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LIBERTY SCIENCE CENTER BREAKS GROUND ON \$40 MILLION EXPANSION IN SEPTEMBER 10TH CEREMONY

Project Supernova Includes Interactive Kids and Goats Playground, River Otter Habitat, Physics-Based Mini Golf Course, Working Rooftop Garden, 9/11 Memorial Garden, Hot-Air Balloon with Science-Defying Twist and Major Enhancements to Planetarium, River Rising, Wild About Animals, and Other Exhibitions

First Comprehensive Expansion of Center in Years Made Possible By New Jersey Economic Development Authority's Inaugural Award Under Its Cultural Arts Facilities Expansion Program

JERSEY CITY, NJ, Sept. 10, 2026 — In a ceremony attended by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, state, county, and local elected officials, and a host of business, community, and philanthropic leaders, Liberty Science Center broke ground today on a visionary \$40 million transformation of its physical campus and its vast array of exhibitions and science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) programs that annually reach hundreds of thousands of visitors of all ages.

The massive re-imagination of the Center, called **Project Supernova**, is supported by the NJEDA through its new Cultural Arts Facilities Expansion (CAFE) program. The initiative offers transferable tax credits that will allow the Center to undergo an ambitious expansion designed to increase visitor attendance and engagement in key demographics, improve accessibility and sensory inclusion, and showcase cutting-edge science. The largest cultural institution in NJ, LSC is the first in the state to receive the backing of the CAFE program.

"Project Supernova is a vibrant fusion of science, ecology, and culture. It's presented through new immersive environments that are interactive and educational, and upgrades to existing iconic experiences that LSC is famous for. The project celebrates the intersection of science and culture, honoring New Jersey's famous scientific legacy and natural ecosystems," said **Liberty Science Center President and CEO Paul Hoffman**. "And true to the DNA of Liberty Science Center, the project is bold, forward-looking, and inclusive, and it transforms the Center into an all-weather campus where learning is fun, hands-on, and accessible to all. Many thanks to Governor Sherrill and the EDA for embracing this game-changing expansion."

In his remarks at the ceremony, Hoffman reiterated his profound gratitude to Gov. Sherrill and the NJ Economic Development Authority for the State of New Jersey's long-standing commitment to the Center and their conviction that New Jersey should be home to the most engaging science learning center in the country.

This strategic expansion, which involves both indoor and outdoor renovations and new activations, will celebrate New Jersey's scientific heritage and broaden LSC's appeal for New Jersey families, tourists, and visitors from New York, Connecticut, and throughout the tri-state and Northeast region.

"Today's groundbreaking is happening in the state with the highest concentration of scientists and engineers per square mile anywhere in the country, and that's no accident. That legacy began at Bell Labs and Princeton, and this expansion is proof it's still being written, not filed away," said **New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill**. "I am proud to see the EDA and Liberty Science Center turn that legacy into a campus where families learn side by side,

reaching 280,000 students a year with room to serve many more. We are reimagining what a science center can be, right here in the state that has always led the way.”

The new features will include:

- A combined – and highly unique – **Kids Corner, a playground for goats and children.** Visible from adjoining Phillip Street and taking advantage of the natural slope and pitch of the landscape, this play structure will feature parallel play areas for kids, both human and goat. A designated ground-level area will house a barn and allow trained staff to facilitate supervised interactions between the two groups, bringing an engaging educational component to the experience.
- **River Otter Habitat.** River otters were once common throughout the Hudson River estuary, but disappeared from its southern urban areas largely as a result of severe water pollution. Thanks to successful efforts to clean up the river, otters have started to return and have been spotted as far south as Staten Island! The new North American River Otter habitat will enable the Center to expand and enhance the story of the Hudson River told in LSC’s existing but soon-to-be reimagined River Rising exhibition. Designed as an outdoor experience, the otter building and habitat will work in tandem to create a seamless and engaging environment. The building will be strategically positioned along both the pool and dry land areas of the habitat, offering visitors unique views of the otters from inside, regardless of weather conditions.
- The highly-unique, state-of-the-art **Physics Mini Golf Course.** From world-class theoretical and experimental physics out of Princeton University to the invention of the transistor at Bell Labs, New Jersey has a rich legacy in physics research and education, with roots in both academic institutions and industry. By bringing together artists and scientists on the design and build of a physics-based miniature golf course, LSC will bring this legacy to life. Each hole will demonstrate a core physics principle, making for a hands-on science learning experience unlike any other in the world.
- **The Weston Family Pollinator Garden.** Named for LSC’s longtime supporter, the Center’s eco-friendly green roof will be home to a carefully plotted garden with native plantings to support local pollinators and other wildlife. This landscape will also provide vegetation to sustain the Center’s resident species, especially such arthropods as the colony of busy leaf-cutter ants. Plantings will be planned to provide seasonal harvests throughout the year, as well as perennial opportunities for science students to experience hands-on horticulture lessons. A garden path will wind through the space, dotted with seating and viewing areas for outdoor visitors.
- **Unique Big Balloon.** Created by the internationally-renowned Argentinian conceptual artist Leandro Erlich specifically for LSC, this massive 90-foot-high balloon is in the familiar shape of the iconic Montgolfier hot air balloon invention in 1783 – but with a highly unique twist that, at once, celebrates science and defies gravity. Indeed, it is totally upside down with the multi-colored balloon resting at the bottom and the payload basket for carrying people and equipment at the top, a position a real balloon could never occupy without toppling over.

“Today’s groundbreaking marks an exciting new chapter for the Liberty Science Center and Jersey City community,” said **NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Evan Weiss**. “The NJEDA is proud to support Project Supernova, which will create new opportunities for families, students, and visitors to learn and experience science in engaging and innovative ways. This project will help advance Governor Sherrill’s mission to create jobs and drive new economic activity, while helping ensure the Liberty Science Center remains a vibrant community anchor for many years to come.”

Of note, given the groundbreaking occurred on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Center’s expansion will include a **9/11 Memorial Garden** featuring two original World Trade Center beams relocated from the former **Skyscraper! Exhibition**, and which were donated to the Center by The Port Authority

of New York and New Jersey in recognition of the Center's assistance to investigators in the days following the attacks.

The project will also replace the existing **Our Hudson Home** exhibition with a modern and highly engaging **River Rising** exhibition. The River Rising renovation will breathe new life into a dated exhibit, offering a fresh, immersive experience that deepens visitors' understanding of the Hudson River and the urgent challenges it faces due to climate change. The new gallery will surround visitors in the power of the Hudson River and our own power in shaping it. It embodies the awe-inspiring forces, from daily tides to climate change to human action, that come together here to make the estuary what it is and what it will be.

Also being upgraded and enhanced through the CAFE program will be the reconfiguration of the Center's building layout to better support high-impact and technologically advanced premium exhibitions. Currently, the gallery housing special temporary exhibits is located on the fourth floor in a space that limits the scale and types of exhibits LSC can host. To address this, the traveling gallery will be relocated to a much larger, more flexible and prominent location on the first floor. This will allow LSC to host brand name blockbuster experiences that draw large crowds, such as the widely-acclaimed The Van Gogh Expo and The Harry Potter Experience.

Other spaces that will be renovated, refurbished, and re-imagined include the **Jennifer Chalsty Planetarium**, the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere; the giant "**Science on a Sphere**" projection globe located in the Weston Family Lab for Earth and Space Exploration; new outdoor spaces to enable LSC to offer all-weather activities and programming beyond the current and ever-popular **Dino Dig Adventure**; and the expansion of the **Wild About Animals** habitat, which is home to more than 100 species of animals and one of the Center's most popular exhibitions.

"I couldn't be more excited for Project Supernova," said **Jersey City Mayor James Solomon**. "Each part of it is going to make [Liberty Science Center] an even better place to bring our kids and then for them to bring their kids."

For project renderings, please visit: tinyurl.com/ProjectSupernova.

ABOUT LIBERTY SCIENCE CENTER (LSC)

Liberty Science Center (LSC.org) is a 300,000-square-foot, not-for-profit learning center located in Liberty State Park on the Jersey City bank of the Hudson near the Statue of Liberty. Dedicated to inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers and bringing the power, promise, and pure fun of science and technology to learners of all ages, Liberty Science Center houses the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere, 12 museum exhibition halls, a live animal collection with 110 species, giant aquariums, a 3D theater, live simulcast surgeries, a tornado-force wind simulator, K-12 classrooms and labs, and teacher-development programs. More than 280,000 students visit the Science Center each year, and tens of thousands more participate in the Center's off-site and online programs. Welcoming more than 800,000 visitors annually, LSC is the largest cultural institution in New Jersey and the largest interactive science center in the NYC-NJ metropolitan area.