



ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE - TECHNOLOGY CENTERS

Representing the science center and museum field worldwide

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International action on GLObal warming (IGLO)

>> March 13, 2006

In anticipation of the International Polar Year in 2007-2008, the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), in association with multiple partners, is launching an ambitious initiative, ***International action on GLObal warming (IGLO)***, designed to raise public awareness worldwide about the impact of climate change.

Because the North and South poles belong to no nation, polar research has traditionally been a collaborative effort, conducted by scientists from many countries. Not only has the work of these researchers uncovered many of the mysteries of Earth's past; it also has had much to tell us about our planet's present and future. This is truly one of the great scientific frontiers remaining on Earth and a potential source of inspiration for young scientists everywhere.

Recently, polar scientists have begun to document a rapid acceleration in the melting of the polar icecaps and subsequent changes in the ecology of the surrounding seas. The International Polar Year (IPY), led by the International Council of Science and the World Meteorological Organization, will afford an opportunity to engage and educate the public on the implications of these findings and to focus attention on the importance of polar processes in general and climate change in particular.

ASTC is an organization of science centers and museums dedicated to furthering the public understanding of science and technology among increasingly diverse audiences. ASTC members have achieved recognition at the local, national, and international levels for their educational work with school-age, family, and adult audiences. This expertise in science communication makes ASTC ideally suited to spearhead an effort to raise public awareness of climate change and its impact. The IPY offers a highly visible platform on which to collaborate in this effort with other concerned organizations around the world.



Representing the science center and museum field worldwide

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A project of this kind must represent the best of current research and seek to inform the public not only on the scientific phenomena, but also on how those phenomena can be expected to affect their daily lives. Elements planned for IGLO include:

- Development of an IGLO Toolkit incorporating high-quality exhibits, programs, and other educational materials related to polar research and climate change;
- Creation of an IGLO web site that can serve as a resource center, demonstration portal, and communication tool;
- Science communication activities, including exhibitions, film fests, student contests, teacher education, citizen science experiments, and more;
- A scientific conference that brings together museum professionals and practicing researchers to foster new partnerships and illuminate aspects of climate science that are difficult to communicate;
- Debate and dialogue that engage citizens, scientists, and decision makers in discussion of the actions necessary to slow the global warming process, and related sessions at the ASTC Annual Conference, and other professional meetings;
- Media events and activities at the planet's most sensitive spots, illustrating the expected effects of global warming, and an October 2008 web cast featuring young scientists at the poles.

Groups that have already committed to participating in IGLO (or expressed strong interest) include the International Polar Foundation (IPF), UNESCO's Science Division, the World Ocean Network (WON), the National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA), the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Earth-Sun Museum Alliance (ESMA). IGLO is a unique opportunity to communicate real science, encourage young people to pursue scientific careers, and reach large groups of citizens on a crucial issue for the future of the planet. Science centers are well-qualified to play a primary role in achieving these goals, but they cannot do it alone. As lead organization, ASTC looks forward to expanding its circle of partners to include many other major organizations with similar objectives.

Contact: Walter Staveloz, Director, International Relations
202/783-7200 x118, wstaveloz@astc.org
Association of Science-Technology Centers Incorporated
1025 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005-6310, USA