

Discovery Park of America

Union City, Tennessee

Role: Architect & Museum Planner for New Museum; Led team of engineers, landscape designers, and specialist consultants; led team of exhibit designers (Thinc Design) and fabricators (Maltbie)

Program: Interactive science, history and art exhibits, a traveling exhibit gallery, theaters, lobby, restaurant, gift shop, function space, classrooms, exhibit support, and offices

Building Area: 100,000 sf

Status: Opened in 2013

Description: Located in a lush 50-acre park at the edge of a small rural town in western Tennessee, the new Discovery Center is a landmark that is completely unexpected in its context. Designed using flowing organic curves silhouetted against the blue sky and green park space, the architecture takes on many playful and mysterious connotations that suggest a place filled with adventure and exploration. Its white curving forms and soaring tower can be seen from miles away in the flat farmlands that surround it, especially when illuminated at night.

The three-level, 100,000 square foot museum features ten galleries with more than 70,000 SF of exhibits, and also includes a themed restaurant, gift shop, classrooms, and a traveling exhibit gallery. With its complex mix of multi-story spaces filled with dinosaurs, airplanes, theaters, and even a giant climb-through human sculpture, families feel both welcomed and engaged. A curved glass oval-shaped space offers open vistas to the surrounding park from the exhibit atrium. Visitors take an elevator up the 200-foot tall observation tower, experiencing views into the exhibit halls then to the outside. This offers a unique perspective from within the Museum to the world beyond the region, inspiring visitors to “look beyond” the constraints of their own lives to what is possible.

This new educational and entertainment complex offers





learning and recreational experiences rarely available outside of urban areas. The Center's nine exhibition galleries interpret topics as diverse as natural history, regional history, space science, alternative energy, military history, enlightenment, transportation, and Native American cultures. Signature exhibits include an earthquake simulator, an interactive starship theater, and a secret vault that houses

treasures from around the globe. A children's exploration area features a giant climb-through human body, water play, and building block activities.