



657 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607
RMSC.org

Fact Sheet

Rochester Museum & Science Center

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
- 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
- *Best of the Finger Lakes 2020* - Best Museum, finalist; Best Art Gallery, finalist
- *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
- *Rochester Business Journal/Daily Record 2018 Reader Rankings* Best Preschool winner
- *Rochester Business Journal 40 Under 40*: 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: The RMSC's Signature Hybrid Learning Model utilizes all of the RMSC's unique assets in support of its mission, blending our unique collection with interactivity, immersive environments, and facilitated interactions in the interpretation of science, culture, and nature.
 - *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
 - *Illumination: The World of Light and Optics*—discover applications of lasers and light
- 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. *Available 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 cutting-edge, full-dome, digital 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

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
- Work Based Learning program: 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
- Area colleges and universities including Rochester Institute of Technology, Monroe Community College, St. John Fisher College, Finger Lakes Community College, and the University of Rochester
- Xerox

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: The 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 Strassenburgh of Rochester, and Monroe County becomes principal supporter. Our name officially changes to the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC).
- 1969: The transition of financial support from City of Rochester to Monroe County.
- 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).
- 1976: The RMSC Preschool opens on the RMSC's Rochester campus.
- 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.
- 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 service areas.



- 2018: Hillary Olson becomes the President & CEO
- 2020: Closed from March 13 through June 27 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the closure, RMSC provided online educational content. Reopened in June 2020.
- 2020: Enormous growth in Cumming Nature Center Forest School and Cross-Country Skiing programs, and the acquisition of the Walden Project, NY program.
- 2021: Installation of an elevator at the Cumming Nature Center main building to increase accessibility.

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:
 - Messenger Post Media, [RMSC highlighting contemporary 'Changemakers'](#) - 3/26/21
 - WROC News 8, [RMSC receives donation of Frederick Douglass' photographs, scrapbook, correspondence, more](#) - 2/16/21
 - Democrat & Chronicle, ['The best year ever!' Demand grows for Forest School at Cumming Nature Center](#) - 2/16/21
 - 518 Profiles Magazine, [Curiosity - Exploration - Participation: This is the Rochester Museum & Science Center](#) - 2/1/21
 - Spectrum News, [RMSC Shares Stories of Women Who Changed the World](#) - 11/22/20
 - Finger Lakes Times, [Cumming Nature Center acquires Walden Project-NY](#) - 9/1/20
 - 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 55 Plus Magazine, [A Passion for Herbs](#) - 6/28/20
 - Canandaigua Daily Messenger, [Nature Center inspiring national Forest schools](#) - 4/27/20
 - 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](#) - 3/13/20
 - Finger Lakes Times, [Cumming Nature Center receives visitor experience fund award](#) - 2/28/20
 - Rochester Business Journal, [RMSC, RCSD collaborate on African-American history initiative](#) - 2/20/20
 - Canandaigua Daily Messenger, [Making Ontario County tourism more accessible](#) - 1/29/20
 - 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.rmssc.org. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#).

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