



DINOSAURS

ANCIENT FOSSILS, NEW DISCOVERIES

NEWS RELEASE

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Dinosaurs of a Feather Flock Together in New Exhibition at Discovery Place - *DINOSAURS: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries*

*Landmark exhibition explores breakthroughs in modern paleontology
including link between dinosaurs and modern-day birds. Opens Friday, April 18.*

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – What’s history? Guests visiting the newest exhibition at Discovery Place will find that everything they knew about dinosaurs...is history. *DINOSAURS: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries* takes guests on a journey into the new prehistoric realm by exploring the most recent findings in dinosaur biology and modern paleontology. **The exhibition opens Friday, April 18.**

DINOSAURS: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries shatters old ideas, challenging preconceived notions about these amazing creatures. The exhibition explores how modern discoveries and complex analysis are painting a new picture of dinosaur biology. After wandering through a 700-square-foot, walk-through diorama featuring more than 35 different ancient species, viewing a feathered dinosaur cast, watching a robotic *Tyrannosaurus rex* (*T. rex*) run, touching a real *Triceratops* horn and exploring interactive computer simulations and animations, visitors will never think of dinosaurs the same way again.

“Science is marvelous because it is ever-changing,” said John Mackay, president and CEO of Discovery Place. “It continues to evolve, offering endless opportunities to learn, adapt or challenge our existing beliefs. *DINOSAURS: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries* shows us how new technologies and discoveries can change accepted understandings and ways of thinking.”

This eye-opening exhibition focuses on dinosaurs not as fossils but as living creatures and explores how scientists are reinterpreting many persistent and puzzling dinosaur mysteries: what they looked like, how they behaved, how they moved, how they battled, how they bred and why they became extinct.

Guests also learn why paleontologists believe that birds are modern-day, dinosaur descendents. The exhibition features newly discovered fossils that reveal the evolutionary link between ancient dinosaurs and modern-day birds including a fossil cast from *Sinornithosaurus millennii* that exhibits both downy fluff and primitive feathers and a fossil of the foot of a *Coelophysis bauri*, which resembles that of a modern-day turkey.

Exhibition highlights include:

- A stunning, 60-foot-long model of an *Apatosaurus* skeleton.

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- A full-size, cast skeleton of a *T. rex*.
- A six-foot-long, robotic, walking *T. rex* skeleton; the most accurate, three-dimensional representation of a dinosaur in motion ever created.
- A life-size model of a newly identified primitive tyrannosaur, *Dilong paradoxus*, covered with branched protofeathers – precursors to the feathers found on living birds.
- One of the largest recreations of a prehistoric environment ever built.
- A large wall of mounted dinosaur skulls, ranging from a three-horned *Triceratops* to the dome-headed *Pachycephalosaurus*, illustrating the latest theories on the purpose of the unusual horns, frill, crests and domes found on many dinosaur skulls.
- A 15-by-10-foot recreation of the famous Davenport Ranch Trackway, a collection of sauropod and theropod dinosaur prints unearthed in Texas in the 1920s and 1940s. Recent analysis of the tracks has revealed new ideas on the herding behavior of these dinosaurs.
- A newly collected sedimentary slab, which clearly shows a thin layer of iridium. Scientists believe this layer represents the remnants of a massive meteoroid that vaporized upon impact and contributed to the extinction of more than half of all species on Earth.

Families also can test their fossil-finding skills by getting their little ones' hands dirty in the **Paleo-Lab**. Rotating activities include fossil digging, excavating dino replicas using paleontology tools, creating take-home fossil impressions, joining a hands-on, fossil-footprint hunt and creating a Geo Time Scale to identify the age of fossils. Tickets to the Paleo-Lab are \$2 per activity.

Guests can immerse themselves in a time when dinosaurs ruled the roost by completing their colossally-cool exhibition experience with ***DINOSAURS Alive!***, showing in *The Charlotte Observer* IMAX[®] Dome Theatre. The film features spectacular animation and a live-action story that joins renowned paleontologists from the American Museum of Natural History as they uncover new fossils, including the remarkable discovery of what may be the oldest dinosaur ever found in North America.

The Museum also is **recruiting volunteers** for the exhibition. Volunteer opportunities include exhibition hosts, gallery volunteers and demonstration volunteers. Those who are interested in becoming a volunteer can contact Volunteer Services at 704-372-6261, x515 or volunteers@discoveryplace.org.

***DINOSAURS: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries* is on exhibition from Friday, April 18 through Sunday, Aug. 17 and is free with Museum admission.** For more information on pricing or programming, call 704-372-6261, x300 or visit discoveryplace.org.

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DINOSAURS: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries is organized by the American Museum of Natural History (New York), in collaboration with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences (Raleigh), Houston Museum of Natural Science; California Academy of Sciences (San Francisco) and The Field Museum (Chicago).

DINOSAURS: Ancient Fossils, New Discoveries is sponsored by Wachovia Foundation (*Education sponsor*); Ben & Jerry's and Bojangles (*Special Event sponsors*); and The Charlotte Observer, WSOC-TV and WAXN 64 (*Media partners*).

About Discovery Place

Discovery Place is located in uptown Charlotte at 301 N. Tryon Street. Convenient parking is available in the Museum's parking garage – the Carol Grottes Belk Complex – at the corner of Sixth and Church streets. For more information about Discovery Place, guests should call 704-372-6261 or visit discoveryplace.org.

One of the top hands-on science museums in the nation, Discovery Place provides ever-changing, entertaining facilities that foster experiences in areas that range from life science to space exploration. More than a half-million people from all over the United States visit Discovery Place, its IMAX[®] Dome Theatre and Charlotte Nature Museum each year. Discovery Place is supported, in part, with a Basic Operating Grant from the Arts & Science Council.

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