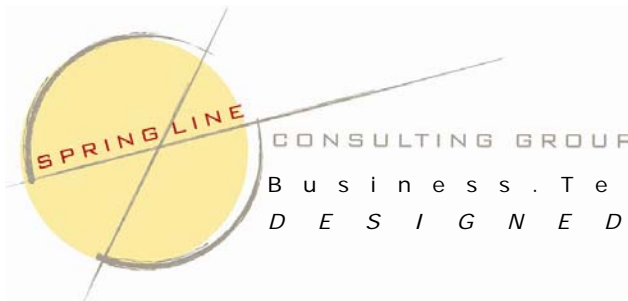


NORTHWEST ARKANSAS MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Site Selection - Request for Proposals

April 4, 2008



B u s i n e s s . T e c h n o l o g y . E n v i r o n m e n t
D E S I G N E D a n d A L I G N E D

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The late John Lewis gave us a vision for a world-class science and technology center that will exist here in Northwest Arkansas. At this science center we will inspire our children in the wonders of the sciences and encourage our adults to navigate the technological changes of the 21st century, and we will do this all through the lens of the Ozarks: our cultures, our histories, our environments, and our innovations.

This request for proposals will assist the Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation in selection of a location for this new science and technology center.

SCIENCE CENTER INTRODUCTION

The proposed science center is a multi-disciplinary, hands-on science and technology center serving Northwest Arkansas residents and students as well as visitors to our region. Located in either Benton or Washington counties, this nonprofit organization will focus on regional research and technologies, the environment, health, and sustainability. It will provide state-of-the-art exhibits, immersive theatre, educational programs, and interactions with scientists, innovators and artists in a comfortable, fun and friendly setting.

The science center serves the two connected purposes most commonly voiced in the community-needs interviews conducted by the Foundation: 1) inspiring engagements with science and technology, and 2) adding to the quality of life in the region. The science center's diversified business model will be based on revenue generated from visitors and customers triangulated with public grants and philanthropic support.

VISION

The science center combines an educational institution that promotes awareness in science and technology with a popular community-gathering place to be revisited for its recurring learning experiences. Akin to great public spaces, those "Third Places" that are neither work nor home, the science center serves the civic needs of residents, for experiential learning and for quality time with family and friends.

The science center will celebrate the joy of learning, the excitement of discovery, the beauty that scientists find in the world and the inspiration that leads inventors to expand our capabilities. The science center's aspiration is to create an institution for excellence in science learning based on the Ozarks' magnificent environment as its unifying theme. The goal is to develop a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)

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Science Center Introduction

designated museum on a site adhering to Low Impact Development standards.

Given the region's needs and rapid pace of change, the science center will be flexible, entrepreneurial, customer-focused and community-oriented.

SCIENCE CENTER DESCRIPTION

Imagine zooming into the science center from a future Google Earth. At the top level, the science center and its neighboring institutions are located in a sustainable, green development that exemplifies renewable energy sources, low impact development, the application of high technology to land conservation, the incorporation of natural features into the architecture, and a clear sensitivity for the beauty of the environment. The buildings are to be LEED-certified, designed in the spirit of the Ozark architect, Fay Jones, renowned worldwide for his integration of buildings into the landscape.

Come a bit closer to the cluster at the center. Three economically independent but symbiotically supportive organizations share the site: The science center, another educational resource (i.e., university center, magnet school, library, National Park or public television station), and an environmental research operation (e.g., US Fish and Wildlife, Ozark Natural Science Center, Audubon Arkansas, NASA or UA's Watershed Research and Education Center). The three are linked by an open, airy Commons, supported by a mixed use area with retail and dining. Nearby, housing and offices are within walking distance.

Focusing on the science museum, we find a collection of learning facilities with entrances grouped around the Commons. Visitor-based learning spaces include the Museum Galleries, a Giant Screen Theatre, and an International Feature Center for hosting traveling exhibits and events. Customer-based learning services include the Ozarks Conference and Learning Center, the Arkansas Distance Learning and Outreach Depot, and the Citizen Science Project Center.

Inside the Museum Galleries, the science center atrium serves as the organizational hub for the five exhibit galleries by day and as a ceremonial space for rent in the evenings. The Atrium's glass walls allow panoramic views to the forested hills serving as gateways to the exhibit pavilions. An adjacent community auditorium offers a seating capacity to match adjacent dining and reception facilities.

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The Commons is enlivened by the Clearwater Café, a “slow food” establishment committed to sustainable agricultural practices, sponsoring locally grown ingredients and healthy food preparation. Advancing the outreach mission of the center, the Café and the One World Museum Store provide a vital third place gathering environment open to regular patrons without having to visit the museum.

MARKET AREAS

The primary market of the science center is defined as the four counties that make up the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) including Benton, Madison, Washington, and McDonald County in Missouri. The secondary market is defined by the Fort Smith-Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Designated Market Area (DMA), including Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Scott, Sebastian, and Le Flore, and Sequoyah in Oklahoma. The tertiary market includes Adair, Cherokee, Delaware and Mayes counties in Oklahoma, Barry in Missouri, and Carroll in Arkansas.

The school market is defined as the Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Primary, Secondary and Tertiary markets.

Tourists are defined as persons spending a night in the Primary Market counties of Benton and Washington counties.

SITE SELECTION PROJECT

Pursuant to securing a site for the science center, the Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation invites the submission of proposals for candidate sites that will be home to the new science center.

Proposed sites must meet the *Basic Project Parameters*. Additional consideration will be given to proposals that meet and exceed the *Site Selection Criteria*. All candidate sites will be evaluated and reviewed by our Site Selection Committee (“Committee”). The Committee will make recommendations to the Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation’s Board of Directors, who will make the final site selection decision.

SELECTION PROCESS

The site selection process will be objective and scientific. The process was developed with the collaboration of Steve Luoni, Director of the University of Arkansas Community Design Center, Dr. Ron Goforth, NWA Museum Board

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member and CEO of Beta-Rubicon, and Brent Robinson, NWA Museum interim Executive Director and principal of Springline Consulting Group.

The selection process is based on an approach used by Dr. Goforth and similar to the Kepner-Tregoe methodology developed at Princeton University. With this process, the NWA Museum Foundation has convened five members from across the two-county region to participate as our Site Selection Committee. Committee members are under a strict confidentiality agreement not to disclose project details until after all agreements are signed and the site is secured.

The Committee will be responsible for evaluating proposals and selecting the final candidates. These top candidates will be notified and invited to present to the Site Selection Committee where the Committee will make a final determination of the best site location for the new science center.

After the presentations, the Site Selection Committee will make a recommendation to the Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation board. The Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation Board of Directors will make the final determination of the site selection and negotiate the agreements.

SELECTION PROJECT TIMELINES

Friday, April 4th – This RFP will be posted on the NWAMuseum.org website.

Friday, May 16th – Completed proposal packages are due by 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 22nd – Site Selection Committee will review proposals and determine a shortlist of finalist proposals.

- The Committee may take additional time to thoroughly review all proposals.
- The Committee may contact bidders to request clarifications or additional information.
- Finalists will be notified via email if selected.
- Finalists will be required to present to the Committee at a yet to be determined date approximately two weeks after notification.

BASIC PROJECT PARAMETERS

Basic requirements for the project include:

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- The new science center will be located in Northwest Arkansas.
- The center will occupy a building (or buildings) approximately 130,000 gross square feet in its final phase.
- The center will include space for exhibits, a giant screen theater, a learning center, offices, and support spaces.
- The center will require parking for approximately 310 cars and 10 buses.
- The proposed schedule expects the facility to be completed and operational within three and a half years after site procurement and identification of lead donors.

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will guide evaluation of candidate site desirability:

- Transportation and Access:
 - Public Transportation – Is the proposed site near existing or proposed transportation routes or is there a plan to incorporate public transportation?
 - Parking – Is there enough space for a peak 310 car parking spaces (minimum 130 by code) and 10 bus parking spaces in either surface or deck parking?
 - Future Rail System – Is the proposed site near potential rail lines for a light rail or other mass transit system?
 - Must have regional identity – Does the proposed site promote the regional identity of Northwest?
 - Bus Access – Does the site provide ample space for drop-off, turnaround and parking for a least 10 buses?
 - Easy on/off Highway Access – Is the proposed site easily accessible from nearby highways and arterial roads?
 - Proximity to Students – Is the site centrally located to the school markets of the region?
 - Near a Population Center – Is the site near a population center within the Northwest Arkansas region?

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- Easy to find for first time visitors – Is the site visible, prominently located, along known or identifiable roadways?
- Near Trail system – Is the proposed site near an existing trail system or is there a plan to tie into existing municipal and county walking and biking trail systems?
- Proximity to College Students – Is there access to college students and college level programs that might augment the exhibits and programs of the science center?
- Proximity to Scientists – Is there access to science and technology professors and professionals that are willing and able to provide content and expertise to programs and exhibits at the science center?
- Municipal Development Environment:
 - Fits program size comfortably – Will the site accommodate the basic project parameters in a reasonable manner? A single level design might incorporate these requirements in approximately 12 acres or more whereas a three-story design with structured parking and rooftop garden space might require only 2 ½ acres.
 - Public Services – Is the proposed site served by fire, police and emergency services?
 - Infrastructure – Is there access to or plans to provide utilities to the proposed site?
 - Zoning Ordinances – Will the existing zoning accommodate any special requirements of the site due to its public nature or the 55' dome height of the theater? If not, is there a willingness, history or mechanisms in place to provide appropriate variances?
- Context:
 - Gift shop to wider audience – Are there complementary uses near the site that will drive potential customers to the gift shop?
 - Nighttime Use – Is there a suitable environment and compatible amenities for nighttime activities at the science center?
 - Cafe to wider audience – Is there a neighboring residential, retail and/or office center that will drive lunchtime or evening traffic to the café?

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- NIMBY – Do the neighbors desire and are they comfortable with a high traffic generating institution in their neighborhood?
- Increases attendance potential – Are there other like businesses or attractions that might drive traffic to the science center?
- Cluster – Is the site near other cultural or entertainment amenities?
- Enhanced by character of neighborhood – What is the character of the proposed neighborhood and how might it impact the nature of the science center?
- Unrelated retail to wider market – Are there other businesses and offices in the area? Describe.
- Bidder Package:
 - Property tax exempt – What are the city, county and state tax liabilities of the proposed site and how do these impact a 501(c)(3) organization?
 - Cost of Land – What is the cost of the land? Is it a gift? If so, what are the parameters of the donor? Is it a full ownership or peppercorn lease (\$1 per year) or other type of arrangement?
 - New Market or other Tax Credits – What tax incentives exist for this location that might be used for negotiating with partners in this location?
 - Other Financial tools and incentives – Are there other financial incentives, gifts, promotions or other vehicles being proposed for this site?
 - Project Management – As a part of this site proposal, are there other administrative, construction, design, etc. services proposed?
- Site Specific:
 - Construction Cost Constraints and Opportunities – Are there any identifiable constraints or opportunities for construction costs?
 - Environmental Survey – Is there any history of environmental pollution or contamination?
 - Environmental Highlight Opportunities – Are there unique or specific environmental elements available for interpretation and interaction?

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Proposal Format and Elements

- Potential for Expansion – Does the proposed site include space for future expansion of the science center and its programs?
- Space for science center plus two neighboring organizations – Is there space beyond that provided for the science center where neighboring educational and research institutions might locate?
- Outdoor Exhibit/Program possibility – Is there space or features for outdoor programs, exhibits or activities available?
- Entails operating costs that are controllable – Are there any specific site features that attribute to exceptional operation costs?
- Income producing possibilities – Is the site conducive to other income producing opportunities?
- Shared site maintenance – Will this site include common area maintenance or other shared opportunities?
- Shared building maintenance – Does this site or its neighbors provide the opportunity for shared building maintenance responsibilities?

Based on the business plan, input from the Community Design Center and the committee members own experiences, the Site Selection Committee have determined this list of criteria to be essential characteristics of the ideal home for the new science center. The Committee has determined numeric values for each of these criteria and will grade each proposed site according to this scale.

Bidders are encouraged to include other defining site characteristics and attributes significant for consideration by the Committee.

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND ELEMENTS

To be considered, all proposals must meet the required format and specific elements listed below. Please be proactive in supplying ancillary information (i.e., air-shed, geotechnical information, mineral rights, signage ordinances, etc):

- Proposal Format:
 - Cover Letter
 - Index of Proposal
 - Executive Summary

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Proposal Format and Elements

- Responder Profile – all relevant contact information
- Property Description – Narrative and Legal Description of the property, including location, buildable acreage (excluding ponds, wetlands, or other areas that cannot be conventionally developed) and total acreage proposed
- Basic Project Requirements – Itemized, narrative response
- Site Selection Criteria – Itemized, narrative response
- Existing Zoning Classification and Other Property Encumbrances
- Other Pertinent Documents – Drawings, renderings, Aerial Photographs, Environmental Reports, Soil Borings and Surveys
- Timeframe – Timeframe of the proposed project and relationship to science center timeline or timing requirements of land donation
- Eight (8) copies of proposals are required. Duplex (two-sided) printing on recycled paper is preferred.
- One (1) digital copy of the proposal on a cd-rom or dvd.
- Relevant questions from Respondents will be posted on the website where this RFP is posted: www.NWAMuseum.org.
- All responses will become property of the Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation. The Foundation will ensure the confidentiality of all proposals within the control of the Foundation, its agents and committees.
- Bidders selected as finalist will be required to sign a mutual confidentiality agreement. Public disclosure may result in disqualification.
- A Site Selection Committee has been appointed to review and evaluate all responses. Evaluation of responses will be based upon the elements noted above and response to any additional information the Committee may request. The winning bidder, if any, will be selected solely by the judgment of the Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation board based on the recommendations of the appointed Site Selection Committee.
- Presentations and additional information from Respondents may be requested by the Site Selection Committee.

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- All submissions will be reviewed for completeness and evaluated base on the factors noted above. The Northwest Arkansas Foundation reserves the right to suspend or discontinue the RFP process at any time, and to return or reject any or all submissions without obligation to the respondent.
- Acceptance of any response to this RFP should not be construed as a contract nor shall it indicate any commitment for any future action.
- The RFP does not commit Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation, its board and committee members and its agents to pay for any cost incurred in the submission of a response to this RFP or for any cost incurred prior to the execution of a formal agreement.

SUBMISSION ADDRESS

Send proposal packages to the following address:

Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation
c/o Brent Robinson
Springline Consulting Group
535 W Research Center Blvd, Suite 105
Fayetteville, AR 72701

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Proposals must be delivered by 5:00 on Friday, May 16th.

DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES

Please submit all inquiries via email to:
Brent.Robinson@Spring-line.com