



NEWS RELEASE

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EMBARGO UNTIL 6:30 AM CDT JUNE 1, 2011.

Renovation to Bring 3-D Programming and More to Irene W. Pennington Planetarium

BATON ROUGE, LA — The Irene W. Pennington Planetarium at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum (LASM) will undergo a \$970,000 renovation this fall that will enable Baton Rouge's star attraction to offer new 3-D programming, to continue to be a leader in planetarium technology, and to better meet the interests of museum visitors.

The project, scheduled to begin Monday, August 1, 2011, includes: installation of digital projectors with 3-D capability; installation of new seats, increasing capacity from 143 to 170; painting of the dome to increase reflectivity; and installation of new carpet and safety lighting. The planetarium will close to the public on August 1 and is scheduled to reopen before Thanksgiving. The art galleries, interactive children's galleries, and the Ancient Egypt Gallery will not be affected by the project and will remain open.

Once the renovations are complete, new planetarium programming will include *Wildest Weather in the Solar System*, a 3-D adventure that lets visitors experience some of the most exotic weather phenomena in space, including solar storms, tornadoes on Mars, and hurricanes on Jupiter. *Wildest Weather in the Solar System* is produced by National Geographic Cinema Adventures and will premiere in 3-D for the first time in North America at Pennington Planetarium. Planetarium staff members are on the show's production advisory panel and contributed to the script.

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LOUISIANA ART & SCIENCE MUSEUM
IRENE W. PENNINGTON PLANETARIUM

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Other new shows will include *One World, One Sky*, featuring Big Bird from *Sesame Street*, and *Wild Ocean*, a symphonic documentary about ocean inhabitants off the coast of South Africa that captures the feeding frenzy of whales, sharks, and numerous other underwater creatures.

“Enhancing the way we visually present astronomy and earth sciences results in the public’s better understanding of the world around us and increased enjoyment of the experience,” says planetarium director Jon Elvert. “The planetarium’s vision of keeping up with technology and relevant programming are prime examples of why we were selected to host the IPS2012 conference.”

IPS2012, the 21st biennial conference of the International Planetarium Society, takes place at LASM July 22–26 of next year. About 400 international delegates are expected to attend the conference, which is anticipated to have an economic impact to Baton Rouge of nearly a half-million dollars.

The Irene W. and C. B. Pennington Foundation made a lead gift in support of the planetarium renovation. Additional funding has come from ExxonMobil Baton Rouge, and a major gift has been pledged by the Albemarle Foundation. Other gifts are pending.

LASM opened the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium and ExxonMobil Space Theater in 2003. The planetarium is regarded as one of the most sophisticated multimedia presentation theaters in the country.

For more information about LASM, visit www.lasm.org. For more information about IPS2012, visit www.ips2012.com.

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