



bigMouth Returns from New York City with Cavities and a Smart Mouth *One of a Kind Oral Health Exhibit is First Component of Museum Reinvention*

ROANOKE, Va.—September 11, 2009-- bigMouth, the beloved giant (over 7 feet tall), anatomically correct model of the human mouth, has returned to the Science Museum of Western Virginia after a six-month visit in New York City for a complete makeover. The new bigMouth exhibit is the only one of its kind.

While the original bigMouth boasted a perfect set of teeth, the new mouth is ridden with cavities, gingivitis and a myriad of other oral health issues to demonstrate the consequences of poor oral health care and to teach the steps to good oral health.

Additionally, bigMouth now has a computerized, interactive component that can be updated to keep the exhibit relevant and interesting. There are 39 touch points in the mouth, one for each tooth (32), six on the tongue, and one along the gum line. Visitors answer questions presented on a screen in the back of the mouth by touching the corresponding part of the mouth.

Exhibit IQ, a leading U.S exhibit producer that is working with the Science Museum on its reinvention, developed bigMouth's new concept and design. Moey, Inc., interactive technology specialists located in New York City, developed the interactive components of the exhibit.

bigMouth is part of the oral health section of the Healthy Bodies Gallery, sponsored by Delta Dental of Virginia, and is the first component to be completed in the Museum's reinvention. Delta Dental supported the purchase of the original bigMouth in 2006 and its makeover for the Healthy Bodies Gallery as part of its oral health education outreach.

"With more than 150,000 visitors annually from throughout southwestern Virginia, Delta Dental's support of the dental health section of the Healthy Bodies Gallery is one of the most important and far-reaching means for teaching the importance of good oral health and its relationship to overall body health," said George Levicki, DDS, president and CEO, Delta Dental of Virginia. "bigMouth will serve as our dental health ambassador."

As with all of the new exhibits in the Museum's reinvention, bigMouth will be temporarily located on the 5th floor of the Museum to be evaluated over the coming

months. This evaluation will assist in the design of future exhibits for the reinvented Science Museum, set to open in 2011.

“bigMouth provides us with an exciting opportunity to test and refine our new design concept based on the principles of inquiry-based learning,” said Nancy McCrickard, the Museum’s executive director. “This knowledge will greatly increase the educational effectiveness of the entire Museum as our reinvention proceeds.”

The new Museum will focus on healthy living, environmental stewardship, and the improvement of science, technology, engineering and mathematics literacy in the region through three new galleries *Healthy Bodies, Healthy Earth, and How It Works*.

About the Science Museum of Western Virginia

The Science Museum of Western Virginia is one of the oldest science museums in Virginia, founded in 1970 by a group of teachers and community volunteers to provide informal science experiences to enhance education in the classroom. It has grown throughout the years to become a valuable community and educational resource. The Museum is among fewer than 5% of museums in the U.S. nationally accredited by the American Association of Museums.

The Science Museum has embarked on a bold plan to serve the community via inquiry-based learning, establishing a new national model others may emulate. The reinvented Science Museum plans to export its inquiry-based learning model to museums around the world that seek to remain relevant in today’s fast-paced, technologically advanced society. For additional information, visit www.smwv.org.

About Delta Dental of Virginia

Delta Dental of Virginia, headquartered in Roanoke, was created in 1964 by the Virginia Dental Association and chartered by the General Assembly, as a not-for-profit service corporation the same year. Delta Dental provides employee dental benefits through a variety of managed fee-for-service and PPO plans covering over 1.3 million enrollees in over 3,200 groups. Delta Dental of Virginia is a member company of the Delta Dental Plans Association, the nation’s largest, most experienced dental benefits carrier providing dental coverage to over 51.6 million people in over 93,000 groups across the nation.

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