

# Flint Hills Discovery Center

Manhattan, Kansas

**Role:** Architect & Museum Planner for New Museum; led team of engineers and specialist consultants; led team of exhibit designers (Hilferty & Associates)

**Program:** Interactive science & history exhibits, 4D theater, lobby, cafe, gift shop, function space, classrooms, exhibit support, and offices

**Building Area:** 35,000 sf

**Status:** Opened 2012

**LEED Gold**

**Description:** VernerJohnson developed a Comprehensive Master Plan for the Flint Hills Discovery Center that will inspire people to celebrate, explore, and care for the Flint Hills Prairie of Kansas. Our consultant team provided clear programmatic and financial guidelines that ensure that the new Discovery Center is sustainable and meets the needs of the community.

The Architectural and Interpretive Concepts provided the City of Manhattan with a platform from which they could garner support and funding for the project. Since that initial planning phase, VernerJohnson and exhibit designers Hilferty and Associates were hired to implement the building, site, and exhibit design for this unique destination.

Inspired by the Museum's mission and its location, we designed a building sculpted from the natural landscape itself - a series of landscaped terraces transition effortlessly into a limestone and glass museum that emerges organically from the park. For the exterior of the building, we chose various types of limestone for their color and texture to create unique patterns on the surface of the building, while the undulating walls echo the natural shapes of the prairie and helps the building to further meld with its natural surroundings.

Since opening to the public in April of 2012, this Museum has already exceeded attendance expectations. It features





interactive science and history exhibits, an immersion theater and other educational components as a part of a fully integrated visitor experience.