

MEDIA RELEASE

**Canada's first permanent digital immersion gallery
to open this summer in Calgary**

[Calgary, Alberta] – Canada's first permanent digital immersion gallery will open this summer in Calgary as part of upgrades at Telus Spark Science Centre and Calgary's economic recovery plan.

"Imagine walking into a gallery where it feels you are stepping into the pages of a storybook, or a human brain, or the inside of a leaf. Digital immersion is a powerful way to engage people from all walks of life in the world where science meets creativity," explains Mary Anne Moser, President and CEO of Telus Spark Science Centre.

Several temporary digital immersion exhibitions have visited Canada this past year, including a well know Van Gogh exhibition, where visitors feel like they are walking inside one of his paintings. Telus Spark Science Centre is planning to dial up guest encounters with immersive experiences that draw upon science and storytelling.

This major gallery renewal is one of several improvements in 2021 that will kickstart activity based on science. A café and ice cream shop, an outdoor program area before the paywall, a technology upgrade to the Dome Theatre plus popcorn and drink service, are all part of a longer-term plan to support a broader community engaging with the science centre. Multiple ways of knowing are an integral part of the way Telus Spark Science Centre is developing both the building and programs.

The \$5.88 million upgrade project is made possible by the City of Calgary's allocation of \$2.3 million from the Municipal Stimulus Program of the Government of Alberta, as well as an investment of \$2.46 million from the Government of Canada through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

"Investments in cultural infrastructure are a vital part of building strong and inclusive communities. Thanks to the Government of Canada's support, Telus Spark Science Centre will renovate the Dome Theatre and the Digital Immersion Gallery, and will purchase and install specialized equipment and new theatre seating. We are proud to support a cultural facility that fosters curiosity and creativity, while ensuring a legacy of quality infrastructure investments in Calgary," says the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage.

"Telus Spark Science Centre is continuously adapting, diversifying, and bettering the community. The investment into an upgraded science centre will have far-reaching and positive impacts for Albertans, and help to create a stronger city and province by sharing science and technology in a way that relates to Calgary and Alberta's needs and priorities," says the Honourable Leela Aheer, Alberta Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and the Status of Women.

"We're exceptionally proud of the experience our civic partners, like Telus Spark Science Centre, provide for Calgarians. In fact, when the pandemic struck, Spark wasted no time in going online to keep their student programs in place. Investment like this create jobs at a time when they're most needed, while

also giving visitors of all ages a new, engaging way to discover the fun of STEM education,” says Mayor Naheed Nenshi.

With these upgrades, Spark plans to re-open later in the spring and build back up to employ 149 Albertans, engage more than 400,000 guests a year, serve over 17,500 members and an average of 72,000 students. Accelerated by the pandemic, online programming will now permanently support students across southern Alberta.

Spark is a registered educational charity.

Media Contact

Pamela Todd Director, Marketing & Business Development
w: 403.651.4043
e: pamela.todd@sparkscience.ca

Jacqueline Tran Specialist, Marketing & Communications
w: 403.651.4891
e: jacqueline.tran@sparkscience.ca

About Telus Spark Science Centre

Spark exists to entertain people of all ages in creative encounters with science and engineering. The current science centre has its roots in the Centennial Planetarium, which opened in 1967. The planetarium became the Calgary Science Centre in 1987, which then merged with the Creative Kids Museum in 2005, to be the organization that it is today. In 2005, Telus became the naming sponsor. In 2011, the Calgary Science Centre Society opened the doors to the first new science centre built in Canada in more than 25 years. It is home to one of the largest Dome theatres in western Canada, five large galleries, and a 15-acre park including a playground based on the science on the developing brain.

Land Acknowledgement

The Calgary science centre, operating as Telus Spark Science Centre, is a registered educational charity in Calgary, Canada. Spark thrives on the ancestral lands of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy), and is grateful to these longstanding caretakers of the land who, along with the Tsuut'ina, Îyârhe Nakoda, and Government of Canada, signed Treaty 7 in 1877. Spark acknowledges that Treaty 7 sets out an agreement for reciprocal peace and friendship between self-determined peoples. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation Region 3.