

## For Immediate Release

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### **Merrimack County Savings Bank Pledges \$10,000 for McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center Expansion**

CONCORD, NH – Merrimack County Savings Bank has pledged \$10,000 to Touch the Future, Inc. towards the expansion of the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center in Concord, New Hampshire. Touch the Future, Inc. is the philanthropic partner of the Discovery Center and is spearheading fundraising efforts for the continued development of the science center.

"We are pleased to be able to support the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center with this contribution. As a local community bank headquartered in Concord, we believe it's important to support organizations like the Discovery Center that help drive our local economy, attracting others to the area and encouraging them to partake in all we have to offer," said Ronald A. Wilbur, Chairman and CEO of Merrimack County Savings Bank

The McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center is currently 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 more 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 [www.touchthefuturenh.org](http://www.touchthefuturenh.org).

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The McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center is New England's premier air and space science center, featuring 21st century interactive exhibits on aviation, astronomy, Earth and space sciences, a state-of-the-art planetarium, observatory, and a variety of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs. Call 603-271-7827 or visit [www.starhop.com](http://www.starhop.com).

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