

**The Discovery**  
**Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum**  
**President & Chief Executive Officer**

***As Northern Nevada's largest hands-on Science Center, and the hub for play and hands-on STEAM exploration for all ages, The Discovery seeks a fundraising chief executive to expand its facilities, programs, impact, audiences and base of philanthropic support.***

**A GREAT MISSION, A GREAT PAST, A GREAT FUTURE**

The Discovery's mission is to inspire. The museum accomplishes this by being the place to experience science for people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and interests. In 2004 local business leader and parent Chris Richie founded [The Discovery](#) which opened to the public in September 2011. The museum is located in the former Reno City Hall building which was purchased from the city in 2008 thanks to the generous support of donors that included the Terry Lee Wells Foundation. Today The Discovery provides engaging exhibitions, programs, and playful, joyful learning experiences that connect nearly 200,000 visitors annually to scientific phenomena and methods. Although The Discovery began as a children's museum and retains playful learning as a core value, it has been transformed to a science museum with exhibitions and programs for learners of all ages. Maintaining a balance that engages both children and adults is important to the museum's earned income and financial strength.

*The next CEO's objectives include expanding the building, installing new and evolving current exhibits, and developing programs that engage 300,000 visitors annually while ensuring that the museum is financially strong.*

**BY THE NUMBERS**

The Discovery is open six days a week (seven days a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day), and is ideally located in downtown Reno close to the Nevada Museum of Art and the National Automobile Museum, and is about 40 minutes from Truckee, Lake Tahoe and Carson City. About 15M visit Lake Tahoe annually, making The Discovery a must-visit when one needs a break from slopes or a day off from the lake.

The museum's primary audience is families. However, over the last decade the museum has increasingly become a gathering place for adults as well. The City of Reno - "The Biggest Little City in the World" - has experienced rapid population growth of 1.2% to 1.7% annually the past few years and is expected to continue due to the influx of tech, energy/geothermal, and manufacturing businesses moving into the area due to the favorable tax benefits. Reno has a population of ~275,000. The surrounding cities of Truckee, Sparks, Carson City have a combined population of ~200,000. Nearly 88% of the museum visitors are residents of the Reno-Tahoe area.

The Museum encompasses 67,000 square feet with nearly 32,000 square feet of exhibition and programmatic space. There is room to expand within the current footprint of the building lot, and to an adjacent lot that would need to be acquired. The museum currently presents eleven permanent but ever-evolving exhibitions whose themes include alternative energy; how the body, the mind and other physical phenomena work; a maker space for educational play with construction materials; an exploration of the history and creative process of invention in Spark!Lab Smithsonian; and exploration of the intersection of art and science through exhibits related to the works of Leonardo Da Vinci. There are ready-to-go plans for a new permanent exhibition on Nevada's natural history. The project was placed on hold during the pandemic, and the next CEO will assess, evolve and integrate these existing plans into a future museum expansion.

The Discovery employs 18 full-time staff and 20 part-time staff. It is governed by a ten-member board of directors. The museum's annual operating budget is about \$3.5M, of which nearly two-thirds is funded through earned income, and roughly one-third through contributions. There is a sense that future growth can come from both earned and contributed revenue sources.

The Discovery makes a significant impact on the science education landscape of Northern Nevada. Programs are interdisciplinary and aligned with National and Nevada state standards that address the educational needs of children and adult learners. The museum is a member of the Association of Science and Technology Centers. These types of museums rank second only to zoos in their ability to attract ethnically and culturally diverse audiences of all ages.

### **BASIC FUNCTION**

The Chief Executive Officer will lead and financially strengthen The Discovery as it continues its evolution as a unique institution that engages children through play and exploration of science, invention, innovative thinking and Nevada's landscapes. This is the beginning of a key chapter at The Discovery. The CEO will be an inspiring, charismatic and diplomatic leader who is active in the community and engages new and existing supporters through consistent outreach, programs that engage, and by positioning the museum as a central asset to Greater Reno, its residents, visitors and businesses.

Reporting to the board, the CEO is accountable for managing all aspects of the museum's exhibitions, education and public programming, operations and revenue generation. The CEO will develop and implement a strategic plan and revenue development strategy that includes specific success metrics including contributed and earned revenue, museum attendance by diverse audience cohorts, and programming that aligns to Nevada's education standards for children and adults.

The CEO will work with the board and staff to:

- Build The Discovery's reputation as a distinctive, exciting, thought-provoking place for families.
- Retain current, and build new memberships and constituents that include children, students, parents, caregivers, teachers, adults, and area community and business leaders, inviting into the museum diverse audiences of different ethnicities and backgrounds, the differently abled, and both tourists and residents of Greater Reno and surrounding areas.
- Assure financial and operating strength through systematic major gift fundraising and development of earned revenue streams (including facility rentals, paid programs, etc.), and through efficient use of museum resources.
- Effectively manage and activate exhibitions, education and public programming, encouraging playful and enjoyable learning experiences connected to science and relevant to the real world experiences of visitors.
- Grow the Board of Directors and The Discovery's volunteer resources by recruiting new board members, volunteers and docents, and by actively engaging board and volunteer participation in an effort to build true community.

### **IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES**

The CEO's immediate priorities will be to:

- Understand all facets of The Discovery, including the museum's history, culture, staff, exhibits, finances, events, education and public programs, facility, infrastructure and operations, and the museum's potential; understand the diverse local and regional constituencies in Greater Reno, and tourists that visit the area to encourage their interest and engagement in the museum; instill a strong sense of partnership and cohesion across the organization.
- With board and staff teams, drive fundraising solicitations and earned income; develop a strategy for targeting for increasing earned revenue through rentals, camps, memberships, retail, etc.
- As the Fundraiser-in-Chief, offer support for any in-process solicitations; with board and staff, create a fund development strategy for increasing contributed revenue and engaging both long-time Reno families and new families with interest in experiential STEAM; define contributed revenue goals by

segment i.e. individuals, major gifts, sponsorships, foundation, grants, contracts; ensure staffing is sufficient to achieve goal and board and staff understand their roles in fundraising and provide support and coaching as needed.

- Cultivate relationships with key business, nonprofit, community and government stakeholders; develop partnership opportunities with tourism, education, elder care, disability, religious, after-school, adult education and other institutions that might deliver members, visitors and financial support to The Discovery.
- Review the current status of the museum's programs, exhibition schedule and operation, and with the staff develop engaging exhibits and programs that can be sustainably delivered within budgetary constraints. Assure that rigorous financial plans and controls are in place, and that capital is effectively invested in improved programs and facilities.

## **ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES**

### LEADERSHIP & GENERAL MANAGEMENT

- Work with the board to define and execute upon the museum's Strategic and Development Plans; refine and interpret the mission of the museum and articulate its place in the community.
- Manage the business affairs of The Discovery with the intent of remaining financially strong; oversee the preservation and maintenance of the museum's physical assets.
- Hire, supervise, motivate, develop and evaluate staff, ensuring that staffing is appropriate to meet the organization's goals; ensure that approved policies are consistently implemented.

### REVENUE DEVELOPMENT, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Actively court philanthropic relationships; set high expectations for increased financial support from individuals, foundations, corporations, governments, events and other philanthropic sources for the museum's programs, exhibitions and capital projects.
- Work closely with the staff, board, and advisors to expand and diversify earned revenue streams from admissions, licensing, facility rentals, museum store, camps, etc.
- Serve as a persuasive advocate and spokesperson for the museum; represent The Discovery to all of its constituencies; cultivate strong and supportive relationships with other institutions in the region and in the community.

### EXHIBITS, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

- Provide direction for the development of new, fun, inspiring exhibitions, outreach and education programs; ensure that best practices are employed; leverage the galleries in ways that deepen visitors' ability to play, explore and learn new skills.
- Take a leadership role in guiding development of exhibitions and programming, and for constantly increasing the "play-quotient" for children and adult visitors. With staff, develop a comprehensive plan to strengthen, continually refresh and enrich the museum's programming and visitor experience; develop relationships that may lead to gifts that strengthen programming and upgrade exhibits.
- Work collaboratively and appropriately manage various relationships with museums, thought leaders in the field, schools, universities, patrons, volunteers and other community members.

### GOVERNANCE

- Identify and help recruit new board members whose talents, interests and commitment will help to further The Discovery's mission and programs and will help to expand funding opportunities; work with the Chair to ensure an effective board committee structure and active engagement of board talent and resources in support of the institution.

- Set the strategic direction for The Discovery and cultivate meaningful relationships with board members; implement board policies, goals, priorities and objectives; keep the board informed of all relevant issues; attend all board meetings and committee meetings as required.

**EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS and CHARACTERISTICS**

Ideal candidates will have a mix of the following experience and qualifications:

- Strong management and leadership responsibility in a museum, school, children’s entertainment, or experiential learning environment that attracts a similar audience mix of adults and children; a deep understanding of ways to engage and build audience; experience cultivating ties within the community that help drive museum attendance and funding support.
- Deep and current experience in raising the public profile of institutions dedicated to playful learning for children and adults; an extensive background in education and the methods and practices of teaching would be an advantage.
- The ability to work successfully with donors, community leaders, educators, artists, community members and the museum’s board to strengthen the museum; measurable and successful results in raising funds and in identifying, cultivating and soliciting donors and other sources of revenue, and in managing change.
- A thorough understanding of operations and financial management, particularly in a museum or similar nonprofit environment; an understanding of nonprofit revenue and expense models would be an advantage.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills, including the means to address issues in non-confrontational and non-polarizing ways, but nevertheless with determination; a person who cultivates trust and engages the interest of constituents by being straight-forward, sharing information, and respecting the abilities of others.
- Someone who enjoys working in close collaboration with a board and community volunteers; a person comfortable engaging with staff in an open and forthright manner; demonstrated ability to evolve a staff team and get the best of each team members is important.

The salary range is \$180,000 - \$230,000 annually.

The Discovery welcomes all races, all religions, all genders, all sexual orientations, all countries of origin, all ethnicities, and all abilities. Everyone.

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