



Over 1,000 Science Center Leaders Headed to Fort Worth for ASTC Annual Conference

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – More than 1,200 science center professionals from across the world will convene in Fort Worth, Texas, October 31-November 3 for the 2009 ASTC Annual Conference. ASTC 2009, *The Art of Science: Creating a Better Future/El Arte de la Ciencia: Hacia un Futuro Mejor*, will be hosted by The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History and held at the Fort Worth Convention Center and the Fort Worth Sheraton Hotel & Spa. Highlights of this year's conference include:

- More than **100 conference sessions** that will challenge participants to explore how the blending of art and science can engage people of all cultures and provide powerful learning experiences, and to become valuable and essential partners in addressing key local, national, and global issues.
- The **ASTC Exhibit Hall**, featuring more than 122 exhibitors in nearly 150 booths.
- A **Keynote Address by Anousheh Ansari**, a technology innovator, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and the world's first female private space explorer.
- A chance to meet – and see live in concert – **Grammy Award-winning duo They Might Be Giants**. Band members John Linnell and John Flansburgh will sign copies of their new CD/DVD, *Here Comes Science*, in the ASTC Exhibit Hall and will also perform at Sunday night's Fort Worth Fandango party at the Museum of Science and History.
- The presentation of the **ASTC Fellow Award for Outstanding Contribution**, the Association's highest honor, and the **2009 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Awards**, presented annually to ASTC members and/or their employees in recognition of extraordinary accomplishments in Visitor Experience, Business Practice, and Leadership in the Field.

With more than 96 million visits worldwide each year, science centers are community resources for informal science learning, serving families, schoolchildren, homeschoolers, teachers, and citizens. They are places where people of all ages, cultures, and educational levels can learn at their own pace, spark their curiosity, use all of their senses to explore science and technology, and become more deeply engaged with crucial issues related to science and society.

Chartered with the State of Texas in 1941 as the "Fort Worth Children's Museum," the new \$80 million Fort Worth Museum of Science and History (FWMSH) campus marks the culmination of an extensive multi-year fund-raising campaign following a comprehensive planning effort. The new museum building, created by internationally acclaimed design architects Legoretta + Legoretta with Gideon Toal, is located in the heart of Fort Worth's Cultural District. The world-class, 166,000 square-foot facility features a collection of new, interactive exhibits and programs developed by the Museum's staff and a team of nationally recognized designers in support of the Museum's dedication to informal, discovery-based learning for all. Anchored by its rich collections, the Museum engages school children and adult visitors through creative, vibrant programs and exhibits interpreting science and the history of Texas and the Southwest. For more than six decades, the FWMSH has provided learning opportunities for tens of thousands of area children annually among its million visitors each year, making it one of the most popular cultural attractions in North Texas.

The new Museum's environment of learning comprises state-of-the-art interactive exhibitions and components including: Energy Blast; the Fort Worth Children's Museum; the Cattle Raisers Museum; the Noble Planetarium; Omni IMAX[®] Theater; DinoLabs/DinoDig[®], featuring the State Dinosaur of Texas, *Paluxysaurus jonesi*; Innovation Studios/Innovation Gallery; and the 60-year-old Museum School.

The Association of Science-Technology Centers is an organization dedicated to furthering public engagement with science among increasingly diverse audiences. ASTC encourages excellence and innovation in informal science learning by serving and linking its members worldwide and advancing their common goals. Through strategic alliances and global partnerships, ASTC also supports science centers and museums in proactively addressing critical societal issues, locally and globally, where understanding of and engagement with science are essential. Founded in 1973, ASTC now numbers nearly 600 members in 45 countries. Members include not only science centers and museums, but also nature centers, aquariums, planetariums, zoos, botanical gardens, and natural history and children's museums, as well as companies, consultants, and other organizations that share an interest in informal science education. Visit www.astc.org to learn more about ASTC and to find a science center near you.

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