Natural History Museum of Utah at the Rio Tinto Center, University of Utah
From the Ground Up Exhibition Fact Sheet

Overview:

The Natural History Museum of Utah opened the Rio Tinto Center on the campus of the University of Utah in November, 2011. Located on the foothills of the Wasatch Mountain Range, the 163,000 square-foot facility serves as the state's new natural history museum building. In a debut of the Museum's changing exhibition gallery, the exhibit *From the Ground Up* is an interactive glance that details the artists, the photographers, the architects, the exhibit designers, the exhibit fabricators and the construction workers who were an integral part of realizing the Museum's trek into the Rio Tinto Center. It condenses 25 years of planning into a 2,000 square-foot exhibit, allowing visitors to learn about the process and the people behind the project.

Exhibit Development Team:

- Tim Lee, exhibit designer
- Annastasia Copeland-Rynders, exhibit designer
- Becky Menlove, exhibits director
- Carolyn Crowley, graphic designer
- Wendi King, content developer

Square Footage:

2,000 square-feet

Opening:

April 20, 2012

Interactive:

- A floor-based timeline immerses and guides the visitor through the exhibit and the process. Beginning in the foyer of the changing exhibition hall, the journey begins with the opening of the Museum in the historic George Thomas Building in 1969. It walks visitors through the exhibit, to panels that detail place, design, collections, and construction.
- A time-lapse movie of the construction process allows visitors to watch the building come together on the former shoreline of ancient Lake Bonneville. It also allows visitors to pause, rewind, and fast-forward through the 2-minute movie.
- A pervious pavement interactive demonstrates how the Museum's parking lot allows water to matriculate through the pavement and back into the soil.
- Touch specimens include: copper samples that came from the Bingham Canyon Mine in Salt Lake City, used to clad the exterior of the building; board-form, a concrete process using lumber to create an exposed formed structure; design materials used in the construction of the building and exhibits.

Highlights:

- The location selection of the Rio Tinto Center and its importance to the Museum's mission of "… illuminating the natural world and place of humans within it."
- The trek that took the architectural and exhibit design teams throughout the state in order to better understand and incorporate the breadth of Utah's natural history into the design.
- Preliminary 3-D models and designer sketches of the Rio Tinto Center's initial design concepts, as drafted and modeled by the designers.
- A video with interviews of the architects, exhibit designers, construction workers and Museum staff who were involved throughout the entire process.
- The benefits of having a seismically engineered and climate-controlled collections area for the Museum's 1.2-million object collection.
- Solar panel and pervious pavement visuals highlight the Museum's green elements as it goes for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification.
- Wooden pallettes used to move the Museum's collection were recycled for *From the Ground Up*, repurposed as freestanding exhibit walls.
- The exhibit is integrated into the Museum's architectural tours, a daily tour available to paying Museum visitors.
- *From the Ground Up* links to the Museum's Trailhead to Utah system, an innovative technology-based, way-finding system through its galleries.

Museum Construction and Design:

Big-D Construction:

With a portfolio that is complex and vast, Big-D Construction has been an industry leader in sustainable design and construction for more than 40 years. The company has built well over 35 LEED certified buildings, including the first one completed for the State of Utah. Among many, recent highly recognized projects include the Westminster College Meldrum Science Center, Swaner EcoCenter, and the Vernal Dinosaur National Monument Quarry Visitor Center. More information www.big-d.com

Ennead Architects:

Known for powerful building designs for cultural, educational, scientific and not-for-profit institutions, Ennead's research-based design process sponsors creates signature building designs that are expressive on an institution's philosophy and vision. Ennead is noted for its work in the museum industry, including the Newseum in Washington D.C, the Dallas Museum of Nature and Science, and the American Museum of Natural History, Rose Center for Earth and Space, among many others. More information www.ennead.com

Museum Construction and Design:

GSBS Architects:

GSBS embraces emerging principles of architecture to create positive structures that are more pleasant to be in, less costly to maintain, and contribute to a healthier environment. A recognized leader in sustainable design for more than three decades, GSBS has designed 14 LEED-certified buildings, including one of the first LEED certified buildings in the world, the 2002 Olympic Speed Skating Oval. The award-winning Escalante Visitors Center is recognized for its zero carbon footprint and photo-voltaic array. More information www.gsbsarchitects.com

Design Workshop:

An award-winning firm practicing landscape architecture, Design Workshop merges artistic vision, environmental sensitivity, community values and sound economics to create compelling places that stand the test of time. Since forming in 1969, Design Workshop excels in many areas of green design, including restoring natural landscapes, conserving ecosystems, and creating places that are compelling and sustainable. Their work is consistently recognized nationally for excellence. More information www.designworkshop.com

Exhibit Sponsors:

Presenting Partner: Big-D Construction. Museum Supporters: Ennead Architects; GSBS Architects; Staker Parson Companies. Community Contributors: A&B Mechanical, C. Comstock Clayton Foundation.

Museum Information:

The Natural History Museum of Utah is one of the leading scientific research and cultural institutions in the country. Established in 1963, the Museum's collections contain over 1.2 million objects and offers innovative exhibitions and educational programs to thousands of residents and visitors each year, including traveling and permanent exhibits, special events and other programs. With an expected attendance of 180,000 visitors a year, the Museum also offers a variety of outreach programs to communities and schools throughout Utah, reaching every school district in the state annually. The Museum has an active science program with more than 30 scientists and 10 field expeditions each year.