



The Discovery Names Heather Norton as New President/CEO

Norton begins her tenure in September

RENO, Nev. (July 21, 2025) – The Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum (The Discovery), Northern Nevada’s premier science center, announced today that Heather Norton has been named President/CEO. Norton brings nearly 20 years of experience in museum leadership, STEM education and community-driven innovation to her new role at Northern Nevada’s premier science center.

Patrick Turner, who has been serving as interim President/CEO, will continue to lead the organization until Norton assumes her position on September 2.

“We are thrilled to welcome Heather to The Discovery,” said Jay Karpen, chair of the Board of Directors. “Her track record of innovation, fundraising success, and commitment to inclusive science education makes her the ideal leader to guide the museum into its next phase of growth.”

Norton most recently served as Chief Science Officer at Discovery Place in Charlotte, N.C. , where she oversaw operations generating \$8.7 million in annual revenue and serving nearly 400,000 visitors. She led the strategic planning and execution of major capital projects, managed large-scale educational initiatives and helped secure more than \$3.5 million in philanthropic support during her tenure.

Throughout her career, Norton has championed equity in STEM learning, focusing on breaking down barriers and building pathways for historically excluded communities. She previously served as Vice President of Education at the Orlando Science Center, where she managed a \$3 million operating budget and led programs reaching hundreds of thousands of learners annually. Her leadership in securing public and private grant funding has resulted in more than \$1 million per year in support of educational initiatives.

Norton also brings national leadership experience to The Discovery, having served as a national advisor for Foundations, Inc. and as co-chair of the Association of Science and Technology Centers’ Conference Program Planning Committee. Her work is widely recognized for advancing hands-on, inquiry-based science learning across formal and informal education settings.

“I am honored to join The Discovery and excited to help shape its next chapter,” Norton said. “Science centers play a vital role in building curiosity, creating career pathways and connecting

communities through lifelong learning. I look forward to working with the team and our partners to expand The Discovery's impact across the region."

Norton holds a Master of Education in Museum Education from the University of British Columbia and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Central Florida.

As President/CEO, Norton will oversee strategic growth initiatives, community engagement, fundraising efforts, and the continued development of hands-on programs and exhibitions designed to inspire learners of all ages.

For more information about The Discovery's exhibitions, programs, and community impact visit nvdm.org.

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About The Discovery

The Discovery creates interest and engagement in science for all. Through unique, hands-on programs, exhibitions and events, The Discovery creates learning experiences that range from simple curiosity to deep understanding, empowering a community of critical thinkers. The Discovery is a locally founded nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. To learn more about The Discovery and how you can help support the museum's mission, visit www.nvdm.org.