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TRAVELERS SUPPORTS THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM WITH \$236,000 GRANT

West Hartford, CT (June 20, 2007)...Travelers has awarded The Children's Museum a \$236,000 grant to upgrade the technology in its Gengras Planetarium. The award was announced by Robert Brody, Senior Vice President of Travelers, at the Museum's 11th annual gala held June 8th at the new Blue Back Square development project in West Hartford. The gift will allow the museum to bring state-of-the-art digital fulldome technology and expanded programming to the planetarium's audiences. When the new system installation is completed in September 2007, the museum will rename the planetarium as the Travelers Science Dome at the Gengras Planetarium. The upgrade will make the Museum's planetarium the most advanced in the state and the only system of its kind in New England. The Gengras Planetarium will join 32 other facilities worldwide that utilize the same technology.

Using a single-fisheye projector and powerful computer processing, the SciDome equipment, manufactured by Spitz, Inc. of Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, will transform the 40-foot dome of the Gengras Planetarium into a real-time three dimensional space simulator and presenter of fulldome multimedia shows. The technology provides diverse areas of programming beyond astronomy which will enable the Museum to expand its show subjects to include microbiology, sea and ocean life, dinosaurs, earth sciences, meteorology and even the arts. "We are really excited about this major opportunity to bring our programming and technology to a new level", said Gengras Planetarium Director Jason T. Archer. "This will benefit the educational needs of students and families across the state allowing them to visualize moving through space and time and observe the workings of the universe. We are most appreciative to Travelers for their support."

According to Marlene Ibsen, president of Travelers Connecticut Foundation, company officials were most impressed with the educational value the technology would bring to the region, after visiting Spitz and viewing demonstrations of the system's technology and enhancements. "As a funder, it seemed like a great opportunity to help the community obtain a unique and important educational asset. We are pleased to help The Children's Museum and the Gengras Planetarium continue their important science mission with young children."

The first shows to premiere in the Travelers Science Dome in September include:

- "*Astronaut with Ewan McGregor*" - What does it take to be an astronaut? Experience a rocket launch from inside an astronaut. Explore inner and outer space, from floating around the International Space Station to maneuvering through the human body. Discover the perils of space as we subject 'Chad', our test astronaut, to everything that space has to throw at him.
- "*Oasis in Space*" – A startling and beautiful voyage through the universe, galaxy and solar system in search of liquid water – a key ingredient for life on Earth. This show will delight viewers of all ages.
- The award winning "*Zulu Patrol*" now airing on PBS comes alive in a full-dome show complete with the cast of characters who are on an expedition collecting samples of weather on planet Zulu for scientist Multo's research. Packed with excitement and intrigue, villains and heroes, children of all ages will delight in this cartoon adventure.
- The Gengras Planetarium's most popular children's show, "*The Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*" will be upgraded for the full-dome environment. Two children spend a night touring the solar system alongside their ship's navigator, an astronomy book. Enjoy 3-D animation and soundtrack with spectacular effects created at George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch as well as updated narration track to reclassify Pluto as a "dwarf planet".
- "*Molecularium: Riding Snowflakes*" – An introduction to the world of atoms and molecules for children. Oxy, the Oxygen atom, and her Hydrogen friends, Hydro and Hydra, travel and sing across the Universe to investigate how atoms form molecules. They shrink down to the atomic level to ride a snowflake as it builds and then turns to rain.

The addition of the Travelers Science Dome continues the Gengras Planetarium's 38-year history of inspiring and educating over a million visitors. Established in 1927, The Children's Museum changed its name in 2006 from the Science Center of Connecticut. In addition to the Museum and the Gengras Planetarium, the organization includes the United Technologies Wildlife Sanctuary, Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, and The Children's Museum Preschool, one of the oldest preschools in the country. The Children's Museum serves close to 200,000 people annually, and is the fifth oldest children's museum in the country, and Connecticut's largest museum. Located at 950 Trout Brook Drive in West Hartford, the museum is accessible from I-84 Exit 43 and offers free parking. For more information, visit the website at www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

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