



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2016

Immersive Technology Promises to Transform Museum and Omni Theater

Celebrating 75 Years and a Vision for Digital Learning

Fort Worth, TX - At a gala celebrating its 75th anniversary Thursday night, the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History disclosed a dramatic new vision that would transform the Museum into a hub for digital learning with fun and inventive ways to experience and explore the world.

Van Romans, president of the Museum, said the new Academy of Digital Learning, would position the Museum to be a national leader in applying technology to enhance learning experiences.

The vision includes:

- Reimagining the space now devoted to the Omni Theater, with an eye toward creating truly immersive and interactive theater experiences.
- Hiring Doug Roberts, Ph.D., a nationally recognized leader in digital learning and science education, as the Museum's first chief technology officer.
- Enhancing galleries and exhibitions throughout the Museum, while upgrading the Noble Planetarium and the Museum's online, on-site and community outreach.

"Obviously, these changes will transform the Museum," Romans said. "We'll be extending into new arenas for all ages. Just as important," he added, "this could be transformational for Fort Worth and North Texas. Our goal is to nurture a nationally recognized center. Imagine a hub where leading teachers, researchers, programmers, technologists and designers come together to explore and experiment."

"At the same time, our children and teens will have the opportunity to develop digital and scientific literacy so they'll thrive in the workforce for the future. Quite simply," he said, "this is laying the foundation for our future, with the understanding that the future will require constant creativity and flexibility. "

Romans said the vision has been taking shape for more than two years, but the planning continues. Designs have not been completed, final costs have not been calculated and it is premature to disclose a target for the capital campaign that will be required.

While it's unusual to discuss a major project like this before such plans are completed, Romans said the Museum and its board decided to share the dreams now as part of the anniversary celebration. "As we celebrate our 75th anniversary," Romans said, "we have a responsibility to honor our innovative past by looking to the future. Frankly, we strive to live up to the legacy of our founders, a small group of creative teachers who dreamed big and embraced change."

Media Contact

Rebecca Rodriguez | Executive Director of Marketing & Communications
817.255.9411 rrodriguez@fwmslh.org

About the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History

The Museum was established in 1941 and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Anchored by its rich collections, the Museum is dedicated to lifelong learning. It engages guests through creative, vibrant programs and exhibits interpreting science and the history of Texas and the Southwest. The Museum is open daily, except Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Visit www.fortworthmuseum.org for more.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2016

In the first 15 years, the Museum had three different homes as it kept growing. And as it grew, it emerged as one of the pioneers in hands-on, informal learning with its acclaimed Museum School. The Noble Planetarium was the first in this region, and the Omni was the first to bring IMAX films to a museum.

“Standing still is not in our DNA,” Romans said. “As the world -- and our understandings about it -- have changed, the Museum has changed.”

Reimagining the theater experience is one of the bigger challenges, he acknowledged. The Omni has been a popular attraction for more than three decades. But there are now several IMAX theaters in the region. More important, the Omni’s equipment is outdated, precluding it from showing the newest digital films.

Romans and the Museum’s designers have been focusing on creating a next-generation offering. The Museum is committed to providing documentaries and other learning opportunities on the giant screen of the 21st century. The preliminary plans envision an immersive experience that places guests into new environments.

“Trust me, you’ll be hearing more from us later, as the plans take shape,” Romans promised.

The new vision builds on the Museum’s traditions. Guests will continue to be engaged as active, creative learners, and activities and programs will appeal to all ages. But the Museum is particularly aiming to ignite the interest of children, tweens and teens in science, technology, engineering and math topics.

The Museum has already begun working with Legorreta + Legorreta, the award-winning architects who designed the current building, which opened in November 2009.

The Museum is also drawing on the knowledge of nationally recognized experts in the fields of digital learning, visitor experience and adaptive technologies. Their counsel is helping to inform critical decisions about the Academy, the galleries and the building, as well as how audiences engage with exhibits and programs.

###

Media Contact

Rebecca Rodriguez | Executive Director of Marketing & Communications
817.255.9411 rrodriguez@fwms.org

About the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History

The Museum was established in 1941 and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Anchored by its rich collections, the Museum is dedicated to lifelong learning. It engages guests through creative, vibrant programs and exhibits interpreting science and the history of Texas and the Southwest. The Museum is open daily, except Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Visit www.fortworthmuseum.org for more.