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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Utah Aquarium Breaks Ground October 24 *Founder & Board of Trustees kick off construction of the next chapter in the Aquarium story*

Sandy, UT (October 12, 2012) – The Living Planet Aquarium begins construction of the 136,000-square-foot, \$20 million expansion with a groundbreaking event scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, October 24 at 12033 S. Lone Peak Parkway. The expansion, which is set to open winter 2013, will take visitors from the Utah deserts and mountains, to rain forest habitats, to the planet’s vast oceans.

The Aquarium has continued to grow since opening in a small space in 2004 at The Gateway and, since 2006, in Sandy at 725 E. 10600 South. The current 43,000-square-foot aquarium in Sandy is on track to land over 450,000 visitors this year, and provides science education to an additional 50,000 elementary school students statewide. “With the tremendous efforts of a remarkable team of staff, volunteers, donors and board of trustees the aquarium has grown over 50% through the recession, confirming the demand for a larger aquarium in Utah,” said Brent Andersen, Founder and CEO.

The new Aquarium, officially named the ‘Loveland Living Planet Aquarium’, will be located in Draper at 12033 S. Lone Peak Parkway and will provide a new and exciting activity in which the whole family can participate throughout the entire year. In addition to pure entertainment, it will offer expanded educational programs, field trips, and hands-on learning that would not otherwise be accessible to Utah’s children.

Conservatively, it will attract 530,000 visitors per year as a family oriented destination for Utah residents as well as tourists. The Aquarium will serve to showcase ecosystems from around the world such as marine, freshwater and rain forests to name a few, and how they work together to form one global ecosystem, The Living Planet.

The first floor of the new Aquarium will feature marine, freshwater, and rain forest exhibit galleries, a 400 seat banquet hall, café and gift shop. The Discover Utah Gallery will exhibit freshwater aquatic species, amphibians and mammals indigenous to Utah. The North American River Otter Exhibit will be the premiere attraction showcasing these lively animals in both an indoor and outdoor environment.

The Ocean Explorer Gallery will host a myriad of marine species such as octopus, stingrays, seahorses and other deep sea creatures. The highlight feature of this gallery will be the 300,000 gallon shark tank with a 40-foot walk-through tunnel.

The Journey To South America Gallery will be a vibrant exhibition of rainforest species and will include Amazon river giants, free-flight tropical birds, Caiman, giant Anaconda, Electric Eels, poison arrow frogs and dozens of other exotic Amazon species.

The Penguin Encounter will feature up to 50 birds and may include several penguin species. The Penguin Encounter will be the centerpiece of the *Bottom of the World* exhibits which include the Deep Sea Gallery and the interactive undersea submersible.

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A scale model replica of an ocean-going National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research vessel will serve as the gateway for our visitors' educational adventure and reinforce TLPA's mission which is to inspire people to explore, discover and learn about Earth's diverse ecosystems.

The second floor will include access to the upper levels of the South America Gallery, Penguin Encounter and the Research Vessel, as well as a changing exhibits gallery, café, interactive play area, and the only 4D theater experience in Utah. The Aquarium will present exciting 4D films, interactive nature films as well as provide space for lectures and educational presentations.

The Changing Exhibits Gallery will allow for new and unique exhibits to be brought in every 12-18 months, providing a fresh experience for guests.

The Education Center will feature classrooms equipped with scientific equipment, which will support onsite education programs reaching K-12 and university students. It will expand the base of operations for the outreach education team that travels throughout the state to deliver core-curriculum based, science and math oriented programs.

The Interactive Play Area will provide a multi-purpose space that can be used for birthday parties, educational experiences, conferences and other group activities. "A larger aquarium will become a major destination spot which will enhance local and statewide economies by generating economic activity and supporting jobs," said Rep. Tim Cosgrove, Aquarium Board of Trustees. "It is estimated that the project will support over 300 construction jobs and generate \$800,000 in tax revenues for the State each year," said Cosgrove.

Take a virtual tour [now](#).

The Sandy location will close September 8, 2013 to allow for transition into the new building.

Aquarium Expansion at a Glance:

- Official Name: Loveland Living Planet Aquarium
- Site Location: 12033 S Lone Peak Parkway, Draper UT
- Size: 136,000 square feet, 44-62 exhibits, 1 million gallons of water
- Cost: \$20 million – Funded by donors, grants, corporate sponsors and financing
- Groundbreaking: October 24, 2012
- Opening: December 2013*

**Dates subject to change due to weather and unforeseen circumstances*

About The Living Planet Aquarium

The Living Planet Aquarium inspires people to explore, discover and learn about Earth's diverse ecosystems. Admission is \$9.95 per adult, \$7.95 per child, ages 3-17, and free for children ages 2 and under. Each ticket purchased helps support the Aquarium's vision to foster stewardship for the environment and life on Earth. Advance tickets may be purchased online at www.thelivingplanet.com or by phone at (801) 355-fish(3474). The Aquarium, located at 725 E 10600 S in Sandy, Utah, is a non-profit organization. Open every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Aquarium is accessible to people with disabilities. Members enjoy unlimited visits and other benefits. Call (801) 355-fish(3474) to join. For more information, visit www.thelivingplanet.com.

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