

Program: The Grand Universe

Speakers: Greg McCauley, CEO Grand Universe, Link Observatory Space Science Institute

Introduced by: Jerry Williams

Attendance: 133

Guests: Marty Osterhous, Craig Spaid, Tom Whitmore, Claire Collins

Scribe: Dick Carter

Editor: Ed Nitka

Speaker **Greg McCauley, President/CEO of Grand Universe** was sponsored by M. P. Meisenheimer.

Indianapolis is one of the largest metropolitan areas in the USA that does not currently have a public observatory and space science center. Greg revealed that Grand Universe, a coming public observatory, with the largest digital planetarium sky theater in Indiana featuring a space science center with NASA exhibits, astronaut visits and a technology center planned for Westfield very near Grand Park. The developer behind that project also wants to build a hotel; an entertainment center with laser tag, bowling, a trampoline park, go-karts; and a restaurant and bar in the same area.

Grand Universe, would be operated by Martinsville-based Link Observatory Space Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to informal science education and public engagement programs in NASA missions, astronomy and space exploration. Link Executive Director and CEO Greg McCauley said, if approved soon, Grand Universe could open in 2024.

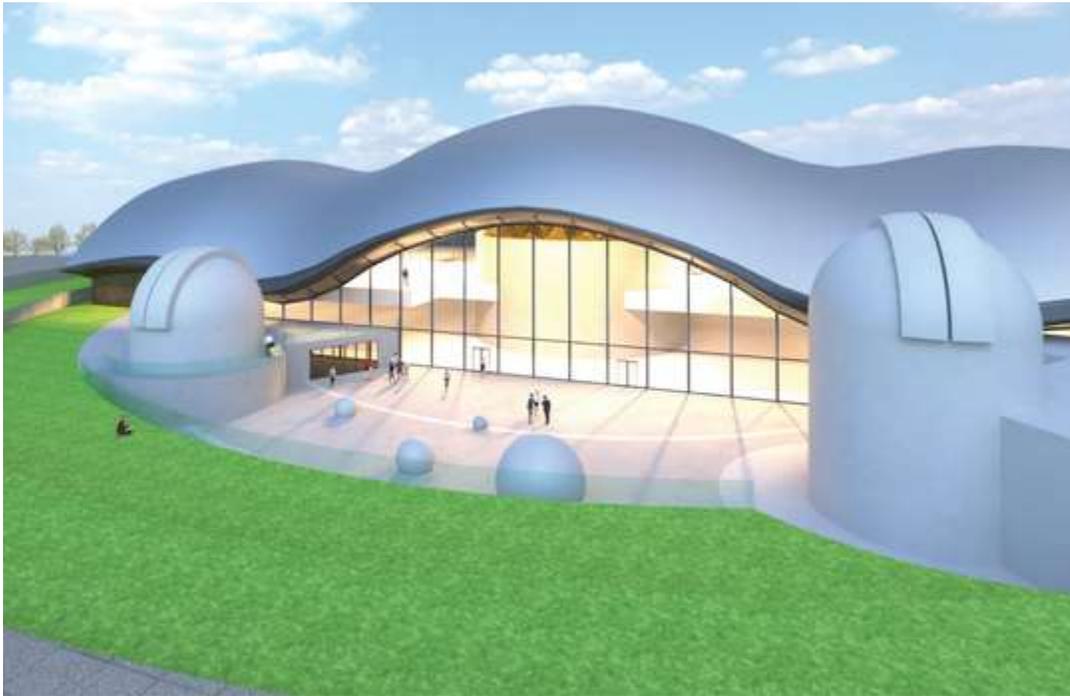
The available land and the existing popularity of Grand Park made Westfield an ideal location to create this concept. It's adjacent to Grand Park, right off U.S. 31 and it's an ideal location for everyone in Indiana and the nation. During 2019 there were 2,500,000 visitors at Grand Park. Some were repeating visitors.

The new 105,000 square-foot space science center would feature a digital planetarium sky theater that is 70 feet in diameter with room for up to 250 people, as well as NASA exhibit areas, and a science, technology, engineering, and math education center.

This STEM (Science - Technology - Engineering - Math) education center would feature after-school programs, summer programs, a summer space camp for kids and adult education programs. It would also feature the Astronaut David Wolf public observatory, which will be the anchor of the project. The observatory will have twin domes, nighttime celestial and daytime solar telescopes, and the largest radio telescope in the U.S. dedicated to STEM education, he said. Special filters will allow the ever-present night-time sky glow to be removed for better optical viewing. Virtual reality viewers are already used in the Link Observatory programs. The goal of Grand Universe is to inspire kids in Indiana to pursue careers in STEM.

Though the Grand Universe experience is expected to be similar to that of the Kennedy Space Center in Houston, the focus of the exhibits will be different, he said. The inclusion of a STEM + Families' Program has a goal of achieving much higher success in the necessary education achievements using inspiration, tools, education,

and a personal support infrastructure. About 8000 on-demand space education videos can be viewed with the Link facility connections. These new facilities will make better accommodations to engage in those significant education programs. Greg presented Harris Poll data showing youth outlook visions for their future in a comparison between the USA and China. It appeared that the USA is losing out to the dreams that others have now. Stem Education is a must-do agenda!



(Photo: Provided by LINK Observatory Space Science Institute)



Greg McCauley