck Swartz of Reader & Swartz Architects, P.C. of Winchester.

In addition to its outdoor features, the museum will offer a variety of exhibits inside.

One feature will be a

trombe wall, which will allow kids to feel thermal energy as they climb the wall, Scheffer said.

Pointing to a design model of the new museum on Thursday, Swartz showcased what exhibits the building will offer.

The museum will include a log house, an art studio, a paleontology exhibit, and a machines exhibit in a room with half of a truck coming out of the side.

A groundbreaking day for the new museum has yet to be set. However, an agreement with the city requires construction to start by Jan. 1, 2006.

Once complete, the Discovery Museum will vacate its current 7,500-square-foot facility at 54 S. Loudoun St. in downtown Winchester.

When plans for the new museum were announced in December, an informational packet stated that \$6 million in donated funds would be required for its construction. No other budget estimates have been released.

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