Space Center Houston Drives Greater Houston Economy, Jobs

New study shows $73 million in annual economic impact

HOUSTON, Feb. 5, 2016 – The growth of a major attraction is making a big impact. A new economic study reports Space Center Houston has a $73 million annual economic impact on the greater Houston area and plays a significant role in generating jobs and millions of dollars in personal income.

“The museum plays a vital role in the region by bringing tourism dollars and stimulating the workforce,” said the center’s President and CEO Richard E. Allen Jr. “Globally, it is inspiring creativity and innovation in people from all over the world. With our hands-on educational programs, we’re exciting young minds and inspiring them to think about a possible future career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.”

The nonprofit set an annual attendance record in 2015, drawing nearly 1 million visitors to experience its hands-on exhibits and educational programs. Eighty-two percent of its visitors in 2015 were from outside of the greater Houston area and by driving patronage to area hotels, shops and restaurants, it helped generate jobs. The 2016 economic study by Jason Murasko and Stephen Cotten, associate professors of economics at the University of Houston-Clear Lake attributed 925 jobs and $36 million in personal income to the center’s presence.

Just six years ago, the center’s annual economic impact was $45 million on the greater Houston area according to a 2010 study by University of Houston-Clear Lake economist Dr. Bob Hodgin.

The center’s global reach is growing. The successful grand opening of its newest exhibit, Independence Plaza presented by Boeing, garnered international news coverage with its unveiling last month. Dubbed the “Big Draw” in Houston by USA Today in 2014, the center is the No. 1 destination in Houston for international travelers and in early spring the center will reach 18 million visitors since opening in 1992.

The center earned a prestigious U.S. Department of State grant in 2015 that will join students from the U.S., France and Singapore to learn about sustainability and solve real-world problems for a global education project, Mars Together. Teens will work together on interactive projects while having a fun cultural exchange. The participating U.S. schools include Alvin High School, and the Houston Academy for International Studies, the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and the Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy, all in Houston Independent School District.

Committed to providing exceptional service, the center earned a 2015 and 2014 “Certificate of Excellence” as a top-performing museum from the world’s largest travel site, TripAdvisor®.

Space Center Houston’s Independence Plaza is the biggest project for the nonprofit since opening. The one-of-a-kind new exhibit complex brings the 30-year Space Shuttle Program legacy to life and teaches visitors how the shuttle flew across the country, what the living and work space for an astronaut was like and gives an up-close look at many NASA artifacts – all inside a shuttle replica mounted on top of the Boeing 747 original shuttle carrier aircraft (SCA). For more information on Space Center Houston, visit www.spacecenter.org.

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The Manned Space Flight Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit space museum with an extensive science education program. The cornerstone of its science education mission is Space Center Houston, which USA Today called “The Big Draw” in the greater Houston area with nearly 1 million visitors annually and a $73 million annual economic impact on the greater Houston area. Space Center Houston is Houston’s first and only Smithsonian Affiliate and the Official Visitor Center of NASA Johnson Space Center. The center draws more than 100,000 teachers and students annually from around the world. For more information, go to www.spacecenter.org.

SOURCE: Manned Space Flight Education Foundation