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The Franklin Institute Set to Launch \$8.5 Million “Wondrous Space” Exhibit on November 4

The immersive, future-focused two-story exhibit on space exploration marks the first in a series of bold thematic exhibits that will lead The Franklin Institute through its bicentennial in 2024.

[NEW! Renderings: Wondrous Space](#)
Media Preview: November 2 | 11 am

Philadelphia, PA – September 14, 2023—The Franklin Institute is excited to announce its newest core exhibit, *Wondrous Space*, an immersive, awe-inspiring journey through the marvels of space exploration, **opens on Saturday, November 4, 2023**. The \$8.5M exhibit aims to feed curiosity about what lies beyond and inspire excitement for future advancements and the endeavors that await—from a return to the moon to groundbreaking travel to Mars.

Backed by a \$3M gift from The Boeing Company, the *Wondrous Space* exhibit marks the first of six new thematic exhibits that will push the boundaries of traditional science center exhibits and allow for the re-imagining of The Franklin Institute experience as the museum embarks on its landmark **200th anniversary in 2024**. Six new exhibits will replace the 12 existing ones over the next several years and be larger in scale, more future-focused, and adaptable to emerging scientific trends—while keeping iconic artifacts like the Giant Heart and Baldwin locomotive. Exhibit themes include space, the human body, earth systems, the built environment, advanced machines and robotics, and computer science.

“The Franklin Institute is a world-renowned science museum that has been inspiring curiosity and creativity for 200 years,” said **Larry Dubinski, President and CEO of The Franklin Institute**. “With the launch of *Wondrous Space* and the exhibits to follow, we are poised to enter an exciting new era of innovation and discovery and continue our mission of inspiring the next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers.”

The *Wondrous Space* Experience

The two-story, 7,500-square-foot exhibit is located between the Fels Planetarium and the Holt & Miller Observatory. The first level fully immerses guests in simulations and experiences that will “transport” them to space, allowing them to control the forces of nature, travel immeasurable distances across the universe, and witness awe-inspiring space phenomena. The upper level takes on a completely distinctive design tone, delving into space through the lens of creativity and innovation, providing a deeper understanding of the future of life and work in space, showcasing new tools, tech, and techniques, as well as rising industry leaders and the varying careers related to space exploration and discovery.

Collaboration across *Wondrous Space*

Wondrous Space marks the first time an external design team led the creative development of a core Franklin Institute exhibit. Creative director Dan Picard, co-owner of the award-winning diverse-owned experiential design firm **MDSX**, known for creating immersive storytelling and design for theme parks, live entertainment, and attractions, is the artistic force behind the design of *Wondrous Space*. To help shape content for the space exhibit, guided by the expertise of [Chief Astronomer Derrick Pitts](#), TFI and MDSX enlisted a wide range of expert advisors, sought feedback from business and community leaders, and held student workshops. This collaborative effort resulted in an exhibit that is modern, fresh, and representative of topics that excite and intrigue, from becoming the center of your own solar system to searching for habitable worlds.

Through strategic collaboration with global industry leaders, the exhibit is fully equipped to feature current technologies and future tools for exploration while highlighting the various careers that support the companies at the forefront of space

exploration. Lead sponsor **Boeing**, whose \$3M gift paved the way for the development of *Wondrous Space*, hopes the exhibit inspires future STEM leaders by illustrating the diversity of science and technology in the aerospace industry and incorporating into the exhibit the many faces of the future, including Boeing engineers.

Wondrous Space showcases space-related artifacts on loan, some in modular casework to easily update items as space science evolves. At launch, some of the objects include two rovers from **Carnegie Mellon University** and a 10-ft-long rocket engine from **Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex**. Additional artifacts on loan from Boeing, Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, ILC Dover, CMU, JPL, Smart Tire, Aleph Farms, Alluxa, and Hope Hersh, award-winning inventor of space bread.

Wondrous Space's Rover Design, an interactive station where guests can design and test their exploratory rovers, is sponsored by **AMETEK Inc.**, an innovative global company based in Berwyn whose businesses are responsible for manufacturing technologies that enable space exploration, including AMETEK Pacific-Design Technologies (PDT). AMETEK PDT is keeping NASA's Mars Perseverance Rover thermally controlled during its two-year mission on the red planet. Several of AMETEK's other artifacts and innovations surround Rover Design in the exhibit.

Abby Bysshe, Chief Experience and Strategy Officer at The Franklin Institute, emphasized the importance of collaboration in creating the exhibit. "It was important to us to provide a glimpse into the real-world companies and people who are driving innovation in space science, and so we were intentional in choosing partners for this project," Bysshe shared. "We assembled a diverse population of dynamic, inventive minds to inform and guide *Wondrous Space*, and we crafted an exhibit we are all extremely proud of."

The Franklin Institute will complement the upcoming launch of *Wondrous Space* with a series of space-related public programming, including the podcast debut of [The Curious Cosmos with Derrick Pitts](#) (9/12), the 2023 annular eclipse museum viewing event (10/14), the unveiling of [Mars by artist Luke Jerram](#) (11/2-19), and the reopening of the refreshed Holt & Miller Observatory (11/4).

Through the generous support of the Green Family Foundation, TFI's education team is working with Philadelphia area teachers to develop a suite of **space science professional development resources** to support educators and their students as they explore the exhibit and bring the learning back to their classrooms.

Save the Date: Media are invited to the press conference, ribbon cutting, and tour of *Wondrous Space* on **Thursday, November 2, at 11 a.m.** Installation is underway.

Boeing is the lead sponsor of *Wondrous Space*. The Franklin Institute received funding to promote the exhibit from the **Pennsylvania Tourism Office**, housed within the Department of Community and Economic Development, which is dedicated to inspiring travel to Pennsylvania. From iconic attractions to hidden gems, tourism in Pennsylvania helps support the state's economy and creates jobs for local businesses – all while improving residents' quality of life.

About *Wondrous Space* Exhibit

The *Wondrous Space* exhibit is an awe-inspiring two-story experience designed to inspire and educate guests about the marvels of space exploration. With interactive displays, immersive simulations, and a focus on future advancements, the exhibit aims to transport guests into the heart of space exploration, igniting a passion for science and inspiring the next generation of space travelers. Opening in the fall of 2023, the exhibit will highlight the diversity of science and technology in the space industry, emphasizing incredible achievements and innovations and the remarkable people who work daily to bring science fiction to life.

About The Franklin Institute

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania's most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for learning about science by offering access to hands-on science education. For more information, visit www.fi.edu.

About Boeing

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