

CAMPAIGN FOR THE SOUTH FLORIDA MUSEUM  
**CONNECT.**  
CREATING PATHWAYS



**SOUTH FLORIDA MUSEUM**  
BISHOP PLANETARIUM • PARKER MANATEE AQUARIUM

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1-14-15**

## The South Florida Museum Announces Exciting Plans for the Future!



### ***\$12 Million Connect Campaign for New Museum Exhibitions, Programs and Space Has Reached 80% of Goal!***

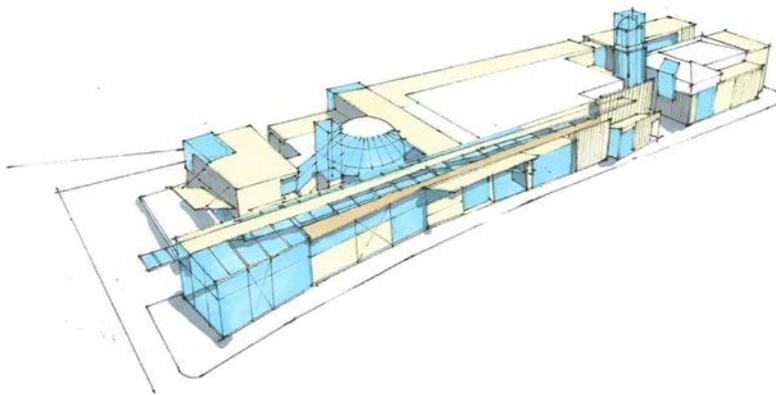
(Bradenton, FL) Today, the South Florida Museum announced that we are looking toward the future. We are ready to **expand**, with plans for new exhibitions, programs and spaces that allow us to explore new ideas, serve new audiences and connect with the Riverwalk as an anchor in Bradenton's reinvigorated downtown. We are ready to **innovate**, with new experiences for our visitors that rely on creative interpretations, engaging storytelling and new technologies that will connect visitors to the world around them like never before.

Transforming the South Florida Museum into an innovative learning destination and cultural hub for Bradenton is an investment in our community's future. It calls for developing new technologies, building new spaces and creating new jobs. To implement this vision, the Museum has developed a thorough Master Campus and Programming Plan. This ambitious plan is underway. In order to execute the first priorities of this plan, the Museum has embarked on the \$12 million *Connect* Campaign to call upon individuals, corporations, foundations and community partners to demonstrate their support of the Museum and its role as a vital link in the cultural and educational fabric of our community.

*Connect* Campaign Chair and Past President of the Board of Trustees, William Blalock is a fourth-generation resident of Manatee County, whose grandfather was one of the Museum's founders. "The *Connect* Campaign is the culmination of many years of work building on accomplishments and investments in the Museum since the 1940s to extend our exceptional standards," said Blalock. "Our focus is to create inspiring visitor experiences through excellent exhibitions and programming, while providing a vital resource for our educational partners (including the Manatee County School District, USF Sarasota-Manatee, New College, Ringling College of Art + Design and State College of Florida). The Museum is also an economic engine for the region, so investment in the Museum has a far-reaching impact."

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Bradenton Mayor Wayne Poston shares this excitement for the future. “The South Florida Museum has been a vital partner in the revitalization of downtown Bradenton. We’ve seen growth in population and the economy over the past few years – and the Museum continues to be an integral part of that growth,” says the Mayor. “The expansion and innovations that the Museum is undertaking will surely increase Bradenton’s profile as an exceptional regional destination – and beyond that, the Museum will add to the quality of life for our residents, students and, of course, visitors.”



Campaign Cabinet member Bill Johnston and his wife Betsy were early and generous donors to the Campaign, continuing their legacy as ardent supporters of education. They see the South Florida Museum as an important adjunct to the formal education system. “The Museum is a natural history museum ‘plus,’” says Betsy. “It brings different perspectives together and connects history, art, science and culture.” In addition to supporting educational causes, the Johnstons are proud donors to the Museum as a local “gem.” Bill is a retired president of the New York Stock Exchange. He and Betsy have lived in Bradenton since 2004. “If you don’t support where you live, why live there?” asks Bill.

Campaign Chair Blalock adds, “I am very pleased to announce that **we have raised more than 80% of the \$12 million goal** of the Connect Campaign. We have received very generous lead gifts including \$1.3 million from the Mosaic Company Foundation toward the Mosaic Backyard Universe.”

“We are pleased to continue our partnership with the South Florida Museum,” said Mark Kaplan, Board President, The Mosaic Company Foundation. “The Museum provides invaluable access to science education and Florida’s rich cultural history. We appreciate the Museum’s efforts to expand this community cornerstone’s offerings for families in Manatee County and across the region,” added Kaplan.

#### **COMPONENTS OF THE *CONNECT* CAMPAIGN:**

##### **The Mosaic Backyard Universe**

This new learning resource for the region will be a two-story interactive exhibition and learning space for children ages 2-8 and their families. Designed to be a familiar setting – a backyard, it includes an outdoor area and works with STEM concepts.



##### **The Commons**

A new lobby/gathering space to connect the Mosaic Backyard Universe to the rest of the Campus will create room for larger public programs and school groups. It also addresses the community need for space for larger events. A new Museum store and café will also be in this area.

##### **Aquarium Upgrades**

Expansions will provide new holding pools for rehabilitating manatees and work space for staff. A new receiving area for lettuce delivery will work better for arriving and departing rehab manatees. A new chiller and heating system for the manatee pools are also included.

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### **Renovation of Existing Exhibition Areas**

An enhanced “storyline” connects the ideas and assets of the Museum, building on the foundation already in place. Many exhibitions will be updated, new areas developed and more items from our collections displayed. New exhibits will allow for easy updating to include new scientific developments.

### **Pathways Program Development**

The *Pathways* program integrates technology into public programs and student field trips, allowing customization for themes, grade-levels and learning styles. *Pathways* creates new dynamic experiences based on individual interest each time a person visits by linking objects and stories throughout the Museum. This revolutionary teaching tool will transform school field trip learning opportunities by providing a way to evaluate student learning and knowledge during a field trip.

### **Planetarium Technology Upgrades**

State-of-the-art, world-class upgrades to the Planetarium’s hardware, software and projection systems were completed in October 2013 thanks to an early gift to the *Connect* Campaign, making it the region’s premier astronomy education facility with stunning new multimedia capabilities. “The Planetarium upgrade was the perfect place to start,” says Campaign Chair Blalock. “It is fundamental to the visitor experience, expands our educational opportunities, provides a major ‘wow factor’ and exemplifies our dynamic vision for the rest of the Museum. It sets the stage perfectly for what is ahead.”

### **Relocation of Administration, Education and Facilities Departments**

In order to create the new spaces, we will build new administration offices on the second floor and relocate the Facilities Department.

**Details about the *Connect* Campaign is available online at [SouthFloridaMuseum.org/Connect](http://SouthFloridaMuseum.org/Connect). For information, image and interview requests, please contact Jessica Schubick (Communications Manager) at 941-746-4131, ext. 14 or [JSchubick@SouthFloridaMuseum.org](mailto:JSchubick@SouthFloridaMuseum.org).**

### **About the South Florida Museum**

The largest natural and cultural history museum on Florida’s Gulf Coast, the South Florida Museum offers engaging exhibits as well as educational programs which interpret the scientific and cultural knowledge of Florida, the world and our universe. In addition to the permanent exhibits, the Museum features a constantly changing lineup of temporary exhibitions – offering something new to discover with each visit. The facility also includes both the all-digital Bishop Planetarium Theater and the Parker Manatee Aquarium. Outfitted with a brand new, state-of-the-art Planetarium and projection system in October of 2013, the NEW Bishop Planetarium is the region’s premier astronomy education facility with stunning new multimedia capabilities. The Parker Manatee Aquarium is home to Snooty™, Manatee County’s official mascot and the oldest known manatee in the world. Snooty shares his Aquarium pool with young manatees from the Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Partnership. These injured or orphaned animals are taken care of by the Parker Aquarium staff until they are ready to be released into the wild. For more information about current exhibitions and special programs, membership, hours, or admission prices please call 941-746-4131 or visit [SouthFloridaMuseum.org](http://SouthFloridaMuseum.org).

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