

Get the scoop on Spark!Lab closing, our 2011 New Perspectives symposium, a new video podcast and more!



News Blast from The Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention & Innovation



Spark!Lab Closing

The National Museum of American History will soon be undergoing renovations to its West exhibition wing. To prepare for construction, Spark!Lab—the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation's hands-on invention activity center—will close after Oct. 6.

For those looking to "spark" their inventive creativity while the space is closed, the Lemelson Center

encourages the public to:

- Participate in a Spark!Lab cart activity at the National Museum of American History ([schedule TBD](#)).
- Find fun, inventive [activities to do at home](#) and on Spark!Lab's [Facebook](#) page.
- [Sign up](#) for our monthly e-newsletters to find out about Lemelson Center public programs and events, our podcast and new at-home activities.
- Visit the first Spark!Lab off the National Mall, which opened at the [Nevada Discovery Museum](#) in Reno, Nevada, on Sept. 10.
- Visit a Smithsonian Affiliate museum participating in the [Spark!Lab Outreach Kit Program](#).

Spark!Lab will re-open at the National Museum of American History following the renovations. During closure, Lemelson Center staff will be hard at work inventing new and improved activities.

*Please note, the National Museum of American History **will remain open** during renovations.*



2011 New Perspectives on Invention and Innovation Symposium

The 2011 New Perspectives on Invention and Innovation

symposium, *Moving Beyond Earth: Innovations in Space*, marks the 50th anniversary of human spaceflight and explores the role of invention and technology in space exploration and space history.

The program, Nov. 18 and 19, features a documentary film screening and panel discussion; symposium sessions examining the cutting-edge innovations that have enabled us to leave the planet, work in space, and explore the cosmos; and an array of family-friendly, space-themed educational activities.

Moving Beyond Earth: Innovations in Space is presented by the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation in collaboration with the National Air and Space Museum's Division of Space History.

[Full schedule](#)

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The Lemelson Center hosted a delegation of Ukrainian museum and science education professionals in July.
Photo by Tricia Edwards.



In August, the Center presented Spark!Lab activities at the Smithsonian's American Art Museum in conjunction with the Great American Hall of Wonders exhibition.
Photo courtesy of SAAM.



The first Spark!Lab located off the National Mall opened September 10 at the Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum in Reno.
Photo by Tricia Edwards.



Visitors to the new Spark!Lab at the Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum in Reno learn about the experiments of Benjamin



to Robot

Jason Bannister, founder and CEO of Mechanical, a robotics company in Pittsburgh, designs, sketches and builds robots. In this video episode, he shows how inventors can start with a basic pencil on paper sketch and eventually wind up with a truly amazing creation.

[Tune in!](#)

Image: Robbie the DARPA ARM Robot in Spark!Lab. Smithsonian photo by Harold Dorwin.

Podcast — Jason Bannister: From Sketch

Franklin.
Photo by Tricia Edwards.



Attendance in Spark!Lab in 2011 is so far up 2% from 2010. *Invention at Play* has seen a 12% increase in visitation. *Photo by Kate Wiley.*



Places of Invention Update

Ever wonder how exhibitions are developed? If so, we invite you to join in the planning for our upcoming exhibition on "[places of invention.](#)" Be sure to take the survey to share your ideas with us. Thanks!

Image: Courtesy [Open Icon Library.](#)



Social Media Round-up

Another great place to catch up with the Lemelson Center in on the National Museum of American History's O Say Can You See blog.

Here's some posts you may have missed:

- [Fort Collins, a place of invention](#) by Monica Smith, Exhibition Program Manager. In this post, Monica shares with us her visit to Colorado State University's Engines and Energy Conversion Lab.

Image: Engines and Energy Conversion Lab at Colorado State University. Photo by Monica Smith.



Tony Hawk's 1986 pro model Powell-Peralta deck, ridden in competition in the mid-1980s, is now on display in the Museum's *National Treasures of Popular Culture* exhibition, so the [August issue of *Prototype*](#) explored the inventive side of skating. *Smithsonian photo by Hugh Talman.*

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