Introductions!

Sarah Cohn, Aurora Consulting

Ryan Auster, Museum of Science

Alex Lussenhop, Museum of Science
What are we doing here?

Today, we will:

- Share and discuss incorporating data collection and evaluation in a small museum context
- Distribute resources to help build evaluation capacity
Fast Facts

• IMLS National Leadership Grant
• Grant-funded period: October 1, 2014-September 30, 2017 (no cost extension through June 30, 2018)
• Research Lead: Museum of Science
• Administrative Lead: ASTC
COVES Background

What it is, who is involved, and why
What is it?
What is it?

- Collaborative
- Ongoing
- Visitor-focused
- Unique
- Adaptable
- Comparable
Governing Body
Participating Sites
Who cares?
Science Centers and Science Museums Care!

- Obtain a timely, comprehensive portrait of visitors
- Measure success and growth over time
- Compare success and growth to other science centers and museums nationwide
- Target data an institution specifically needs
Science Centers and Science Museums Get Involved!

- Increase an institution’s evaluation capacity
- Shape the trajectory of visitor experience evaluation across the science center and museum field
- Improve visitor experience in science centers and museums
What’s next?

The future of COVES
Sustainability

- Increased visibility
- New resources for the field
- Business model
QQ&A

(Quick Q&A)
Pensacola MESS Hall
Pensacola MESS Hall Stats

- Pensacola, FL
- Approximately 6 full-time staff, 2 part-time
- Annual budget: $250,000
- Average visitation: 9000 general visitors, 6000 field trips, 10,000 outreach
- Data collectors: 6 trained, though mostly done by 3 people
Pensacola MESS Hall Galleries
Michael Rathbun
Discovery Center Museum
Discovery Center Museum
Discovery Center Stats

- Rockford, Illinois
- Founded in 1981 by the Junior League of Rockford and the Rockford Area Arts Council
- 12 FT regular staff, 16 FTE part-time
  - COVES collectors: 4 FT staff, 2 part-time staff
- Budget ~$2.0 M
- Receive ~ 146,000 visits/year (22,000 of those are group visits)
- Size: 23,000 ft² + 5,000 traveling exhibit hall (shared)
Discovery Center Galleries

- Great Balls of Fire
- Air & Flight
- Body Shop
Discovery Center Galleries

- Tot Spot
- Secret Garden
- Rock River
- Discovery Park
Discovery Center
Data Collection
Linda Deck

Bradbury Science Museum,
Los Alamos National Laboratory
Bradbury Science Museum
Bradbury Stats

- Los Alamos, New Mexico
- Part of Los Alamos National Laboratory
- 8 FT regular staff, 8 .25 FTE casual
  - COVES collectors: 3 FT staff, 1 casual staff
- Budget ~$1.5 M, w/out rent & custodial
- Receive ~ 80,000 visits/year
Bradbury Galleries

History Gallery

Defense Gallery

Research Gallery
Bradbury Exhibits
Bradbury Data Collection
Questions?
Discussion Groups

Some things to think about:

• How can you use structures already in place at your institution to accommodate data collection?
• What tools are available to share data and analyses with stakeholders?
• How do you make data collection work with your schedule and staff members?
COVES at ASTC 2017

Sunday, October 22

Sharing is C(omp)aring: Using and Applying Comparative Visitor Data Within and Across Our Institutions
10:15am-11:30pm

Saturday, October 21-Sunday, October 22

Exhibit Hall, Booth #517
Thank you!

www.understandingvisitors.org