

Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center

Hutchinson, Kansas

Role: Architect and Museum Planner for Comprehensive Museum Revitalization Plan; led full team of exhibit designers (West Office Exhibition Design) and fabricators (Maltbie), specialist museum consultants and engineers through all planning and design phases

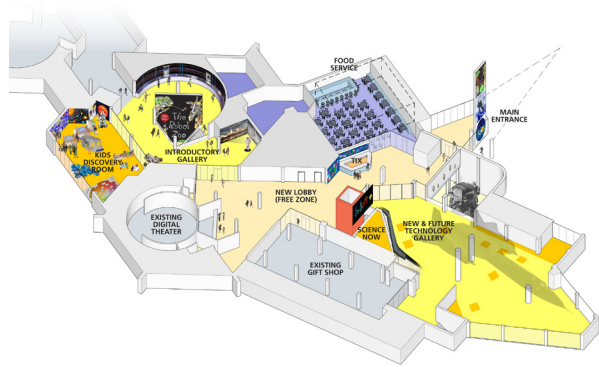
Program: Renovated existing exhibits, new educational interactive and participatory exhibits, new Entrance with a signature canopy, newly defined free/paid zones, renovated Space Camp, new Introductory Gallery, new Temporary Gallery, new Kids Discovery Room, new Current & Future Technology Gallery, and new Science Now area.

Building Area: 105,000 sf renovation plus expansion.

Status: Construction Documents completed, in Fundraising Phase.

Description: The existing Cosmosphere museum houses the world's second largest U.S. space artifact collection (second only to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum) and the largest collection of Russian space artifacts outside of Moscow. In recent years, the institution was seeing the effects of an economic recession, a waning interest in space exploration history, and a loyal supporter base that was aging out. In 2013, VJI was commissioned to develop a comprehensive Museum Revitalization Plan for their long-term sustainability and future.

VernerJohnson, along with Leisure Business Advisors, developed an exciting architectural and economic viability vision that included institutional, physical, operational and implementation recommendations. VJI determined that the institution should not significantly expand their physical facility (at least initially), but rather pursue a rebranding that increased the institution's national and international visibility and broadened its mission, programs, and visitor experiences. Against the backdrop of a world-class collection of artifacts and space science exhibits, the proposed new





focus would extend beyond space history alone to include informal learning opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

In 2014, VernerJohnson was retained as the Architect to complete the design and construction phases of the Master Plan. Working with exhibition designer West Office, Wichita-based engineers and specialist museum consultants, our original conceptual designs were further

developed to include the new entrance, complete redesign of the exhibition areas, a new Discovery Center, revised and expanded education spaces, new and improved special events spaces, cafe, and back-of-house improvements. The construction documents have been completed and fundraising is ongoing.