

SSC Visitor Center Funds
Administered by Stennis Space Center
Congressionally Directed Funding
2009

Informal Education Addressed:

- Education Resource Center funding for training, workshops, and materials for K-12 educators
- Purchase of a portable Magic Planet system
- Technology maintenance and upgrades for the ERC and the Visitor's Center Exhibits and Materials
- ERC support for training and workshops for informal education and visitor relations specialists (VRS)
- Support of the ERC Bayou Regional

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Stennis Space Center Office of Education, in partnership with the SSC Visitor's Center, proposes to enhance the performance of our STEM education and outreach programs through a combination of labor, workshops, equipment purchases, as well as education activities with women and girls as applicable. The Visitor's Center at Stennis is operated by the Stennis Public Affairs Office.

MAGIC PLANET (portable version)

SSC proposed to acquire either one or two of the portable Magic Planet visualization systems. One will be used to travel to classrooms and to support our traveling outreach. A potential second system may be acquired for use in the main lobby of our administration building and as a second traveling unit. Magic Planet uses the same datasets as our Science on a Sphere (installed FY09) and will allow our staff to work between the two systems with ease. Estimates for one complete system (ready to travel) are between \$35k - \$50k. We are currently evaluating the different options to determine which will best suit our needs and if we should acquire one or two.

SMART BOARDS FOR ERC WORKSHOPS

Smart boards are becoming state-of-the-practice in classrooms, and many teachers lack the background to properly utilize them. We propose to acquire and use smart boards in ERC workshops and to provide technology training for teachers using NASA materials and curriculum guides.

Education Resource Center

The majority of the funding will be used to support the SSC Educator Resource Center (ERC) and will be expended through the end of FY10. Funding will provide professional development training for members of the ERC and Visitor's Center staffs. In addition, the ERC staff will host educator workshops that include mathematics, science, technology, and engineering. The staff conducted 40th Anniversary work and Center outreach workshops and special emphasis at student programs. These funds will also allow us to maintain our current activities with the girl Scouts and other local organizations. Our

ERC focused on expanding our formal and informal education activities to a larger geographic area with this funding. \$339k will cover approximately four WYEs used to help support Astro Camp and teacher workshops in the Delta and associated computer (ODIN) costs.

Kiosk for and general maintenance of Science on a Sphere

Spent funding on a Kiosk for general maintenance of our Science on a Sphere.

Conclusion

Stennis' proposed activities align with the NASA's Education Framework, especially Outcomes 2 and 3. The activities and purchases provide opportunities for collaboration with academic researchers and educators. Our continued challenge at SSC is to ensure that the activities are not limited to a one-time infusion of funds that will subsequently be neglected. We believe that with care and proper follow-through the proposed investments represent a step toward long term improvement of STEM education in our region and for the nation.

Budget

The budget is categorized for procurement, with a very small amount for Civil Servant travel. No civil Service salaries are covered.

	Funding
ERC support for workshops for informal and Formal educators to include training for Education Specialists and VRSs	339k
Technology Maintenance and Upgrades for ERC and Visitor's Center	75k
Magic Planet	50k
Mobile Exhibits and Materials (in work) (need at Visitor's Center Signage, Hands-on Exhibits)	35k
Support of Robotics Competition (done)	50k
Travel	4k
TOTAL	553k

FY-2009 Totals:

The NASA Education Office supported 63 Workshops with 9 being Offsite Presentations. From those Workshops, the Total Participation number was 24,138.