

# Science exhibit at A-State slated to open on Monday

BY ALDEMARO ROMERO  
AND JOHN M. PRATTE  
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

The lobbies of buildings are normally spaces through which people pass to get where they are going. In the Lab Science Building at Arkansas State University, the lobby is a destination unto itself.

On Monday at noon a new science exhibit that encompasses features from a porpoise skeleton to a meteorological station will be inaugurated in the Lab Science Building. Dr. Dan Howard, vice chancellor for academic affairs and research, will officially open this display that showcases some of the scientific research and educational opportunities available at ASU.

Among the unique features of this exhibit is the skeleton of a porpoise stranded off the coast of Massachusetts that was dissected and studied by A-State students. The exhibit also includes the cast of the skull of a minke whale, a marine aquarium with some 50 species of fish, corals and other invertebrates aimed at explaining the new marine science program that is under preparation, and a vivarium that contains some live individuals of basiliscus (the "Jesus Christ lizard" named after the fact that is capable of walking over the water) and blind cave fishes. All these live animals were bred in captivity to avoid any collecting in nature.

Other themes exhibited include current research on the ivory-billed woodpecker,

flying squirrels, effects of nicotine in the brain, mine salamanders and the recent documentary filmed by BBC's David Attenborough in Arkansas about that theme. A complete specimen of the American alligator "Big Arkie" is also being exhibited.

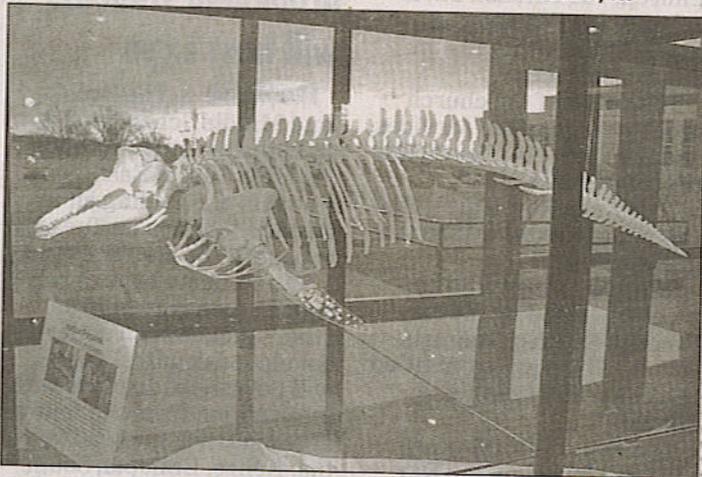
Some parts of the exhibit will also be available online. The data output from a local seismograph and meteorological station will be displayed on monitors in the lobby as well as being fed to a server online for all of the public to view and study. This data will also be used by researchers who are studying the New Madrid Fault Zone and by students in climatology classes.

A major part of the exhibit is a rotating set of rocks and minerals from the Karl Estes Mineral Collection. This massive collection was donated to ASU last year by Brooke Estes, Karl's daughter, and includes minerals he collected from all over the world. On a regular basis, minerals fitting a particular theme will rotate into the display cases to show the rich diversity of specimens that can be found in nature.

In the near future, other features will be added such as a DNA statue at the entrance of the building and a prairie garden with native plants from Arkansas.

The opening of this exhibit on Monday will be the first of a daily celebration of "The Week of Science" at Arkansas State that

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The skeleton of a porpoise, dissected, cleaned, and mounted by ASU students is one of the items on display at the ASU "Hall of Science" exhibit, which will open Monday at noon in the Lab Science Building East.

## EXHIBIT: Event was year in making

FROM PAGE A8

includes the showing of science-related movies, the celebration of the birthdays of Galileo Galilei and Charles Darwin, and the release of a high-altitude atmospheric probe.

This exhibit, a joint project of the Department of Biological Sciences and Chemistry and Physics, has been in the making for almost a year now. At the cost of nearly \$50,000 this science expo has been fully funded by private

donations and funds generated by the university's research activities.

For more information, including the schedule of showings, contact the ASU Department of Biological Sciences at biology@astate.edu.

Dr. Romero is chairman and professor at the Department of Biological Sciences, and Dr. Pratte is chairman and professor at the Department of Chemistry and Physics at Arkansas State University.