



**Museum of Life and Science**

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**National Science Foundation Selects Museum of Life and Science  
as Working Partner in \$20 Million Network  
for Public Engagement with Nanotechnology**

***Museum of Life and Science partners with multiple science museums  
and research institutions nationally***

**For Immediate Release -- October 14, 2005** -- The Museum of Life and Science, Durham, NC announces its selection as one of six nationally known science institutions to work as network partners with three lead institutions--Science Museum of Minnesota, Museum of Science, Boston and Exploratorium, San Francisco--to form a national *Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network* (NISE Network) of multiple science museums and research institutions. Awarded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), this \$20 million effort will collaboratively develop and distribute innovative approaches to engage Americans in nanoscale science and engineering education, research and technology. The five-year \$20 million award will allocate an initial ??? **\$700,000** to the Museum of Life and Science to develop exhibits and programming for the general public to experience nanoscale science first hand. This grant is the largest award NSF has ever given to the science museum community.

“An increased understanding of nanoscale science and engineering is vital to create an informed citizenry and competitive workforce for this broad-based technology, and we recognize the substantial role science museums and informal science education institutions play in pioneering innovative science learning experiences, supplementing K-12 curricula and engaging adult audiences.” said Mihail Roco, key architect of the National Nanotechnology Initiative and Senior Advisor for Nanotechnology of the National Science Foundation.

Nanoscale science and engineering explores revolutionary approaches to producing new kinds of materials, systems, and devices through the control and manipulation of matter at the nanoscale (one billionth of a meter), the realm of individual atoms and molecules. Under the White House's inter-agency National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI), the U.S. government is spending about \$1 billion a year to promote nanotechnology which is expected to lead to far-reaching, beneficial outcomes for healthcare, manufacturing, information processing, defense, construction and transportation, energy production and conservation. These breakthroughs will likely require an overhaul in science and engineering education

and have economic, environmental, cultural and societal dimensions that will require public input and guidance.

The NISE Network is not only the first one to address nanotechnology informal education but also is a new way in which NSF is placing its funding to National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI) centers and networks to be more relevant to society. "The NSF's support of nanotechnology education initiatives is key to our ability to bring current science to our area," said Barry Van Deman. "The Museum of Life and Science's role is an effort to boost public understanding and leverage the significant work of nanotech-research centers in North Carolina, raise the field's profile for greater overall educational impact and strengthen ties between science educators, the research community and K-12 curricula developers."

### **About the NISE Network Partners**

In addition to the Museum of Life and Science, institutional working partners of the NISE Network include the New York Hall of Science, the Sciencenter in Ithaca, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, the Association of Science-Technology Centers, the Materials Research Society and nanotech education research groups at Cornell University, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Purdue University.

The NISE Network will also include 30 advisors from other science museums, nano research centers, libraries, media organizations, the National Nanotechnology Infrastructure Network and the National Center for Learning and Teaching (NCLT) in Nanoscale Science and Engineering, headquartered at Northwestern University, which is developing nanoscale curricula for middle and high schools.

### **About the Museum of Life and Science**

The Museum of Life and Science is creating a place of lifelong learning where young children to senior citizens embrace science as a way of knowing about ourselves, our community and our world. Offering hands-on, interactive learning in a distinctive indoor and outdoor setting, over 250,000 visitors, including 80,000 school-aged children, enjoy nationally recognized education programs in the physical and life sciences.

Ranked eighth in North Carolina for field trips by *Field Trip Magazine* and fourth in the Southeast for family fun (*Family Fun Magazine*), the Museum is both in indoor and outdoor science experience located on 70 acres with 90,000 square feet of indoor exhibit space and several acres of outdoor features including a farmyard, playground and wild animal exhibits.

In 2006, the Museum will debut *Explore the Wild* and *Catch the Wind*, a 12-acre, one-of-a-kind outdoor natural science experience, the first comprehensive plan in the world engaging people, animals and plants with interactive exhibits in a natural outdoor setting. Funding provided by Durham County and National Science Foundation.

**About National Science Foundation**

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency that supports fundamental research and education across all fields of science and engineering, with an annual budget of nearly \$5.47 billion. NSF funds reach all 50 states through grants to nearly 2,000 universities and institutions. Each year, NSF receives about 40,000 competitive requests for funding, and makes about 11,000 new funding awards. The NSF also awards over \$200 million in professional and service contracts yearly.

*This award was made as a Cooperative Agreement by the Informal Science Education program in the Education and Human Resources Directorate and is being co-funded by 12 Research and Related Activities programs across the National Science Foundation.*