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Regional Science Center to Bring New Opportunities for Inspiration to NoVA *Project serves as an example of the power of public-private partnerships*

Dulles, VA, March 6, 2019 – The vision for a world-class interactive science center in Northern Virginia took a giant leap forward when the Virginia General Assembly approved its Fiscal Year 2020 Budget in late February. The budget included \$2.3 million to initiate the detailed design of a regional science center in Northern Virginia. Support at the local, regional and state level has helped the project reach this pivotal milestone.

Developed in partnership with the Fairfax-based Children's Science Center, the new regional science center will be an extension of the Science Museum of Virginia and will benefit from shared resources and expertise from the Museum's four decades of delivering inspiring informal science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning experiences at its locations in Richmond and Danville, Virginia.

"This partnership is a result of leaders from across the state who stepped up to make this dream a reality and found a smart solution to fill a major gap in our region," said Nene Spivy, executive director for the Children's Science Center. "We look forward to expanding our mission of inspiring a love of learning in STEM; showcasing our region as a science and technology hub; and providing fun, high-quality interactive experiences for families, schools and curious minds of all ages."

"We thank the Governor and General Assembly for this tremendous opportunity to extend the mission of the Science Museum of Virginia to the northern region of the Commonwealth where STEM education and workforce development is an upmost priority," said long-time Arlington resident Glenn Davidson, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Science Museum of Virginia and an executive with Deloitte Consulting LLP.

This new STEM-focused resource will serve an estimated 300,000 guests annually, including children, families, schools and citizens of all ages. It will be located on donated land at the Kincora development in Dulles and will be 10 times the size of the current Children's Science Center facility at Fair Oaks Mall.

Support from local and state elected officials was key to securing the funding to advance the science center – which a recent study estimates could contribute \$121 million in economic benefits in the short term and \$9 million annually – to detailed design.

“I am proud to have sponsored the regional science center that will offer extraordinary educational opportunities for generations of children in our region and those across the Commonwealth,” said Senator Janet Howell. “I thank my Senate colleagues including Chairman Tommy Norment, Senator Frank Ruff and Senator Jennifer Boysko for their instrumental support.”

Delegate David Reid, who represents the 32nd district that is home to the future science center said, “I am thrilled for Loudoun to host this valuable resource for the region, and I appreciate the significant economic impacts it will bring to the region and Commonwealth. I want to acknowledge Chairman Chris Jones, Delegate Mark Sickles, Delegate Luke Torian and Delegate Ken Plum for their support and thank the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors for their significant contribution to this public-private partnership.”

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors agreed to contribute \$15 million to the public-private partnership project, which played a pivotal part in the General Assembly’s decision. Loudoun County Board Chair Phyllis Randall and Supervisor Ron Meyer were leaders in the Board’s unanimous vote.

“How special will it be to see Loudoun’s children – including my own daughter – be inspired and excited to go learn about science and innovation?” said Ron Meyer. “Loudoun County is cementing its legacy as a home for next-generation learning.”

The project has benefited from broad community support from business and community leaders, including the Kincora developers who donated the property; the Northern Virginia Regional Commission; Northern Virginia Technology Council; the Northern Virginia, Alexandria, Dulles, Loudoun, McLean, Prince William and Reston Chambers; Visit Fairfax and Visit Loudoun.

Private support and community involvement has been essential in the early planning for the regional science center. Grants from the Fairfax Education Foundation and Claude Moore Charitable Foundation, as well as significant donations from several generous donor families, enabled the development of a comprehensive master plan for the science center in 2017. Citizens of all ages and perspectives provided input to the design team led by Roto, an international museum design firm, to help envision an innovative and efficient facility with expansive galleries and learning spaces to be filled with engaging, hands-on experiences. Themes emerging from the plan encourage audiences to explore a variety of topics through the lens of science, from water, motion and medicine, to space colonization and the fusion of technology with the arts.

The master plan reflects the unique character, attributes and aspirations of the region. It is designed to enable the science center to be a community hub and showcase, while offering direct connections for outdoor environmental education by taking advantage of the diverse, mixed-uses within Kincora and its over 150 acres of stream-valley parkland.

The total cost of the science center is projected to be over \$70 million with the public partners supporting approximately two-thirds of the funding. The remaining funds will be secured through private donations as required to match the state’s contribution.

During the next phase, architects and engineers will be commissioned for the detailed design of the facilities and exhibits. In the near future, a new name and brand identity will be developed for Northern Virginia’s regional science center. The team and partners will continue to engage broad community input throughout the life of the project.

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About the Children's Science Center

The Children's Science Center's mission is to inspire a love of learning science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) by providing unique opportunities to explore and create. The Children's Science Center Lab is located at Fair Oaks Mall and is Northern Virginia's first interactive museum where children, families and school groups can explore STEM concepts through fun, engaging hands-on exhibits, activities and programs. In addition to the Lab and community programs, the Center is working to fulfill the vision of a full-scale, world-class, interactive science center to be located in Dulles, VA. The Children's Science Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Learn more at www.childsci.org.

About the Science Museum of Virginia

The mission of the Science Museum of Virginia is to inspire Virginians to enrich their lives through science. Through hundreds of experiential exhibits, awe-inspiring artifacts and interactive technologies, the Museum presents dynamic science programming to hundreds of thousands of guests each year. The Richmond-based museum is home to three floors of interactive exhibits, the Dome theater – the largest movie screen in Virginia – and proudly hosts dynamic traveling exhibitions from around the world. Learn more at www.smv.org or call 804.864.1400.