

For Immediate Release

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Northeast Delta Dental Pledges \$50,000 for the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center Expansion

CONCORD, NH – Northeast Delta Dental recently announced that it pledged \$50,000 to the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center in Concord, NH to support their expansion project.

Northeast Delta Dental's donation helped fund the Science Store and also provided free admission for the public during the opening weekend of the Discovery Center in March 2009. In addition, they have sponsored events such as the Astronomy Bowl for high school students and Aerospacefest 2010.

“We appreciate the value of the Discovery Center in highlighting the significant achievements of our space program, and we think it is a critical resource for energizing and exciting children about considering careers that demand strong math and science skills,” said Tom Raffio, President & CEO of Northeast Delta Dental.

Currently, the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center is undertaking a substantial expansion which will enable it to become the preeminent center for experiential education in Earth and space science, astronomy, and aviation in New England. The 45,000-square-foot science center will provide opportunities for discovery and inspiration for people from communities throughout the region.

Phase I of the project, completed in March 2009, included construction of the facility, upgrade of the planetarium theater, and the addition of new exhibits and programs. Based upon national education standards in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), these exhibits and programs provide engaging, interactive learning experiences for students, teachers, and families.

Phase II is focused on the Astronomy Gallery, which will provide a comprehensive look at the universe in which we live including exploration of the electromagnetic spectrum, orbital mechanics, gravity, key astronomical discoveries, and the process of scientific thinking. Planning for this gallery is currently underway. Phase III will focus on the creation of the Aeronautics Wing, including a flight simulation center with F/A-18E and Cessna simulators.

The total cost of these three phases is approximately \$13 million. A public-private partnership has provided more than half that total to date, including major support from NASA and the State of New Hampshire. Touch the Future, Inc. is leading efforts to secure additional private gifts and grants from organizations and individuals throughout the region.

Touch the Future, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization formed for the sole purpose of supporting programs and the expansion of the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center.

For more information, visit our websites at www.touchthefuturenh.org and www.starhop.com.

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