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**NEW OUTDOOR EXHIBIT ON THE NATIONAL MALL
TAKES VISITORS ON A VOYAGE THROUGH THE SOLAR SYSTEM**

The Smithsonian Institution, in collaboration with Challenger Center for Space Science Education and NASA, will premiere a new permanent outdoor exhibition on Wednesday, Oct. 17 in the nation's capital. "Voyage – A Journey Through Our Solar System" is a model of the solar system – the actual solar system is 10 billion times larger.

The exhibition consists of 13 8.5-foot-tall stainless steel stations, spanning 650 yards along Jefferson Drive, between the National Air and Space Museum and the Smithsonian Castle. In nine of these stations, three-dimensional model planets and their moons are laser-sculpted in crystal. The remaining stations feature the Sun, asteroids and comets as well as introduce the exhibition to visitors.

Each of the exhibition's models are one ten-billionth actual size of their real-life counterparts. For example, the model of the Sun is 5.5 inches in diameter – about the size of a large grapefruit. Visitors encounter the Earth 49 feet from the Sun. Once the visitor reaches Pluto -- 2,000 feet from the Sun -- they have ventured across the entire solar system in a comfortable 10-minute walk. On this scale, the nearest star would be the size of a cherry in coastal California.

"We are thrilled to have played a role in developing this new outdoor educational experience," said J. Dennis O'Connor, Under Secretary for Science at the Smithsonian. "Millions of visitors to the Smithsonian will have the opportunity to learn about our solar system through this dynamic experience." The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) has been developing the exhibit for the Smithsonian.

Visitors to "Voyage" will take a sidewalk walking tour of the solar system, experiencing the worlds as exciting destinations in space. Each station includes high-resolution, full-color graphics in porcelain enamel. The graphics offer visitors the opportunity to see these worlds up close via stunning color imagery, most of which was

commissioned specially for this exhibition and derived from NASA planetary data sets. Vital baseline statistics about each planet are also provided.

“A whole new solar system was revealed when NASA finally developed the capability to actually visit planets. Through this exhibition, NASA hopes to share what has been discovered, and the strangeness, wonder and beauty of these newly revealed worlds with the public,” said NASA’s Jeffrey D. Rosendhal, director of education and outreach in the Office of Space Science.

“‘Voyage’ dramatically portrays the nature of our existence on planet Earth, and celebrates the human capacity to explore,” said Jeff Goldstein, the project’s director and vice president of space science research at Challenger Center. “Using models as powerful tools of exploration, we hope to change visitor perspectives of home and inspire the next generation of explorers.”

A series of supplemental materials have been created in support of the “Voyage” exhibition. An exhibition guide and a “Voyage” Web site, www.voyageonline.org, will be available to enhance a visitor's experience of the exhibition while at the Smithsonian museums in Washington, D.C., as well as through explorations in the classroom and at home.

Plans to replicate the outdoor exhibition at science museums, universities, planetaria, and other community organizations throughout the country are being developed.

“Voyage” was designed by Vincent Ciulla and his Brooklyn-based firm, Vincent Ciulla Design. The design of the stations expresses the intellectual content of the subject using the imagery of space flight and exploration. In addition, each station is carefully designed to work in the unique setting of the National Mall, blending the site’s monumental aesthetic with the need for durability. Materials of stainless steel, glass, and porcelain enamel were chosen not only to reflect the exhibit’s topic, but also to withstand outdoor conditions. The exhibition is accessible to the visitor with physical impairment, and contains tactile elements for the visitor who has a visual impairment.

“The challenge of the project was to create an elegant yet accessible solution to a hard-to-visualize concept – the scale of our solar system and its worlds,” said Ciulla.

For 30 years, Vincent Ciulla Design has developed and designed engaging educational exhibition experiences for America's leading museums, parks, historic sites and visitor centers. Their body of work includes more than 260 permanent indoor and outdoor installations, as well as special and traveling exhibitions; and covers a range of topics including fine arts, anthropology, social and cultural history, natural science, the environment, technology, and childhood learning. For more information, visit www.ciulladesign.com.

Challenger Center for Space Science Education is an international, not-for-profit organization created in 1986 by the families of the astronauts tragically lost during the Challenger space shuttle mission. Using space as a theme and the power of simulation as a teaching tool, Challenger Center programs create an exciting cooperative learning environment that exposes students to the challenges and successes of teamwork, problem solving, communication and decision-making. For more information, contact Howard Wahlberg at (703) 683-9740 and visit www.challenger.org.

For more information on NASA's educational programs, contact Don Savage at (202) 358-1547 and visit www.nasa.gov.

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For more information on SITES or to obtain images, please contact Anabeth Guthrie, SITES Public Relations, (202) 357-3168, ext.140 or guthriea@sites.si.edu.