



Over 1,500 Science Center Leaders to Assemble in Columbus for ASTC Annual Conference

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – More than 1,500 leaders in the global science center community, representing 33 countries, will convene in Columbus, Ohio, October 13-16 for the 2012 Annual Conference of the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC). ASTC 2012 will be hosted by COSI, the city's dynamic Center of Science and Industry, and held at the Greater Columbus Convention Center and the Hyatt Regency Columbus Hotel. Highlights of this year's conference – once again the premier professional development opportunity for the global science center community – include:

- Over **100 conference sessions** addressing everything from education, outreach, development and fundraising, marketing and public relations, equity and diversity, exhibits, and more.
- An **opening keynote address by Brian David Johnson, a futurist at Intel Corporation**, on Saturday, October 13, and a **closing keynote panel on cyberlearning and gaming** featuring **Nicole Lazzaro**, Founder of XEO Design; **Michael A. Evans, PhD**, from the Department of Learning Sciences and Technologies at Virginia Tech; **Jim Vanides, M.Ed., BSME**, Global Education Program Manager of Sustainability and Social Innovation for the Hewlett Packard Company; and **Leilah Lyons, PhD**, Director of Digital Learning at the New York Hall of Science and Assistant Professor of Computer Science and the Learning Sciences at the University of Illinois-Chicago, on Tuesday, October 16.
- The **ASTC Exhibit Hall**, featuring **107 exhibitors** representing a wide range of products and services and **SHIFT**, a strand of programming that provides a platform for ideas, demonstrations and discussions regarding the science's center community's embrace of innovation, returns to the ASTC Exhibit Hall. This year, **SHIFT will examine the challenge of presenting "big data" to informal learners, and explore CoCensus, an NEH- and NSF-funded project that turns exploring large Census data sets into a collaborative, interactive experience at a museum exhibit**. A demo and trial installation will allow conference participants to experiment with real data.
- The **Planetarium Showcase**, where attendees will have a unique chance to see the technology and content that planetariums, museums, and science centers are choosing to educate, excite, and inspire audiences, and the always popular **Big Screen Day**, featuring ten of the latest giant screen films; both will be held at COSI on Monday, October 15.

With more 95 million visits worldwide each year, science centers are sites for informal learning, and are places to discover, explore, and test ideas about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), serving families, schoolchildren, homeschoolers, teachers, and citizens. They play a valuable role within their communities, serving as a hub for learning, exploring, and engaging. Science centers encourage the innate curiosity that resides in all of us, providing opportunities for education, awareness of social and global issues, even recreation.

About ASTC

The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) is a global organization providing collective voice and professional support for science centers, museums, and related institutions, whose innovative approaches to science learning inspire people of all ages about the wonders and the meaning of science in their lives. Through strategic alliances and global partnerships, ASTC strives to increase awareness of the valuable contributions its members make to their communities and the field of informal STEM learning. Founded in 1973, ASTC now represents over 600 members in 45 countries, including 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. For more information about ASTC, or to find a science center near you, visit www.astc.org.

About COSI

COSI, Columbus, Ohio's dynamic Center of Science and Industry, inspires the scientists, dreamers, and innovators of tomorrow. Opened in 1964 at Memorial Hall in downtown Columbus, COSI moved in 1999 to a new 320,000-square-foot home designed by internationally-renowned architect Arata Isozaki, creating one of the largest modern-built science centers in the United States. COSI continues to represent a significant investment in the economic development and community revitalization of downtown Columbus. As a "center of science," rather than a standalone science center, COSI has established embedded partnerships that enrich our guests' experiences, including WOSU@COSI, the only working television station in a science center; the Ohio State University (OSU) Labs in Life, working research laboratories created through a partnership with The Ohio State University and staffed by OSU researchers; Battelle's STEM Innovation Network, in partnership with one of the world's leading research institutions; the Columbus Historical Society; and the STEM-based Metro High School, among others. In 2008, COSI was named America's #1 science center for families by *Parents* Magazine. Since 1964, COSI has engaged with nearly 30 million people from all 50 states and around the world, both on-site and through its award-winning outreach programs. For more information about COSI, visit www.cosi.org.

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