



657 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607
rmsc.org

Fact Sheet

RMSC

The mission of the RMSC (Rochester Museum & Science Center) is to inspire a better future for all through curiosity, exploration, and participation in science, culture, and the natural world. RMSC includes the Museum & Science Center, Strasenburgh Planetarium, Cumming Nature Center. Offering experiences at the Museum & Science Center 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 and its natural history including fossils, animal, and invertebrates. 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 & Science Center galleries covering 3 floors
- Strasenburgh Planetarium with 65-foot Star Theater dome, exhibitions, and event space
- Cumming Nature Center on 900 acres in Naples NY, heart of the Finger Lakes
- Over 200 theme-based, hands-on exhibit elements
- Interactive science experiments daily
- School break science day camps
- More than 1.2 million authentic collection items
- Workforce development programs
- Programs and events all year
- The Walden Project, N.Y.

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 Genesee Community Charter School, a major partner of the RMSC
- Pre-K - 12 Outdoor education programs

Current Accolades

- *Rochester Business Journal/Daily Record 2022 Reader Rankings* Best Cultural Attraction semifinalist; Best Museum semifinalist
- *Best of the Finger Lakes 2020* - Best Museum, finalist; Best Art Gallery, finalist
- *KidsOutAndAbout.com 2022 "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

Economic Facts

- \$6.9 million dollar budget annually
- More than 385,000 visitors annually
- Serve 65,000 school-age children in groups annually
- Over 6,000 active members
- 62 full-time and 141 part-time employees
- More than 500 annual volunteers
- Annual earned revenue of \$4.5 million

Primary Audiences

- Families, 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 displaying 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.
 - *Wonders of Water:* An immersive exploration of the waters of our region as a force of nature and source of life.
 - *Expedition Earth:* The Rochester area landscape and natural history from 540 million years ago to present day
 - *Flight to Freedom: Rochester's Underground Railroad:* Abolitionists and freedom seekers
 - *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
 - Pat Hale Gallery: A changing exhibition gallery showcasing interactive exhibitions focusing on science and culture
 - *Under Construction:* A hands-on exploration of construction tools, machines, and materials for our yonder visitors
 - *Face to Face:* Explore the ways in which individuals and groups express their identities to the world around them.
 - *At the Western Door:* Over 400 years of cooperation and conflict between Western New York's native Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) inhabitants and Europeans.
 - *How Things Work:* Discover the science behind everyday devices and machines in this hands-on, minds-on exhibit



- *Native People's of the Americas*: Discover the diversity of indigenous American lifestyles as expressed through material culture and the environment.
- *Keva*: Blending science with art, KEVA Planks bring out the designer, architect, and engineer in all of us.

- *Rochester in 1838*: explore how Rochester became America's first western "boomtown" as a result of the Erie Canal.
- *Flight to Freedom: Rochester's Underground Railroad*: Explore the paths that courageous freedom seekers followed through Rochester in this dramatic, interactive exhibition

- *Inventor Center Maker Space*: Power cities, build cars, harness wind, and fire catapults in Inventor Center.
- *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.

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 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.
- 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.
- Interactive and participatory exhibits
 - *Gambit Optical System*: The Optical housing of a reconnaissance satellite created at Kodak in Rochester in 1967.
 - *Same Sky*: Explores the universal importance of sky watching through unique cultural perspectives.
 - *Rochester's Eyes in Space*: Exploring technologies pioneered in Rochester that allow us to view distant stars, explore other planets, and better see what is happening on Earth.

Experience Highlights: Cumming Nature Center

- Regional hub for environmental education and outdoor recreation:
 - 900 acres with 15+ miles of hiking trails, including an active beaver pond, 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 middle school
 - The Walden Project, N.Y. an alternative outdoor high school or gap year program

RMSC 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 14,000 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 the 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

RMSC 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
- Genesee Community Charter School

Brief History

- 1912: Established at Exposition Park (later Edgerton Park) as the Municipal Museum of Rochester, New York
- 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 (closed 2022).
- 1982: The visitor Center building, funded in part by the Kresge Foundation, 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 seventh President & CEO
- 2020: Closed from March 13 through June due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the closure, RMSC provided online educational content and experiences.
- 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.
- 2022: The RMSC rebrands, bringing fresh energy and clarity to the brand and its three locations as one organization.
- 2022: RMSC opens three new state-of-the-art science and technology labs in the Museum & Science Center
- 2022: RMSC opens new permanent exhibitions, *Rochester's Eyes in Space* and *Same Sky* in the Strasenburgh Planetarium.
- 2022: RMSC opens the Wonders of Water exhibition, the first permanent exhibit at the Museum and Science Center building in over 15 years.

Media Coverage

- Each year, stories about, or referencing the RMSC and its offerings appear regionally, nationally, and some even worldwide. The RMSC's presence reaches millions through local and national television network segments, local and regional publications, public social media platforms, and websites.
- Recent media highlights:
 - 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
 - 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
 - Rochester 55 Plus Magazine, [A Passion for Herbs](#) - 6/28/20
 - Canandaigua Daily Messenger, [Nature Center inspiring national Forest schools](#) - 4/27/20
 - 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
 - National Geographic Newsletter, featuring RMSC object [WERE WE REALLY KICKED OUT OF THE GARDEN?](#) - 06/01/21
 - The Wall Street Journal [See the 'Ring of Fire' solar Eclipse Up Close in Dramatic Photos](#) - 06/10/21
 - As I Live and Grieve Podcast, [Grief Traditions from the Victorian Era](#) - 10/12/21
 - WBFO npr, [Rochester digitizing one of NYS' longest-running Black-owned newspapers](#) - 11/12/21
 - Yahoo!entertainment, [Take a peek at new animatronic dinosaur exhibit at the Rochester Museum and Science Center](#) - 11/08/21
 - The Peninsula Qatar, [MES Indian School students visit Strasenburgh Planetarium virtually](#) -



01/23/22

- NY Courts Calendar, [Haudenosaunee Women](#)- 02/01/22
- Yahoo!news, [Frost Town Archaeology project reveals clues about a ghost town in South Bristol](#)- 01/28/22
- Reader's Digest, [21 Spring Break Road Trips That Are Scenic from Start to Finish](#)- 03/18/22
- Yahoo!finance, [iD signsystems Reimagines Rochester Museum and Science Center's Signage](#), 07/26/22
- Minority Reporter, [RMSC Receives \\$85,000 Lowe's Hometowns Grant, Helping Local Rochester](#)- 07/13/22
- Monre
- Archaeological Institute of America News, [2022 IAD Grant Winners Announced](#)- 10/14/22
- Space Daily, [Two solar eclipses are coming to America](#)- 10/17/22
- Saturday Evening Post, [Origins of Native American Heritage Month](#)- 11/01/22

For more information about RMSC, visit www.rmsc.org. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), and [TikTok](#).

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