The mission of the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC) is to inspire a better future for all through curiosity, exploration, and participation in science, culture, and the natural world. RMSC includes the Science Museum, Strasenburgh Planetarium, Cumming Nature Center, and RMSC Preschool. Offering experiences at the Museum with more than 200 interactive exhibits, the Planetarium with a 65-foot dome, and the Nature Center on 900 acres, the RMSC stimulates community interest in exploration. In addition, the more than 1.2 million RMSC collection items tell the story of the Rochester Region's past and present, including its rich history of social and technological innovation. RMSC receives major funding from Monroe County, where it is one of the top five most visited attractions serving children and families.

Key Offerings

- Museum galleries covering 4 floors
- Strasenburgh Planetarium with 65-foot Star Theater dome
- Cumming Nature Center on 900 acres in Naples NY, heart of the Finger Lakes
- 200 theme-based, hands-on exhibits
- Interactive science experiments daily
- On-site preschool with over 40 years of service
- School break science day camps
- Curiosity Club school day program
- More than 1.2 million authentic collection items
- Skill-building opportunities
- Programs and events all year

Home To...

- The largest diversity of exhibits assembled under one roof in western New York State, including the largest and most comprehensive Seneca-Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) collection in the world
- One of the first musical twin Tesla coil Electricity Theater experiences of its kind in the country
- Natural Science collections of the Rochester region dating back more than 435 million years; and regional history collections illuminating the daily lives of everyday people and historic figures of Rochester, including people like Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony
- Only public domed planetarium, the Strasenburgh Planetarium, within a day’s drive in any direction
- Fifteen miles of hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing trails at Cumming Nature Center
- Science on A Sphere: global and planetary data visualizations on a 5ft diameter digital globe
- The RMSC Preschool; a premier museum-based preschool with a child-centered, developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Genesee Community Charter School

Current Accolades

- *Rochester Business Journal/Daily Record 2020 Reader Rankings Best Cultural Attraction semifinalist; Best Museum semifinalist*
- *KidsOutAndAbout.com 2020 “Top Places To Take Kids in the Greater Rochester Area” third-place winner*
- *Museum Association of New York 2019 Engaging Communities Award for Take It Down! Organizing Against Racism exhibit, presented in partnership with the Take It Down Planning Committee and the City of Rochester*
- *Museum Association of New York 2019 Anne Ackerson Innovation in Leadership Award to Past President Kate Bennett*
- *Rochester Business Journal/Daily Record 2018 Reader Rankings Best Preschool winner; Best Museum semifinalist*
- *KidsOutAndAbout.com 2020 “Top Places to Take Kids in the Greater Rochester Area” third-place winner*
- *Landmark Society of Western New York 2018 Special Citation Award for Rochester in 1838 diorama*
• Rochester Business Journal 40 Under 40 honors to Capital Campaign Director Ryan Elizabeth Shear 2018; Senior Director for Collections and Exhibits Kathryn Murano Santos 2017

Economic Facts
• $6.9 million dollar budget annually
• More than 385,000 visitors annually
• Serve 65,000 school-age children in groups annually
• Nearly 6,000 members across Western New York
• 67 full-time and 186 part-time employees
• More than 500 annual volunteers
• Annual earned revenue $4.0 million

Primary Audiences
• Families, children, current students, life-long learners
• Served from the following counties:
  ○ Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates

Experience Highlights: Museum & Science Center
• Live science shows and demonstrations:
  ○ Electricity Theater musical lightning twin Tesla coil live show
  ○ Science On a Sphere high-res 3-D image data projection system—Earth storms, Mars and more
• Interactive and participatory exhibits:
  ○ Regional Green Infrastructure Showcase - Stewardship of water resources
  ○ Expedition Earth - The Rochester area landscape from 540 million years ago to present day
  ○ Adventure Zone - Hands-on earth science
  ○ Flight to Freedom: Rochester's Underground Railroad - abolitionists and freedom seekers
  ○ Objectively Racist - explores how objects and images perpetuate Racism and what we can do to change it
  ○ Take It Down! Organizing Against Racism - explores how community activism can lead to tangible social change
  ○ Face to Face: Encounters with Identity - how individuals and groups express identity
  ○ Illumination: The World of Light and Optics—discover applications of lasers and light
  ○ Inventor Center maker space encouraging invention, innovation and teamwork
  ○ Rochester in 1838: Young Lion of the West--construction of the Erie Canal transforms Rochester into the nation’s first boomtown
• Innovative in-depth science and cultural programming for students, families and adult lifelong learners.
• Haudenosaunee Days: Celebrate Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) culture — past and present — with artisans from the community. Availble to school groups and the general public.
• Curiosity Camps: Curiosity Camps at the RMSC offer exciting opportunities for young minds ages 2-15 during school breaks and over summer break.
• Curiosity Club: A safe, supportive, and structured environment for kids to attend their virtual school, complete their homework, learn, and play (2020).

Experience Highlights: Strasenburgh Planetarium
• The Star Theater, renovated for its fiftieth anniversary, features the Evans & Sutherland Digistar 6 fulldome visualization system, projecting through Rochester-made Navitar lenses.
• The beloved 1968 Zeiss Mark VI star projector, known to children as “Carl,” remains in the theater and is turned on in occasional “Stars with Carl” shows.
• The anniversary renovation also included flexible seating in the Star Theater, an attractive food service bar and kitchen in the lobby, new audio-visual equipment for events throughout the building, and accessible restrooms.
• Current-events star shows at the Strasenburgh Planetarium informed by relationships with
scientists at NASA, Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Rochester and University of Chicago.

- **Gambit Optical System** on display in the Strasenburgh Planetarium previously part of a reconnaissance satellite created at Kodak in Rochester in 1967
- Classic rock and holiday laser shows for families produced in-house at the Strasenburgh Planetarium and projected with state-of-the-art laser system from Kvant and Pangolin Laser Systems

**Experience Highlights: Cumming Nature Center**

**Regional hub for environmental education and outdoor recreation:**

- 15+ miles of hiking trails, including a Beaver Pond Observation Tower, interpretive trails, and an outdoor natural playground. Winter activities include 12 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails and 3 miles of snowshoeing trails (rentals available)
- Exhibits focused on local landscapes and histories
- Programs and events that explore the complexities of human-nature interactions through ecology, citizen science, archaeology, culture and foodways, recreation, and more.

**Innovative and immersive outdoor education options:**

- Suite of innovative Forest School programs provides outdoor education options from early childhood through high school: RMSC.org/component/k2/item/742-forest-school

**Community Services**

- Serves schools and underserved populations through support that helps to subsidize admission and transportation costs for individual visits and field trips to the RMSC as well as outreach experiences in the classroom
- Free-of-charge and reduced-price admission to 14,692 low-income families and individuals with disabilities annually through Community Partner Pass and Museums for All programs
- Students with developmental disabilities from the Greece Central School District learn and practice workforce and life skills at the Museum
- The Career Ladder Program provides opportunities for teens in community to learn workforce skills
- Eva Howe Stevens Scholarship Fund provides partial scholarships for youth classes and camps assisting families with household incomes of $40,000 or less or on a needs basis

**Key Partners**

- Monroe County
- American Alliance of Museums
- Association of Science and Technology Centers
- Rochester City School District
- Xerox
- Take it Down Planning Committee
- Astronomy Section and Botany Section, Rochester Academy of Science
- Rochester Regional Photonics Cluster
- Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County

**Brief History**

- 1912: Established at Exposition Park (later Edgerton Park) as the Municipal Museum of Rochester, New York, the Rochester Museum & Science Center expands and evolves to meet the changing needs of our community
- 1925: The Municipal Museum Commission becomes a City department.
- 1930: Institution changes its name to the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences.
- 1941: The cornerstone for an expanded Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences is laid on East Avenue with the donation of land and funding from Edward Bausch.
- 1968: The most advanced planetarium in the world at the time opens as a gift from Edwin
and Clara Strasenburgh of Rochester, and Monroe County becomes principal supporter. Our name officially changes to the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC).

- **1973:** The Cumming Nature Center (CNC) officially opens to the public with a regular schedule of programs; in 1977, CNC was designated a National Environmental Study Area by the US Department of the Interior after meeting their high standards.
- **1973-1974:** RMSC upgrades physical facilities by constructing the Gannett School classroom building for lifelong learning (1973) and the Eisenhart Auditorium (1974).
- **1982:** The visitor’s building, funded in part by the Kresge Foundation grant, opens at Cumming Nature Center.
- **2001:** Genesee Community Charter School opens on the RMSC campus.
- **2016:** RMSC creates hybrid exhibit model incorporating collection items into traveling exhibits and blending interactive and collections-based experiences in our own featured exhibits.
- **2018:** With a lead gift from John and Barbara Bruning, the Planetarium is renovated with digital visualization technology and modifications to the theater, lobby and restrooms.
- **2018:** Hillary Olson becomes the President & CEO
- **2020:** Closed from March 13 through June 27 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the closure, RMSC provided online educational content. Reopened with new health, safety, and well-being procedures

**Media Coverage**

- Total average annual RMSC media coverage includes more than 375 million impressions for an ad value of nearly $3.5 million. Each year, stories about, or references of, RMSC and its offerings appear on local television networks, in local and regional publications and websites across the region, and occasionally the country and world.
- Recent media highlights:
  - WXXI News, *Forest schools: An alternative to in-classroom or remote learning* - 7/15/20
  - Spectrum News, *A Look at the History of Racist Images and Brands as Companies Remove Them* - 6/18/20
  - Spectrum News, *Rochester Museum and Science Center Receives $20,000 Grant* - 6/22/20
  - Rochester First, *The Changemakers: New Rochester Museum & Science Center exhibit announced for October* - 4/14/20
  - Fox Rochester, *RMSC creates virtual offerings for families* - 3/31/20
  - Rochester Business Journal, *RMSC president reached for the stars and got them* - 3/13/30
  - CITY News, *The woods are your classroom* - 1/29/20
  - Rochester Business Journal, *Declassified spy satellite returns home to Rochester* - 1/16/20

For more information about RMSC, visit www.rmsc.org. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

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