



Science Center Leaders to Attend ASTC Annual Conference in Philadelphia

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – More than 1,800 science center professionals from across the world will convene in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 18-21 for the 2008 ASTC Annual Conference. ASTC 2008, "In the Public Eye: Science Centers at the Crossroads of Science and Culture," will be hosted by The Franklin Institute and held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center and the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown. Highlights of this year's Annual Conference include:

- Over **140 conference sessions** that will challenge participants to explore their responsibility to both their scientific and public constituencies and ask: What role do we play in reflecting or supporting the views of these communities? How do we mediate the relationship between science and public audiences?
- The **ASTC Exhibit Hall**, featuring more than 150 exhibitors in nearly 200 booths.
- A **Keynote Address by Steven Berlin Johnson**, a journalist, cultural critic, best-selling author, and web site developer who specializes in the synergy that occurs when science, technology, and media intersect with the local and the personal.
- The presentation of the **ASTC Fellow Award for Outstanding Contribution**, the Association's highest honor, and the **2008 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Awards**, presented annually to ASTC members and/or their employees in recognition of extraordinary accomplishments in Visitor Experience, Business Practice, and Leadership in the Field.

With more than 96 million visitors worldwide each year, science centers are community resources for informal science learning, serving families, schoolchildren, teachers, and citizens. They are places where people of all ages, cultures, and educational levels can learn at their own pace, engage their curiosity, and use all of their senses to explore science and technology.

Founded in honor of America's first scientist, Benjamin Franklin, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. In 1824, The Franklin Institute was established as the first professional organization of mechanical engineers and professional draftsmen in the United States. The Franklin Institute has survived for more than 175 years, finding ways to adapt, flourish, and create opportunities for expanding knowledge. Evolving over the years, but retaining a passion for exploration and discovery, the heart of the Institute's mission remains public science and technology education – through interactive exhibits, theater-based programming, educational programs and outreach. The Franklin Institute is composed of three centers of division, The Science Center, The Center for Innovation

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in Science Learning, and The Benjamin Franklin Center. Visit www.fi.edu for more information.

The Association of Science-Technology Centers is an organization of 443 science centers and museums in 44 countries dedicated to furthering public engagement with science among diverse audiences. ASTC encourages excellence and innovation in informal science learning by serving and linking its members worldwide and advancing their common goals. Through strategic alliances and global partnerships, ASTC also supports science centers and museums in proactively addressing critical societal issues, locally and globally, where understanding of and engagement with science are essential. Visit www.astc.org to learn more about ASTC and to find a science center near you.

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