

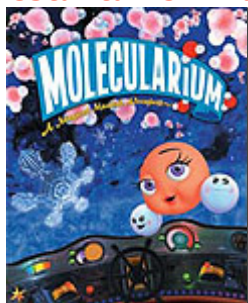


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April 07, 2006

### LodeStar turns inward to become 'Molecularium'



Renowned for presenting the best and most advanced journeys through the vastness of the Universe, the LodeStar Astronomy Center is now turning inward to take audiences to the nanoscale (really, really small) world of atoms and molecules as it presents 'Molecularium.' Explore billions and trillions of molecules with Oxy, a precocious young oxygen atom, and Hydro and Hydra, her hydrogen sidekicks. Fly through the structure of a snowflake, a penny and more, in the most fantastic ship in the Universe!

'Molecularium' an award-winning, groundbreaking digital fulldome animation, is a science lesson, a thrilling ride, a musical cartoon and a magical journey into the world of atoms and molecules: Aboard the 'Molecularium,' audiences join an ensemble cast of atomic characters on an immersive and unforgettable adventure into the nanoscale universe.

“Remember watching and learning from ‘School House Rock’ as a kid? Imagine that sort of creativity, fun and music focused on the science of atoms and molecules and presented in a giant immersive digital dome. That's 'Molecularium:' an absolute delight that teaches kids, reminds parents (they learn too), put smiles on faces, humming in mouths and gives you a view of the inner universe that you won't forget,” said David Beining, director, LodeStar.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, N.Y. produced the show with support from the National Science Foundation. LodeStar is able to present 'Molecularium' through a partnership with RPI.

“The show has only played in upstate New York and briefly at one other institution, so it's pretty special that we can bring it to New Mexico. RPI wanted to bring the show here because of LodeStar's position as a leading digital fulldome theater,” Beining added.

LodeStar will be supporting RPI by assessing the show's educational and entertainment impact as well as creating a Spanish-language version of the show.

'Molecularium' will be presented with a short-film produced by Sandia National Laboratories through a community outreach program. Dr. Carl Diegert uses high-tech tools to take audiences around the Lab in search of a copper atom inside a penny as it gets cut into ever-smaller parts and examined under powerful microscopes.

“The Sandia short is the ultimate home-movie as only a national lab could produce. Dr. Diegert directed and produced the piece and he does a great Mr. Rogers shtick while giving audiences a unique view into work at the lab and the itty-bitty nature of the nanoscale universe,” Beining said of the 10-minute, high definition video-based production.

“Conveying science as a way of thinking and a way of making a living is fundamental to LodeStar’s mission. We want New Mexico kids to aspire to science careers and showing local scientists at work (work that seems like play) is a great way to spark their interest,” Beining said.

“Molecularium,” which is slated for a six-month run through September, will be presented daily at 12 noon, 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Ticket prices are \$6 adults, \$5 seniors and \$3 children.

The LodeStar Astronomy Center is a University of New Mexico project in partnership with the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science. LodeStar is located at 1801 Mountain Road N.W., in Old Town Albuquerque, and is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For information or group reservations, call 505-841-5955 or visit [LodeStar Astronomy Center](#).

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