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**ATTENTION: News/Science/Education/Section Reporters**

**H.R. MacMillan Space Centre reveals starring role in UFO hoax**

**Vancouver, BC, Sept. 10, 2013** – Is it a bird, a plane or proof that life exists on other planets? Recent close encounters reported by local UFO bloggers are actually the result of an elaborate hoax masterminded by the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre.

The image of a drone in the shape of the Space Centre was captured by web cams, camera phones and video in and around Vancouver locations such as Deep Cove, Jericho Beach, Burrard and Cornwall, and Nat Bailey Stadium, including during last night's Vancouver Canadians game.

The goal of the faux UFO was to create a buzz about the new planetarium viewer experience at Vanier Park. The Planetarium Theatre at the Space Centre underwent a half million dollar upgrade this summer.

The Space Centre worked with Vancouver ad agency MacLaren McCann in developing this "extreme teaser campaign" which consisted of strategically releasing web cam photos of the drone sightings through social media to UFO bloggers and Twitter and Facebook. A YouTube video of the Nat Bailey UFO captured more than 200,000 hits alone. <http://youtu.be/irltqeBZ7ds>. Rumour has it that the UFO presence led to the Canadians' wins last night and week.

The campaign is complemented by the release of a charming new PSA, showing that same Space Centre-shaped UFO flying in and replacing the old with the new building. A slogan follows: "New and improved. H.R. MacMillan Space Centre Planetarium Theatre." To view the PSA, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDRj2zGzvic&feature=youtu.be>.

"We want to show Vancouver, BC and the world that you can truly have a rare experience by exploring the exciting new shows and state of the art projection system. The buzz we are creating seems to be working as attendance is up 65 per cent compared to this time last year," said Rob Appleton, Space Centre executive director.

The attendance boost mirrors that of the Manitoba Museum whose planetarium also went digital a year ago and saw a 50 per cent increase in visitor volumes. Similar to its prairie counterpart, the Space Centre is destined to embrace unconventional uses of its revamped system.

First on the docket is a new program debuting in November called Through the Lens: Building Vancouver's History. The indoor digital walking tour will give the audience a chance to experience Vancouver streetscapes as they have evolved over the past century.

There are also plans to make the projection space available to corporations, foundations and other organizations for unique presentation purposes, including potentially for medical schools wanting to demonstrate surgeries with an immersive and close-up perspective.

"Thanks to these recent changes and innovations, the Space Centre has gone from being a kind of beloved and well-respected Vancouver time capsule to a timeless expression of this new

technological age. The possibilities are endless. If you can digitize it, we can show it," added Appleton.

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is a non-profit community resource that brings the wonders of space to Earth, while providing a personal sense of ongoing discovery. Through innovative programming, exhibits and activities, our goal is to inspire sustained interest in the fields of Earth science, space science and astronomy from a Canadian perspective.

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