

# NATIONAL CENTER FOR INTERACTIVE LEARNING

EXCITE. EXPLORE. DISCOVER.

Education & Outreach Newsletter



**Large Exhibit (3000 sq. ft)**

May 28 - December 31, 2011  
Science Museum of Virginia  
Richmond, Virginia

February 1 - April 30, 2012  
OPEN

**Small Exhibit (750 sq. ft)**

Sept. 1, 2011 - May 31, 2012  
Tyler Community College Planetarium  
Tyler, Texas

Contact Lisa Curtis  
[\\_curtis@spacescience.org](mailto:_curtis@spacescience.org)  
or visit

[www.greatballsoffireexhibit.org](http://www.greatballsoffireexhibit.org)  
to learn more!



**Giant Worlds Tour Schedule**  
**Only One Date Left!!**

February 2011 - August 2011  
Lafayette Natural History Museum and  
Planetarium  
Lafayette, Louisiana

October 1 - December 31, 2011  
OPEN

Contact Lisa Curtis  
[curtis@spacescience.org](mailto:curtis@spacescience.org)  
or visit  
[www.giantworlds.org](http://www.giantworlds.org)  
to learn more

(Below) Students interacting with the  
"Gravity Lab" in the Giant Worlds  
exhibit (Photo Credit: National Center  
for Interactive Learning)



The interactive "Asteroid Encounter" game lets kids (and adults!) climb into an asteroid shaped pod and blast off to the Asteroid Belt, and catch a glimpse of a comet before it smashes into Jupiter. (Photo Credit: National Center for Interactive Learning at the Space Science Institute)

Technology Centers (ASTC), Catawba Science Center, New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, and the NASA Dawn and WISE Missions. Funding for this project is provided by the National Science Foundation.

For information on hosting this exhibit, please contact Lisa Curtis, Exhibits Manager, [curtis@spacescience.org](mailto:curtis@spacescience.org) and be sure to visit [www.greatballsoffireexhibit.org](http://www.greatballsoffireexhibit.org) and [www.killerasteroids.org](http://www.killerasteroids.org)



## **Great Balls of Fire! Opens As Dawn Approaches Vesta**

Ever wonder about the origins of comets, asteroids, and meteors? Or what they tell us about Earth? As NASA's Dawn spacecraft approaches the asteroid Vesta to begin a year-long orbit, these questions will be in the news. Visitors to the *Great Balls of Fire!* exhibition, which opened at the Science Museum of Virginia on May 28th, are already exploring these mysterious space rocks through hands-on activities, computer-based interactives, meteorite specimens, scale models, and an immersive audio-visual experience.



These students gathered around the "Impacts Test Videos" interactive are able to use a Spin Browser to slow down and speed up high speed projectiles to better understand what happens when these objects hit their targets. (Photo Credit: National Center for Interactive Learning)

## **Teacher and Educator Workshops a Big Success!**

NCIL provided two workshops for the Science Museum of Virginia, to coincide with the opening of the *Great Balls of Fire* exhibit. NCIL Director Paul Dusenbery, along with Erin Graves of the Catawba Science Center and Suzy Gurton of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific.



(Above) Teachers participating in the Educator Workshop at the Science Museum of Virginia make "comets" (dirty snowballs) using dry ice. This activity was presented by Erin Graves of the Catawba Science Center, along with two members of Catawba's SAT (Student Advisor Team) group. (Photo Credit: National Center for Interactive Learning)

Astronomical Society of the Faculty, provided a workshop for museum educators. This workshop focused on interpreting the science content of the exhibit, and highlighted the traveling cart that can be used anywhere in the museum to get people interested in the exhibit. This cart contains materials developed by the Catawba Science Center education staff and middle school aged volunteers.

Dusenbery and Graves (with the help of two of her museum volunteers) also provided a workshop for teachers and local astronomy club members. This focused on activities that can be done in the classroom to promote state learning standards related to the exhibit. Elizabeth Warner of the EPOXI outreach time also gave a presentation about comets to the teachers, and provided them with materials for their classrooms.



*Expanding the frontiers of knowledge and understanding*

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