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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Connecticut Science Center Celebrates 15 Years with Big Plans *New Exhibitions, Digital Experiences and STEM Career Focus*

Hartford, CT (July 22, 2024) – The Connecticut Science Center this summer crosses a major milestone, celebrating its 15-year anniversary. In that time, the Science Center has served over 4.3 million individuals, through the interactive museum in Hartford and educational programs delivered at schools and community centers statewide. With big ambitions for the 25-year anniversary, the Science Center has adopted a new 10-year Strategic Vision. The plan is anchored in the Science Center's driving purpose, to be a pillar of Connecticut and beacon for science that empowers people to make the world better.

"It's been 15 years since a robot kicked off our grand opening, and the Connecticut Science Center has become a beloved landmark in Hartford and a constant in the lives of Connecticut families," Len Wolman, a founding donor, Trustee, and current Board Chair, reflected. "Those first curious young minds have now graduated high school, their experiences here shaping their futures and fueling their passion for STEM. As we approach our 25th year, our vision remains the same: to make science, technology, engineering, and math accessible and engaging for everyone."

The Science Center's vision starts with strengthening its role as a trusted resource and premiere educational destination that contributes to the quality of life while promoting Connecticut's culture and standing as a place of innovation. Further, the Science Center is focused on inspiring people to respect, use and participate in science to improve their lives and the world around them. Serving families and working through schools and community partners, the Science Center sparks people of all ages and backgrounds to see themselves in STEM learning, action and careers.

"To achieve our mission, the Science Center must continually reimagine its offerings to inspire interest, questions and free exploration amid the din of competition for time and attention from screens and other options," said Matt Fleury, President & CEO. "That's why we will be investing \$20 million in new exhibitions, programs and facilities, and a completely new online presence to conveniently serve museum visitors and also push fun and actionable science experiences deeper into homes."

The Science Center's 10-year vision has six key points:

Exemplary Science Center Visitor Experience | Continually improve on-site visitor experience to be attractive, enjoyable and engaging for all people.

STEM Engagement, Learning and Career Awareness | At the most impressionable ages, the Science Center's programs open minds to science and inspire interest in STEM, offering pathways to a market eager for talent.

Digital Engagement to Connect and Serve | Deepen and extend the museum visit with integrated online experiences for learning, transacting and connecting.

Inspire Generations to Sustain the Planet | Centering natural resources, inspire awareness, knowledge and action towards sustainability.

Social and Governance | A foundation of culture, practices and programs that exemplify social and financial stewardship, and evoke pride, goodwill and confidence.

Build Financial Strength | Operational sustainability to support growth in services and capital needs and innovation.

All of the objectives listed above are being advanced with an ongoing fundraising campaign rooted in the successful public/private partnerships that created the Science Center, starting with its planning phase in 2004. The State of Connecticut has approved \$10.7 million in funding, and to date, the Science Center has raised an additional \$5.06 million towards a combined \$20 million goal.

New exhibitions and a completely re-imagined app, mobile platform and website mark the beginning of a multi-year rollout of exciting attractions and features. The journey kicks off later this year with the unveiling of the brand-new *Exploring Space* exhibition, and the opening of a blockbuster traveling exhibition, *The Science of Pixar* in 2025. The plan also includes an expanded *KidSpace* exhibition tailored for the youngest visitors, and a new attraction, *KidSpace Outdoors*, an imaginative outdoor science playground to be located next to the popular indoor water play area. The team at the Science Center is also planning new exhibitions focused on environmental sustainability and energy. Every exhibition has a focus on STEM careers and related trades, including a planned exhibition on advanced manufacturing, and a new physics exhibition using race car simulators and icons to demonstrate and explain forces in motion, titled *Forces in Motion: Speed*.

The Science Center's on-site offerings will increasingly be supported by an entirely new digital platform to make it easier to visit and connect, and to extend STEM engagement into homes and families every day. Featuring a new website and app, the mobile-oriented platform will make planning and purchasing visits, services and memberships far easier. The app will also enable augmented reality enhancements to select exhibitions and offer personalized dashboards for families to participate in science at home and accumulate points and badges through contests and activities.

"The hands-on, in-person moments that we offer are treasured by families, who value time together in our museum," said Fleury. "At the same time, a thoughtfully integrated digital platform can remove some of the logistical issues with planning a trip, and also extend STEM information, learning and activities right into the home."

The Science Center thanks Travelers, the Mandell-Braunstein Family, The Barnes Group Foundation, Ensign-Bickford Foundation, Maximilian E. & Marion O. Hoffman Foundation, Inc., and Members of its Board of Trustees for early support. Additional funding is provided by the State of Connecticut, the US Department of Housing & Urban Development, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services.

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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 more than 4.3 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 the state's only year-round butterfly habitat, five educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, 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 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.