

State of the art Science and Discovery Facility Planned for PEI

The Homburg family of companies has pledged a \$9 Million gift to launch a 15,000 square foot science and discovery facility within The Confederation Court Mall in downtown Charlottetown.

For the past eighteen months, the management team of Dr. Phillip Homburg, President of the Homburg Institute, Wraychel Horne, executive director of The Montessori School of Charlottetown, and Chuck Bridges, Consultant, former VP at Saint Mary's University and Atlantic Lottery, have been engaging the community to learn what PEI needs. "We have held group consultations with leaders from the political, academic and business communities, and one-to-one industry talks. Extensive time has been spent with educators from elementary curriculum developers to our post-secondary institution deans, and leaders." shares Dr. Homburg. "Our independent feasibility study with more than 300 public respondents shows that although this is not a new concept, there is a clear desire for this type of facility in our provincial capital. Our business plan will ensure that the facility can be successful over the long-term while reflecting our community and showcasing it to the outside world."

The creation of the PEI Science + Discovery (PEI S+D) facility will bring a spotlight to innovation, agriculture, and energy our Island creates. The gift is a considerable amount of space alongside providing support for the development stage of the project. Street front access will be available from a landmark marquee entrance on Grafton Street. PEI S+D will make additional use of upper and lower levels from this central access point. Access is available via Confederation Court Mall, The Holman Grand, and from the lower level, connecting to the tunnel leading to the Confederation Centre of the Arts. The main centre court footprint will allow for multiple rotating exhibits.

"The City of Charlottetown continues to see transformation and growth in our economy. Charlottetown is a destination so it makes sense that this science and discovery facility will be located here, in the Birthplace of Confederation and the Capital City of Prince Edward Island," said Charlottetown Mayor Clifford Lee. "As a municipality, we're very supportive of this project and excited that it will enhance innovation and education on PEI, while at the same time adding another great tourism product to our city. We will be following the progress in anticipation and look forward to the grand opening."

Government engagement has been positive at all levels - municipal, provincial, and federal - and has been a part of the planning process since early talks in 2017. Best practice site visits have taken place to exceptional facilities in Ottawa, Vancouver, Sarasota, Florida, and Portland, Maine, to see first-hand what is working best in other markets.

PEI S+D presents the opportunity to create and become a beacon of innovation. The facility will lead to the creation of new jobs. It will provide a much-needed hands-on component to the education systems of PEI, and create a new tourism element for the province. Next steps include the commitment of additional industry partners and finalization of initial exhibits. At this juncture, the facility is set to launch for summer of 2019.

Dr. Debbie Plouffe, VP Research at the Center for Aquaculture Technologies, states “The PEI S+D facility represents a unique opportunity to showcase and communicate the leadership, innovation, and successes of PEI science-based businesses. Creating an interactive environment for people of all ages to explore their interests in STEAM-related topics engages them directly with the scientific community right here on the Island and forges a mutually beneficial connection between the technology sector and the public.”

The development of such a facility will play a role as a destination for tourists, and locals alike: It will be a living demonstration of what PEI offers the larger confederation in the areas of science, technology, and culture. It is not a static museum that looks back at past accomplishments, but an ever-changing embodiment of the brightest minds, emerging innovators, and most creative companies on the Island.

The PEI S+D will adopt a multidisciplinary STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) approach that encompasses the traditional STEM subjects with an added arts component. The STEAM approach recognizes that the skills learned in the humanities help inform critical thinking skills and creativity that are beneficial in the STEM subjects. PEI S+D will be a place where learners can express their creativity while, at the same time, see how STEAM skills can be put into practice in the world of science and technology.

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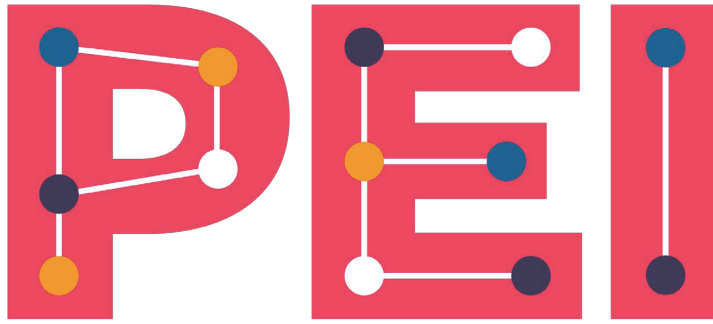
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