

FACT SHEET

for the University of Arizona Science Center at Rio Nuevo

From UA Campus to Downtown Tucson

The Flandrau Science Center has served the Tucson community from the campus of The University of Arizona for nearly three decades with informal science-based learning opportunities. To date, over a million children from public and private schools throughout southern Arizona have enjoyed the Flandrau's planetarium shows, exhibits, and mineral museum.

Unfortunately, public parking and access to the Flandrau has been reduced as University research and teaching facilities have grown and expanded, and it has become increasingly difficult for Flandrau to serve the public and schools.

The idea of relocating the Flandrau to downtown Tucson was a very early part of Rio Nuevo concepts, and in the last two years, plans have been developed for a new, state-of-the-art science center. These developments have proceeded as a collaboration between the University and the City of Tucson to create a world-class institution that will not only provide informal science education opportunities for Tucson-area young people but will also offer entertainment and educational venues for local residents and tourists of all ages.

What's in the new UA Science Center?

The University of Arizona Science Center will include fourteen major components dramatically positioned along a bridge that spans Interstate 10 and the Santa Cruz River. The bridge will physically link the east and west sides of Rio Nuevo, reuniting a city that has been split by the Interstate for nearly 50 years.

- A programmatic partnership with the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum that will use shared space throughout the Science Center.
- Butterfly Vivarium: an enclosed tropical environment home to hundreds of butterfly species. Butterfly houses are tremendously popular attractions around the county, and the Cockrell Butterfly Center at the Houston Museum of Natural Science is so successful it supports the operation of other museum facilities.

- One-Meter Telescope: providing the public with views of the day and night skies. Like the entire Science Center, the Observatory will be accessible to all visitors, regardless of ability or mobility.
- EarthWorks Exhibit Hall: explores how the natural systems of the earth, such as oceans, forest, and deserts, interact with each other and with human systems such as transportation and communication.
- Agriculture and Life Sciences Park: a showcase for the present and future trends in agriculture including food production and genetic research on agricultural plants and animals.
- Changing Exhibits Gallery: seasonally new and exciting traveling exhibits from around the world will provide motivation for visitors to come back to the Science Center throughout the year.
- Teacher Resource Center: offering “one-stop shopping for teachers,” the Resource Center will provide professional training and science materials for teachers throughout our local region, and may offer services to remote parts of the state through new technologies.
- Unispherium: a state-of-the-art, digital planetarium that will not only present traditional star shows but create interactive virtual experiences that can explore the inner workings of a living cell or transport the visitor to the edge of the Universe.
- Bridge of Knowledge: itself an exhibit on the use of sustainable materials and design techniques, this bridge will be a combination of forward-looking technology and the timeless traditions of our past. With outdoor shading, people movers, and exhibits along the way, the bridge will be a community gathering place, creating activity where none exists today.
- Mineral Museum: the University’s world-class collection of more than 15,000 mineral specimens will be expanded and strategically placed near the Tucson Convention Center to take advantage of its synergy with the annual Tucson Gem and Mineral Show.
- Giant Screen Theater: the first large-format film theater in southern Arizona, this theater will be an attraction for both daytime and evening visitors to downtown Tucson.
- Café and Science Store: a community gathering place and a source for science-based gift items, the Café and store will be places for people to shop, mingle, and enjoy their time downtown.
- Reality Science Exchange: the “stock exchange floor” for current science information. This will be a place to get up-to-date, in-depth information on science-related stories that are in the news.

- Center for Health and Wellness: Tucson is home to some of the best medical research on arthritis, diabetes, and cancer, and this facility will be a place to go for quality information on current health issues.
- PathWays to Discovery: the technological “backbone” for the new center. PathWays will provide an information link to connect the visitor to the informal science-learning opportunities available at the Science Center, from the University, and in the community.

How will construction of the UA Science Center be funded?

The UA Science Center is a collaboration between The University of Arizona and the City of Tucson’s Rio Nuevo District. The projected capital cost of construction is \$72.7 million dollars, and the University will transfer about \$5 million dollars worth of existing assets (primarily the value of the UA Mineral Museum collection) to the project. The University has received approval from the Arizona Board of Regents to issue Certificates of Participation to raise \$56.1 million dollars for capital construction costs. The University has also committed to raise a \$16 million dollar endowment, the proceeds of which will be used to support the annual operation of the Science Center.

The Rio Nuevo District proposes to contribute \$20 million dollars of tax increment finance funds (so-called TIF funds) and lease the land for the Science Center to the University at very low cost. TIF funds come from a portion of existing sales tax revenues collected within the Rio Nuevo District that would otherwise be funneled into the State treasury. It is not an increase in sales tax rate.

What economic benefits come with the UA Science Center?

An independent analysis by Piper-Jaffray projected that the UA Science Center would create more than 250 new construction jobs and 68 new full-time positions. In addition, more than \$3.8 million dollars in new tax revenue would be generated by the construction and the first ten years of operation of the Science Center. The report also projected that the Science Center has the potential to generate \$30 million dollars of new spending in Tucson from overnight visitors in its first ten years of operation.

Will the UA Science Center support itself financially?

The business model for the UA Science Center is valid and shows that it can generate sufficient earned revenue from all sources to have a net operating surplus. The University of Arizona, not the City of Tucson, will be responsible for sustaining the operations of the Science Center in the event of a revenue shortfall.

Where can I get more information?

Contact the Flandrau Science Center, 1601 East University Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85719. The phone number is 520 621-STAR (7827). The Flandrau and the City of Tucson have information on their Websites at *www.flandrau.org/rionuevo/*, or *www.ci.tucson.az.us/rionuevo/*.