

## **Discovery Park of America, Inc.**

### **CONTACT:**

**Larry Snider**

**Discovery Park of America, Inc.**

**423-963-0442**

[lsnider@discoveryparkofamerica.com](mailto:lsnider@discoveryparkofamerica.com)

[www.discoveryparkofamerica.com](http://www.discoveryparkofamerica.com)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Work Resumes for Discovery Park of America**

### **Architect Selected - Many Activities Underway**

**UNION CITY, TN – March 16, 2010** – After a lengthy delay due to a change in architects, work has resumed on the multi-million dollar Discovery Park of America project.

The Robert E. and Jenny D. Kirkland Foundation, principal benefactor of Discovery Park, confirmed that the vision for Discovery Park remains unchanged. It will be a 50-acre world-class educational venue for both children and adults to learn more about history, nature, art and science.

The Kirkland Foundation selected Verner Johnson, Inc. of Boston, MA as the new architect for the venue. In addition to designing the main exhibit building, Discovery Center, Verner Johnson will also oversee the implementation of the site master plan and all exhibit design and fabrication.

Verner Johnson was selected from approximately 70 architectural firms that expressed interest in the design project. They specialize exclusively in museum architecture and planning and have completed more than 200 projects throughout the world including several for the Smithsonian museums. It is estimated that more than 13 million people annually attend museums designed by Verner Johnson. Verner Johnson's extensive knowledge about what makes museums operate successfully will be utilized in designing and planning an exceptional experience for Discovery Park visitors.

Verner Johnson has assembled a talented and experienced team of experts to work on various aspects of Discovery Park including:

- Thinc Design is an exhibition design firm based in New York City. Thinc is currently designing exhibits for the National 9/11 Memorial Museum at The World Trade Center, among others. Thinc has also completed many science and natural history exhibits.
- Maltbie is a firm that specializes in constructing world-class exhibits. They have experience producing all aspects of successful museum exhibits including hands-on interactivities, lighting, graphics, audio-visual and software technology. Recent projects include the Walt Disney Family Museum, Nascar Hall of Fame and the *YOU! The Experience* Exhibit at The Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.
- Ritchie Smith Associates is a Memphis-based landscape architecture firm that has designed many botanic gardens, including the Memphis Botanic Garden.

The Verner Johnson team is currently working in three areas:

- **Creating a New Design for Discovery Center** –Verner Johnson will create a new design that will be a unique and compelling landmark in order to help generate significant interest in the Park. The design process for the 70,000 square foot building is underway with a new design concept scheduled for April.
- **Implementing the Site Master Plan** - A new overall site plan was approved late last year. Verner Johnson with Ritchie Smith Associates will lead the detailed planning and implementation of the site plan in phases. Work in the first phase is expected to begin late this summer with additional grading and other site preparation. Soon thereafter, landscaping work and the relocation of historic buildings will begin. This work will be done simultaneously with the design and construction of Discovery Center in order to expedite completion of the Park. Subsequent site development will occur in future years as funds become available. Key features of the initial site will be:
  - - Water will be a prominent feature of the site with several pools and a stream that flows north to south throughout the park. Landscaped paths along the stream and several bridges will create a delightful

and educational visitor walking experience throughout the site.

- The northern section of the park will include a gristmill, amphitheatre and open lawn for sculptures and events. It will also include an historical farm area with a farmhouse, log barn, crop displays, orchard and other structures.
  
  - The southern portion of the park will include historical town structures, including a one-room schoolhouse and a visitor center, as well as gardens and a covered bridge.
- **Designing Exhibits** – Discovery Center will have approximately 35,000 square feet of exhibit space devoted to education in history, nature, science and art. The building will also include a café, museum store, and a space for special events that will accommodate approximately 300 people.

The estimated completion date for Discovery Park is September, 2012.

See [Discovery Park of America](#) for more information.