For Immediate Release

OMSI EXHIBITS SUSTAINABILITY, INSIDE AND OUT
Museum Introduces New Permanent Exhibit and Related Community Outreach

Portland, OR (September 20, 2012) – The city of Portland is known as one of the most livable in the U.S. Some say residents’ widespread belief in sustainability is what sets the city apart, but what does that mean? What decisions can people make in order to create more sustainable communities? In a powerful combination of exhibits and interactive web and cell phone programs at OMSI and throughout the Portland metro region, visitors and members of the community are invited to find out for themselves.

The bilingual exhibit Clever Together: Our Everyday Choices/Juntos somos ingeniosos: Una decisión a la vez is the museum’s latest permanent installment. With a special opening Sunday, October 7, 2012, Clever Together will be on display in OMSI’s newly transformed Earth Science Hall for the next roughly eight years. The exhibit encourages visitors to make more sustainable decisions by weighing the impact of their choices in three ways: environmentally, economically and socially. The Clever Together experience is based on the idea that being sustainable requires being aware, and that the smallest action can make the biggest impact when made by the hundreds, thousands, or even the hundreds of thousands. Visitors are challenged to get Clever Together with their families, friends, and neighbors to discover and implement ways to make a difference.

“Our aim is to inspire people to consider their own decisions and prompt them into action,” says OMSI Energy and Environment Spokesperson Chris Stockner. “Whether the choice is to start riding a bike to school or work, buy local, share items with our neighbors, take shorter showers, or reduce wasted food in our homes... any of these things moves us toward a healthier community.”

Among other activities, Clever Together visitors are invited to use “human power” to take a virtual walk or bike-ride through familiar places in the Portland metro region, employ smart sorting tactics to divert waste from landfills, and find ways to save energy in a funky room furnished with everyday home appliances and personal electronics.

The new exhibit is the handiwork of OMSI’s very own developers, designers, builders and evaluators. It was developed in partnership with the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Metro, Verde, Portland Community College, and the Coalition for a Livable Future. The exhibit and outreach campaign were made possible with support from the National Science Foundation under grant award number: DRL-0917595.

“Participating in this project and partnership has been a wonderful experience for Metro. This work aligns well with our goals to provide bilingual tools that encourage residents in the region to take action,” says Metro Sustainable Living Project Manager Kate Edlin. “The Clever Together exhibit and the outreach efforts help people understand what they can do to create cleaner, healthier communities and neighborhoods.”
The exhibition is accompanied by OMSI’s new *Local Voices, Clever Choices/ Nuestras voces, nuestras decisiones* community outreach campaign, also bilingual, which incorporates a variety of digital and traditional communication mediums. Community members are invited to go online (to [www.omsi.edu/choices](http://www.omsi.edu/choices) or [www.omsi.edu/decisiones](http://www.omsi.edu/decisiones)) to see local stories about sustainability, share their own stories, and participate in challenge-based games where they can earn badges representing the top 10 actions individuals can make to support their local economy, environment, and community.

“We have been very pleased to work with OMSI and others to create an exciting set of experiences that bring to life the concept of sustainability and make learning about it fun,” says Ron Carley, executive director of the Coalition for a Livable Future. “The new exhibit and *Local Voices, Clever Choices* will help our residents take action together to build a healthier and stronger community.”

The *Local Voices, Clever Choices* campaign also invites community members to access, listen to and in some cases view, two-minute stories or audio slideshows via their cell or smart phones. Signs, social media, creative artwork, newsletters, and other outlets throughout the community display links and the phone number for the stories (503-797-4686), as does the permanent exhibition within the museum.

“It’s been a great experience for our staff to be a part of this project helping to share personal stories and information about sustainable choices with a broad cross-section of our community,” says Michele Crim, sustainability manager of the City’s Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. “By educating and inspiring our neighbors, the *Clever Together* exhibit, stories, and challenges will help us all build a more sustainable city.”

The price of the exhibit is included in paid museum admission. Members are free. For more information, visit [www.omsi.edu](http://www.omsi.edu).

*Clever Together* Exhibition Overview/Highlights:

- **We know our options!**
  Visitors explore six categories of sustainable resources: community gardens, farmers markets, lending libraries, public transportation, arts and cultural attractions, and reuse centers. Each category features a Portland resident’s story and ends with opportunity to take an attitude poll and compare results to those of previous visitors.

- **We reduce food waste!**
  In this six-player, pinball-inspired interactive feature, visitors work together to prevent food waste by hitting “food” (balls) into waste reduction targets. Visitors manipulate fork and spoon flippers to divert the “food” (balls) into the six waste reduction targets, thereby keeping it out of the landfill. Waste reduction targets include buying less, sharing large meals, eating leftovers, freezing for later, eating what you have, and storing food properly. Through interaction, visitors will discover exactly how much food is wasted in the U.S. each day, while gaining an understanding of the resources and energy that went in to producing that food.
• **We use human power!**
  Visitors go on a virtual walk or bike-ride through familiar places in the Portland metro region. As they pedal or walk, they see a changing Portland scene turning on mechanical flip-gear panels before them. Every 30 seconds, the scene changes, and every 15 seconds, a “fun fact” explaining environmental, social, and economic benefits of biking and walking appears. From this exhibit feature, visitors learn the benefits of non-fossil fuel based transportation options and familiarize their bodies with the action required to achieve them.

• **We take public transit!**
  Visitors walk into this life-size cross-section model of a TriMet bus and automatically trigger one of two audio stories told by real Portland bus commuters about some of the environmental, social, and economic benefits of taking the bus. As the stories play, color photographs featuring the storytellers light up. Visitors discover that using public transportation options like the bus, light rail or trolley can be more socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable than driving cars.

• **We are energy savers!**
  Visitors are challenged to wander about a living room turning knobs, pulling cords and opening doors in order to find seven impactful behaviors that will reduce energy consumption at home. The exhibit addresses behaviors related to heating and cooling energy, powering home appliances, and charging personal electronics. By manipulating the target item (e.g., switching off a lamp), a hidden panel is revealed, explaining the benefit of doing that behavior at home. Visitors explore and practice energy-saving behaviors in a relatable and familiar context for easy application in their own lives.

• **We are super sorters!**
  Visitors work together to accurately sort objects in a simulated curbside-recycling scenario. As pucks with common household waste items (food containers, old worn out shoes, apple cores, etc.) travel by on a rotating table, visitors must correctly sort the items into the five different bins. Each puck sorted correctly earns the visiting group a point, and the object of the activity is to gather as many points as possible before the time runs out. Real objects like computers, plastic bags, and other commonly mis-sorted items are on display in the side bins, with explanations of how to responsibly dispose of them in the Portland metro area. This interactive experience helps visitors discover how to distinguish and identify compost, recycle, trash, and toxic items and accurately sort them into bins, as well as explore common misconceptions about other waste items and what is and is not recyclable.

**About OMSI**
Founded in 1944, the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) is one of the nation’s leading science museums, a world-class tourist attraction, and an award-winning educational resource for the kid in each of us. OMSI is located at 1945 SE Water Avenue, Portland, OR 97214. For general information, call 503.797.4000 or visit [www.omsi.edu](http://www.omsi.edu).

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