

## For Immediate Release

September 24, 2009

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### **Associated Grocers of New England Pledges \$50,000 for McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center Expansion**

CONCORD, NH – Touch the Future, Inc. announced that Associated Grocers of New England has pledged \$50,000 for the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center expansion. Touch the Future, Inc. is the philanthropic partner of the Discovery Center and is spearheading fundraising efforts for the expansion project. This gift will help fund the Associated Grocers Countdown Café at the Center and will support annual programming.

“Associated Grocers of New England, a retailer-owned cooperative that serves over 600 independent food stores across New England, is very pleased to be able to help fund the Discovery Center's expansion plans and annual programming,” said Mike Bourgoine, president of Associated Grocers of New England. “The McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center is a premier science center providing outstanding interactive exhibits that inform and educate visitors, particularly children, from New England and beyond. We are proud to be associated with such a prestigious institution honoring Christa McAuliffe and Alan Shepard, New Hampshire's astronauts.”

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.

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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](http://www.touchthefuturenh.org) and [www.starhop.com](http://www.starhop.com).

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