



# News Release

301 Gervais St. • Loading Zone D • Columbia SC 29201

Phone (803) 898-4921 • Fax (803) 898-4969

publicrelations@scmuseum.org or visit southcarolinastatemuseum.org

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Contact: Sig Huitt or  
Tut Underwood

## **South Carolina State Museum Launches \$23 Million Transformation, Renovation**

### **Enhancements Will Benefit S.C. Schoolchildren**

Columbia, S.C. --- The South Carolina State Museum Wednesday (Oct. 12, 2011) launched its \$23 million expansion and renovation project, *Windows to New Worlds*, which will transform the museum's capacity to engage, educate and inspire visitors at its historic site in Columbia, across the state and beyond.

Exciting new attractions will include a state-of-the-art observatory, a 55-foot digital dome planetarium and theater (the largest in the state), and an immersive 4-D theater.

Stunning multimedia images, digital sound and laser light shows are only a few of the capabilities of the digital dome theater.

Three-dimensional films will be enhanced with fourth-dimensional sensations such as blasts of air, water sprays and seat vibrations in the 4-D theater.

Eyepiece-to-projector technology will enable incredible views of the universe to be seen not only through the giant, historic Alvan Clark telescope by individuals, but by 125 people at once in the planetarium or by every schoolchild in South Carolina via the Internet, in what the museum calls "virtual field trips." "The educational possibilities are as limitless as space," said Director of Education Tom Falvey.

Not only will science programming be improved dramatically, but teaching capabilities for history, art and natural history also will be enhanced. A hall spotlighting the museum's world-class collection of historic telescopes and equipment will emphasize an enriched ability to display more of the museum's prestigious collections, a major part of its mission.

"This launch culminates more than a decade of planning an expanded vision for the State Museum with education, cultural and tourism leaders across South Carolina," said Gray

Culbreath, chair of the State Museum Commission and a Columbia attorney. “Giving the go-ahead for construction is a milestone day for this institution, its thousands of supporters and the hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren and others who and enjoy its diverse offerings.”

The project will add approximately 22,655 square feet to the museum’s home, the historic Columbia Mill building located on the Congaree River in downtown Columbia. Additionally, 47,500 square feet of the facility will be renovated, making room for a new front entrance and lobby, larger museum store, expanded catering capabilities, and increased meeting and professional development facilities.

“These enhancements to our existing programming are directly tied to the state’s educational emphasis in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics,” said William Calloway, executive director of the museum. “In addition to standard-based programs delivered, our expanded outreach capacity will be particularly valuable for schools that do not have the resources to travel to Columbia.”

Annually, more than 70,000 school children from all 46 counties visit the museum free of charge.

Construction is expected to begin in early March, Calloway said, and the grand opening for the expanded facility is planned for summer 2013.

Bond financing of \$5.5 million facilitated by the South Carolina Jobs-Economic Development Authority (JEDA) is aiding initiation of the project. JEDA said the bond issuance would help maintain 30 existing jobs and create a total of seven new jobs within 24 months after the project is operational. Direct construction jobs from the expansion will be 170, with about 350 more spin-off jobs generated. The museum estimates that the improvements will help attract 75,000 additional visitors and \$1.6 million in additional revenue annually, essentially doubling earned income.

The \$23 million project is being funded by public and private sources, including the State of South Carolina, NASA, the City of Columbia, Richland County, Lexington County, the City of Forest Acres, BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, the Rev. Dr. Solomon Jackson Jr., SCANA, the Dorothy Smith Charitable Foundation, the Lipscomb Family Foundation and others.

The South Carolina State Museum, long described as “South Carolina under one roof,” is the largest and most comprehensive museum in the Southeastern United States, celebrating the Palmetto State’s art, natural history, cultural history, and science and technology.

For more information on *Windows to New Worlds*, contact Tut Underwood at (803) 898-4921 or visit [www.southcarolinastatemuseum.org](http://www.southcarolinastatemuseum.org).

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## CUTLINE #1 FOR WINDOWS TO NEW WORLDS

This outside view shows how the planetarium and observatory will transform the South Carolina State Museum from the outside when its new \$23 million expansion, Windows to New Worlds, is completed in summer 2013.

[Click here to view/download hi-res photo](#)

Illustration courtesy South Carolina State Museum

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## CUTLINE #2 FOR WINDOWS TO NEW WORLDS

The South Carolina State Museum's new \$23 million expansion, Windows to New Worlds, will include an observatory featuring a giant Alvan Clark telescope, considered the Stadivarius of refracting lens telescopes. The project will break ground in March and will be complete in summer 2013.

[Click here to view/download hi-res photo](#)

Illustration courtesy South Carolina State Museum

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## CUTLINE #3 FOR WINDOWS TO NEW WORLDS

The South Carolina State Museum's new \$23 million expansion, Windows to New Worlds, will include a digital dome planetarium capable of presenting many forms of education and entertainment, including star shows, laser light and music programs, and much more. The project will break ground in March and will be complete in summer 2013.

[Click here to view/download hi-res photo](#)

Illustration courtesy South Carolina State Museum

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#### CUTLINE #4 FOR WINDOWS TO NEW WORLDS

The South Carolina State Museum's new \$23 million expansion, Windows to New Worlds, will include a 4-D theater which will add air blasts, seat vibrations, and other physical effects to add a fourth dimension while guests enjoy a large-screen 3-D film. The project will break ground in March and will be complete in summer 2013.

[Click here to view/download hi-res photo](#)

Illustration courtesy South Carolina State Museum

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#### CUTLINE #5 FOR WINDOWS TO NEW WORLDS

The South Carolina State Museum's new \$23 million expansion, Windows to New Worlds, will include a telescope gallery highlighting the museum's recent acquisition of historic telescopes and instruments, the priceless Robert B. Ariail Collection of Historical Astronomy. The project will break ground in March and will be complete in summer 2013.

[Click here to view/download hi-res photo](#)

Illustration courtesy South Carolina State Museum

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