

## Press Release

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### **The Franklin Institute Receives \$2 Million In Gifts For Topical “Changing Earth” Exhibit**

*Gifts from The Sunoco Foundation  
and The Hamilton Family Foundation  
Support Creation of Environmental Exhibit*

**Philadelphia, PA, May 13, 2008** – The Franklin, Pennsylvania’s most-visited museum, has received two \$1 million gifts, from The Hamilton Family Foundation and The Sunoco Foundation respectively, to create a new “Changing Earth” exhibit. Slated to open in fall of 2009, this ongoing exhibit will feature the latest in exhibit technology and advances in environmental science to explore the issues facing our changing planet. The contributions are part of The Franklin’s recently announced *Inspire Science!* museum renovation efforts. The Franklin has already received \$27 million in funding, with a goal of raising \$60 million for an ambitious series of revitalization efforts.

*"The Sunoco Foundation is proud to partner with The Franklin Institute and supports its ongoing mission of life long science education,"* said Mary Capetola, president of The Sunoco Foundation. *"The new "Changing Earth" exhibit will nurture a passion for science and technology by giving thousands of students the chance to explore, discover and learn about the world in which they live."*

*"The Hamilton Family Foundation is pleased to help support the creation of the new 'Changing Earth' core exhibit,"* said Nancy Wingo, Executive Director of The Hamilton Family Foundation. *"We believe that the Franklin Institute's imaginative, interactive exhibits on geology, meteorology, and climatology will inspire youth to become tomorrow's scientists."*

*"We are thrilled by The Sunoco Foundation and The Hamilton Family Foundation's generous contributions to our new ongoing exhibit, which addresses issues that are so topical, and so essential to our future,"* said Dr. Dennis Wint, President and CEO of The Franklin Institute. *"Understanding our impact on the world has assumed global importance in recent years. We are proud to now have the capability of creating a multi-media, multi-sensory exhibit to explore the meaning and science behind these changes."*

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The new “Changing Earth” exhibit will examine the interconnectedness of water, air and land. Topical experience areas are dedicated to sparking curiosity and discussion about how humans impact the world in which they live – from global warming to erosion. Utilizing new and emerging scientific understanding, the exhibit will feature a new Weather Center, as well as immersive sensory experiences of earth’s changes – where visitors can explore the power of earthquakes, volcanos and hurricanes, among other things.

The Franklin’s “Inspire Science!” efforts include, to date, the launch of a new 3D/Blu-Ray theater in February, the announcement of plans to renovate the museum’s Benjamin Franklin National Memorial this summer, and the upcoming creation of a series of multi-media programming “pathways” through the museum which are inspired by The Franklin Institute’s namesake. In recent weeks, The Franklin announced that it will be building a new building extension for 2012, which will have climate-controlled capabilities, and will house, among other things, a signature neuroscience exhibit.

The Franklin has doubled its attendance in the last five years. Upgraded facilities, which range from a re-built *Giant Heart* to a 5,000 square foot store to blockbuster exhibits like *Titanic*, *BodyWorlds* and *Tut* have generated unprecedented attention and audiences. The sum total economic impact to the Philadelphia region of the three blockbusters has been calculated to be over \$200 million. To capitalize on the re-invigorated image of the museum, as well as leverage its core mission of inquiry, The Franklin recently introduced its tagline “Curious?” to cement public perceptions of The Franklin as a place for excitement, intrigue and just plain fun.

### The Franklin Institute

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. It is dedicated to creating a passion for science by offering new and exciting access to science and technology in ways that would dazzle and delight its namesake. For more information, please visit [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu).

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