



CONTACT: Michael Chapaloney  
717.724.3879  
mchapaloney@whitakercenter.org

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## ***Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts to Launch Interactive, Educational & Entertainment Experience***

**HARRISBURG, PA (April 6, 2011)** – Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts today launched *Expedition Chesapeake*, a multi-media educational and entertainment experience anchored by a Large Format film, which is designed to educate and inspire the 17 million residents of the Chesapeake Bay watershed to become more aware of this national treasure.

The project will result in four related products that are headlined by the 42-minute Large Format film. The educational components include a made-for-television documentary series, a hands-on, traveling 4D science exhibit, and a set of online learning experiences designed to engage students throughout the six states in the watershed.

“We are in the heart of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and this initiative cuts to our core mission – to educate citizens, especially students, about the world around us. Our goal is to educate and inspire the 17 million residents of this watershed so we can all become better stewards of this national treasure,” said Dr. Michael Hanes, President and CEO of Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts. “We are proud of the work we have done in preparation for this launch and look forward to working with our many partners as we continue to develop this project. We’ve attracted an enormous wealth of talent and expertise which will result in the creation of a world-class product.”

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is the largest estuary in the United States and covers 64,000 square miles in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware and Washington, D.C. *Expedition Chesapeake* aims to inspire the watershed’s 17 million residents by sharing the lives of real people making a difference. The educational tools are designed to inform, engage and challenge all citizens in a comfortable and interactive conversation. The initiative will serve as a model for watersheds around the world.

Hanes said, “We are using the power of Large Format to capture the natural beauty of this watershed while also making a direct link between our daily lives and the watershed. Our goal is to help people understand the impact isn’t just on the Chesapeake Bay but right in our backyards. The story of the Chesapeake Bay watershed will hopefully inspire generations to come, and we are thrilled to be leading this initiative.”

Dr. Patricia Vathis, Environment and Ecology Curriculum Advisor for the Pennsylvania Department of Education, said “The learning experiences being developed through *Expedition Chesapeake* are an exciting way to bring environmental education into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To truly comprehend this watershed you must understand its issues and how they relate to the people in each of the six states.



Our goal is to provide the appropriate tools for the classroom in order for that to happen. By integrating the teaching standards established by the Department of Education with interactive, educational tools for students, we now have a powerful combination that allows us to have a positive impact for years to come.”

Whitaker Center has assembled a diverse team of scientists, environmental specialists, science educators and film industry experts to collaborate in producing a cutting-edge Large Format film and learning materials about issues related to the health of the Chesapeake Bay. In addition, Whitaker Center has built a coalition of business leaders, environmentalists and civic leaders from throughout the watershed that will help spearhead the effort.

Hanes was joined by members of the *Expedition Chesapeake* Advisory Panel, funding partners and David Nixon Productions (DNP Studios), the film’s producer. Founded and operated in Orlando, Florida, DNP Studios produces and manages projects throughout the United States and around the world. Their staff brings more than 150 years of combined experience, including Feature Film Directors, Creative Directors from large corporations and advertising agencies, Producers from Walt Disney World, Fortune 500 Marketing and Sales Executives. DNP Studios has produced four full-length feature films, including the wildly successful *Facing the Giants* and *Fireproof*. Their latest venture is the theatrical release *Letters to God*.

David Nixon, Director/Producer for *Expedition Chesapeake*, said, “Large Format has been delivering an inside look at important issues for many years now; however, Whitaker Center’s approach to take what we bring to life on the giant screen and deliver it directly into the classroom and begin a serious conversation with residents is really cool. We are very proud to be part of this innovative project.”

Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts is a leading non-profit educational and cultural organization based in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Harsco Science Center, housed in Whitaker Center, is a 22,500 square foot, hands-on interactive learning environment. In addition to state-of-the-art learning experiences for approximately 100,000 visitors to Harsco Science Center each year, the science educators of Whitaker Center are committed to advancing science education in a number of ways. In recent years, innovative learning experiences for all ages in the science center have provided the basis for creative professional development opportunities for pre-school through high school educators to improve science education in the region.

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*Whitaker Center partners and advisory panel members will be made available upon request. Please direct all media inquiries to Michael Chapaloney at 717.724.3879 or [mchapaloney@whitakercenter.org](mailto:mchapaloney@whitakercenter.org).*

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