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Take Your Curiosity on an Adventure at Tommy Bartlett Exploratory

WISCONSIN DELLS, Wis. (June 25, 2021) – Visitors can let their natural curiosity take charge and learn about the world in which we live when they include a visit to the Tommy Bartlett Exploratory in their Wisconsin Dells vacation. The Interactive Science Center encourages explorers to go hands-on with more than 175 exhibits that spark the senses and challenge the brain. Families can delve into science, dabble in technology and explore space travel, all while having fun.

“We make learning about science enjoyable for the whole family,” said Jill Diehl, executive vice president and general manager of Tommy Bartlett, Inc. “Visitors can explore at their own pace as they learn how some of the unique things in our universe work.”

For nearly four decades, the Exploratory has stood along the bustling Wisconsin Dells Parkway, beckoning to travelers to stop in and pique their curiosity. The Exploratory features four sectors of activities; many are simple brain-teaser puzzles or optical illusions. Others, such as the *Giant Lever*, get your whole body in on the experiment. The exhibit features a large 57-foot steel beam, weighing almost three tons, on a tripod support. By pulling down on a rope attached to one end of the beam, visitors show off their “superhuman” strength by lifting a 5,000-pound, full-sized vehicle that is attached to the other end of the beam.

“It’s a really simple, but grand demonstration of weight distribution by using a support structure to control a large heavy item, like a car; kids get a real kick out of it,” said Diehl.

Explorers can use their bodies to jump into more experiments, such as the High Wire SkyCycle (Seasonal, weather permitting). The special bike, balanced with a pendulum, allows riders to traverse a

tightrope 12 feet off the ground. The SkyCycle provides a unique activity with a sense of adventure and without any real danger.

Another highlight of the Exploratory turns some heads with some shocking hairstyles. The Van de Graaff generator – the Bridge of Fire – demonstrates the science of static electricity. When you hover your hands over the generator, 100,000 volts of static electricity flows through your body causing your hair to stand on end.

Making science fun is what makes the Exploratory a unique playground of activity. It is also a place to look back on how technology has advanced humankind over the years. An entire area is dedicated to the marvels and milestones of space exploration. The special space hangar focuses on many “firsts” in space travel, including a replica Mercury Space Capsule. The capsule is compact, only 6-feet 10-inches long and 6-feet 2½-inches in diameter and was the pod that carried the first Americans into space during the five-year run of the historic Project Mercury missions that preceded the first moon landing in 1969. The sector is filled with a variety of space memorabilia and informational displays about mankind’s venture into space travel.

The centerpiece of the space sector is an Original Russian Space Station MIR Core Module, paying tribute to the first efforts at prolonged space travel and living in outer space. At 43 feet long, the MIR looms large in comparison to the compact Mercury capsule nearby. Bartlett’s MIR module was one of only three manufactured and was intended to go into space, but when the former Soviet Union broke apart, the MIR space program began to fizzle. The authentic replacement module was acquired for the Exploratory in 1997 from a Russian museum. It is the only place on Earth where visitors can walk through the space station module and see how the core workings are set up.

“We are very proud of the collection of exhibits we’ve assembled honoring humanity’s exploration of the great beyond,” said Diehl. “Visitors are often in awe of the display, located smackdab in the middle of Wisconsin.”

Tommy Bartlett Exploratory is open daily, year-round, and, in addition to the displays on space exploration, offers more than 175 hands-on activities that delve into science, virtual reality, technology and good old-fashioned, brainteaser fun. The Exploratory is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. during summer and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. during fall, winter and spring. For more information, please call (608) 254-2525, or visit www.tommybartlett.com.