

NEWS RELEASE



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The Discovery Center of Idaho Celebrates First 20 Years!

Boise, ID – Following closely on the heels of the Julia Davis Park Centennial, the Discovery Center of Idaho will be celebrating 20 years since the doors of the Myrtle Street complex were opened to the public. The official opening date for the Discovery Center was on January 15, 1989. It was almost 26 years ago that the Junior League of Boise conceived of the idea for a children's science museum in Boise, and the next 6 years were spent bringing the idea to life. Through countless hours of volunteer effort, the current location was selected through the generosity of the City of Boise, and has proven to be a great location and an even greater affiliation with the other public institutions in and around Julia Davis Park. With the volunteer work of local architect, Parker Massman, three old military warehouse buildings on Myrtle Street were joined into one and it is still the same building that houses the Discovery Center today. Through the tireless efforts of the founding DCI board members (Stan Darger, Floyd Decker, Dr. Dewey Dykstra, Alec Gloth, Guy Hurlbutt, Gary Lewis, Parker Massman, Jerry Nielson, Don Peterson, Patricia Pierose, Katherine Shiflet, Joe Terteling, Barbara Trenary, Dr. Blossom Turk, Jena Vasconcellos and Lorette Williams), the brand new Discovery Center of Idaho opened its doors on January 15, 1989, to a crowd of hundreds of people and an exhibition that included about 50 interactive exhibits (many of which were broken by the end of that day). In April, 1990, the "Discovery Bridge" from the DCI parking lot to Julia Davis Park, over a canal, was added through the collaborative efforts of BSU Engineering Club, Joe Canning, Trus/Joist International, Idaho Society of Professional Engineers and Kreizenbeck Constructors, Inc. Today, the Discovery Center welcomes over 100,000 people annually and has over 160 hands-on exhibits, and has seen well over 1,000,000 visitors since 1989.

The Discovery Center plans to celebrate this 20th Birthday throughout most of 2009. Events for the celebration are still being planned, but some of these events will include:

- A photo gallery of images from the past will be on display in the DCI "Orange Room" beginning January 15th
- An exhibition that includes some of Discovery Center's original exhibits is already on display through June 7th
- The actual birth date, January 15th, will be a public celebration with reduced admission for the general public to view relics of DCI's past (go to the DCI web site for more information at www.scidaho.org)
- A web page on the DCI site (www.scidaho.org) with photos and video from the past will be in place by January 1, 2009

The Discovery Center would also like to publicly thank all of the Boise citizens who helped to bring our science museum to life. They are too numerous to list, but they put their personal time and effort into helping design and build our current site; they created the capital fundraising efforts that provided the initial overhead funding to open our doors; they helped to build many of the first exhibits, some of which are still in use today; and they staffed our first group of volunteers, the heart of DCI who greet the public every day. Some of those volunteers from 20 years ago are still on the job at DCI today.

DCI is a non-profit 501 (C) 3 organization. The center is an interactive science center providing exhibits and educational programs that offer authentic, sensory experiences making the sciences, math and technology tangible. The science center fosters lifelong learning and enhances scientific literacy in a collaborative environment for people of all ages and from all walks of life.

DCI celebrates the pure joy of learning, helping to develop an educated workforce and an informed electorate in stewardship of our planet and is built on cooperative partnerships with education, industry and research organizations, public and private. It is our goal to showcase the philosophy and objectives and reflect the region's resources through our programs, exhibits and architecture.

Discovery Center of Idaho Celebrates 20 Years!



Concept

Over 20 years ago, the **Junior League of Boise** started to form a concept. The concept was built around the idea to create a place where the whole family could go to have fun BUT would also learn something new on their outing. A popular concept at the time was a hands-on science museum. Science museums had been around for centuries, but hands-on science museums, most oriented toward children ages K-8, had taken hold in the 1960's. A hands-on science museum would not only be fun but could help to augment science education throughout the Treasure Valley. After a long hunt for just the right location for this museum, the current site was selected which was comprised of some old warehouses. These warehouses were joined into the rendering on the left, and the **Discovery Center of Idaho** was born! Continue to check our online calendar at www.scidaho.org to view upcoming 20th Birthday Events!



Founders

Leaders from the Junior League of Boise, including Lorette Williams (far right) and Jena Vasconcellos (second from right), worked with civic leaders (founding board members included L to R, Dewey Dykstra, Joe Terteling, Alec Gloth and Jerry Nielson) to raise funds and break ground on the renovated facility. Lorette and Jena went on to become founding staff at the Discovery Center.



Staff

Our staff has always been the strength for the long term success of the Discovery Center. A few staff members, like Exhibits Director, Bill Molina (pictured above), and Exhibit Technician, Mike Twitchell have been with DCI almost from day one. Bill had worked at the Exploratorium in San Francisco (a huge hands-on science museum) and brought his exhibit concepts from there.



Exhibits

Our hands-on approach to exhibitions has been a very large part of the popularity of the Discovery Center over the years. We regularly hear remarks from our younger visitors like, "this is **way** more fun than Chuck E. Cheese!" We also refresh about 1/3 of our exhibits every 3 to 6 months which helps to bring families in over and over.



Volunteers

Without a doubt, our volunteers over the years have been the heart of the Discovery Center. From high school students up through retirement age volunteers, they greet the public every day and are responsible for leaving a lasting, positive impression with our visitors. Some of our current volunteers have been with DCI from the beginning.