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Connecticut Science Center Celebrates 10 Inspiring Years

From a parking lot and a vision to serving 3.25 million people at region's leading science education destination

Hartford, CT, June 12, 2019— The Connecticut Science Center is celebrating its 10th anniversary since opening its doors on June 12, 2009, when it forever changed the landscape of Hartford and established a premier destination for science learning. The robot-assisted anniversary ceremony mirrored the grand opening, when a robot cut the ribbon to welcome the first visitor a decade ago. Since then, 3.25 million people have been served by the Science Center at its iconic location in downtown Hartford and through science outreach programs throughout the state.

Governor Ned Lamont lauded the Science Center as a symbol of Connecticut's heritage and its future as a place for innovation. "The Connecticut Science Center serves as a point of inspiration for our workforce of tomorrow. All of the innovative employers in our state have one thing in common—they need high-quality talent", said Governor Lamont. "The Connecticut Science Center stands at the beginning of the workforce pipeline, inspiring and educating children who will take their places in our colleges and universities and ultimately in our workforce."

The Governor kicked off a yearlong celebration with a proclamation naming June 12, 2019 as "Connecticut Science Center Day." Over the next 12 months, the Science Center will mark the occasion with strategic initiatives, new exhibits, special events, and programs to advance its mission and adapt to the changing needs of science education while responding to the ever-increasing demand for a diverse, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)-ready workforce.

Recognizing the need to accelerate Connecticut's trajectory as a place for innovation, state and business leaders, educators, and community leaders began planning the new Connecticut Science Center in 2001, when it was founded as the Connecticut Center for Science & Exploration. A core team of supporters embarked on an extensive planning process that led to construction of the new facility starting in 2006.

"Having been there when the earliest concept plans for this institution were developed, I can say that this was the right idea in the right place at the right time for Hartford and for Connecticut," said Matt Fleury, President & CEO of the Connecticut Science Center. "It took tremendous vision and commitment to bring the Science Center to life, and the significance of this achievement is easy to see on the skyline of the capital city just as it shines in the eyes of the millions of children we have served since that time."

The Science Center serves the community with a wide range of programs, events, and STEM resources for educators, parents, students, and learners of all ages and backgrounds, including its Women in Science initiative and teen programs, and its successful Access Membership program for low-income families.



"Beyond the extraordinary STEM connections program advanced by the Connecticut Science Center is the significant economic development impact the Science Center generates, driving vibrancy in downtown Hartford and throughout the region, attracting new businesses and long-term investment in Connecticut's capital city," said Lizabeth Zlatkus, Vice Chair of the Connecticut Science Center Board of Trustees. "Providing local youth with first-hand experiences makes it more likely they will pursue careers close to home, working in STEM for a thriving company right here in Connecticut."

Over the next twelve months, the Connecticut Science Center is ramping up accessibility initiatives to serve diverse audiences, and helping visitors see themselves in the science and technology career opportunities that are expanding across the state. In its 10th anniversary year the Science Center will increase the scale and visibility of its efforts to attract women and under-represented minorities to STEM Careers.

The Science Center, once a somewhat solitary STEM presence, is now surrounded by a growing community of science and technology players. Since 2009, Stanley Black & Decker has launched their Manufacturing 4.0 center in Hartford, Infosys established new offices, Jackson Labs expanded Connecticut's biotech presence, and Pratt & Whitney created its engineering headquarters in East Hartford alongside United Technologies' new R&D center. UCONN and Trinity College have opened campus facilities downtown, and TechStars, MakerspaceCT, Upward Hartford, and insurtech, fintech, and medtech centers have launched.

"This is the momentum we're building in Hartford," said Mayor Luke Bronin. "To compete, states need vibrant urban centers that have support, culture, energy, and a sense of community that appeals to entrepreneurs and innovators. The Science Center will go down in history for lighting the spark that ignited this potential for our city and we will ensure that it continues to grow over the decades ahead."

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About the Connecticut Science Center: The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Serving over 3.25 million people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features more than 165 exhibits in ten galleries covering a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children's gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, a function room, a gift store, and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. The Connecticut Science Center is also the home to the **Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers**, offering powerful Professional Development for educators. More information: CTScienceCenter.org or (860) SCIENCE.