

Reno Discovery Museum making headway for fall opening

By Jackie Green, Reno Gazette-Journal

In what used to be the old Reno City Hall, a climbable tower of clouds hovers above an outline of the Truckee River. Where the City Council once met now stands an 8,900-pound mining tire. Whole sections of glass windows are being installed as child's play replaces the serious business of the city.

Though still in the infant stage, the Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum is beginning to take shape on Center Street in downtown Reno. The front of the building is getting a facelift to add a 2,700-square-foot lobby. A project that melds a children's museum with a science museum and targets ages 1-14, the Discovery plans to open in September. Memberships went on sale Monday, a milestone in the seven-year-long process that has involved \$20.3 million in fundraising. The museum itself will open in late 2011, according to its website.

"Almost all of our funding has been local," said Gretchen Kelly Bietz, director of development for the museum. "We've been well-supported from our community."

When fundraising stalled last year, help came from fourth-generation Nevadan (and "Gilligan's Island" TV star) Dawn Wells and an investing group of five Nevada women. They made a deal: If the museum board could find \$6 million more, they would ante up the rest, ultimately donating nearly \$5 million.

"For their gift, we decided to memorialize Terry Lee Wells," Bietz said.

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