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## School of Geosciences teams up with Lafayette Science Museum

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Part of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's School of Geosciences will be moving into new digs — literally.

The University is collaborating with the Lafayette Science Museum to create an exhibit with a three-fold mission. It will:

- house the University's collection of fossils, rocks and minerals;
- establish an on-site laboratory to process specimens; and
- offer new learning opportunities for the public.

At its regular meeting today, the Lafayette City-Parish Council unanimously approved an intergovernmental agreement to move forward with the exhibit, which is planned for summer 2014.

Dr. David Borrok, director of the School of Geosciences, said the exhibit will extend the University's footprint into downtown Lafayette. The Science Museum plans to display items on a rotating basis for 10 years.

"By moving UL Lafayette's Geology Museum, we will increase our access to the public and provide a stronger link to the community," Borrok said.

In addition to static displays of select specimens, the exhibit will give the public the opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at laboratory work. Video cameras will capture University faculty members and students as they prepare specimens for exhibition. Visitors will be able to view monitors to see how items are prepared for display.

The University's collection is composed of thousands of specimens UL Lafayette has acquired over about 50 years. In May, two University faculty members, Dr. Jim Martin, a paleontologist, and Cathy Bishop, a geology instructor, led a field paleontology course for seven students at Oregon's Fossil Lake, a well-known Ice Age collection site. The team found more than 5,000 fossils, including those of birds, fish, horses and camels.

Some of these specimens will be featured in the exhibit.

"This collection represents a major contribution to the University's educational and research collections," said Borrok.

When UL Lafayette established its School of Geosciences in 2011, it combined the Department of Geology and the University's environmental sciences program. The School prepares students for careers in the petroleum and oil exploration industries, environmental firms, government agencies, construction, mining, environmental protection, waste management, and coastal protection and restoration.

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Kevin Krantz, the museum's director, said the facility "significantly refined its programming" three years ago, when its name changed from the Lafayette Natural History Museum to the Lafayette Science Museum.

"The Science Museum's mission is to build the future through science, technology, engineering and math. We are a regional science museum serving families, schools and other visitors. So, this partnership is a perfect fit."

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