ADLER
PLANETARIUM

Contact: Sarah Beck
312.542.2424
sbeck@adlerplanetarium.org

Hands-On Space Visualization Lab is Fun for the Whole Family

The Space Visualization Laboratory (SVL) at Chicago's Adler Planetarium is a perfect complement to *Cosmic Collisions*. SVL offers a cutting-edge space science experience designed to give visitors a close-up view of galaxies far, far away. The SVL allows visitors the opportunity to explore real cosmic collisions using the latest images from the Hubble Telescope. It also includes multimedia interactives where guests can virtually travel through the stars, planets and galaxies.

The 1,200 square foot lab showcases a variety of scientific visualization technologies. Adler astronomers Mark SubbaRao and Doug Roberts conceived the SVL, a family-friendly place where the public can explore the latest technologies in museum environments. Visitors get a behind-the-scenes look at exhibit development as they play with advance display systems designed in laboratories at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Northwestern University and the University of Chicago.

Wall-Size Display Screen
A large video screen with images of the universe serves as the centerpiece when you enter the SVL. High resolution imaging captured during space missions and sky surveys provide insight into astronomical phenomena. For a closer look at the galaxies, the Hubble telescope is at your fingertips. These scientific visualization tools have revolutionized the Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum in educating the public about space science.

Mars Transporter
An interactive scale model of Mars, built using NASA datasets, is a user-controlled virtual flight around the popular planet. The Mars Transporter offers a challenging experience – visual or interactive – that visitors cannot find anywhere else. High resolution images of the entire planet were garnered by the Viking orbiter.

Star Flight
This interactive virtual reality exhibit explores well-known constellations and allows visitors to fly around constellations in space. According to SubbaRao, "Star Flight communicates the tremendous distances between the stars and accurately conveys that constellation are just two-dimensional projections of three-dimensional distributions of stars. And, as an exhibit for both English and Spanish speaking users, I expect it's going to be a big hit with our visitors."

How to be an Astronomer in the 21st Century
Decades ago, we used telescopes and microscopes because those were the tools that scientists were actually using at the time. Today, scientists are routinely using supercomputers, high-definition cameras and advanced visualization systems to enhance and extend the capabilities of these instruments. These are the new telescopes and microscopes. It is important that we teach a whole new generation of future scientists how to use these tools.

###