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Children's Museum announces July opening



-2-1 Blastoff exhibit

The Children's Museum



GEORGE GARDNER / Staff

Scottie Lu Brandt, president of the Board of Directors of the Children's Museum of the Upstate, speaks at a Wednesday press conference to announce the countdown to the museum's grand opening. At right are former S.C. Governor and U.S. Secretary of Education Dick Riley and museum president and CEO Carol Scott.



The Children's Museum

Garage Rock exhibit

First exhibits to be installed Friday

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After years in planning and months in construction, The Children's Museum announced Wednesday that its long-awaited and much-anticipated grand opening will be held in July.

The $20 million project, which will create one of the nation's 25 largest children's museums, has been on the drawing board for at least a decade, gradually picking up steam over the years.

The building and surrounding land were donated in December 2003, and renovation of the facility got underway with a groundbreaking ceremony in September 2007.

"A truly enlightened community cares for its children," said Carol Scott, president and CEO of The Children's Museum. "It takes a village to build a children's museum."

Delays in financing, Scott said, pushed the opening to this summer from original earlier projections.

The first shipment of custom-designed exhibits is expected to arrive Friday, and installation of the 18 permanent exhibits is expected to take 12 weeks.

The 79,000-square-foot museum, with its "I Can Be Anything" theme, also will include space for traveling exhibits and performances, an outdoor learning garden and an interactive art courtyard.

Geared primarily to children ages 6 to 11, the museum will include designated areas for younger kids. And a middle-school leadership program will involve students ages 11 to 15 as volunteers.

Over the next few months, the museum will stage a series of "Be Anything · Countdown" events for the run-up to the opening, including a "Count Me In" change collection campaign for kids and a public gala the night before the grand opening.

Scott said the museum is continuing to raise funds for its capital campaign, which is $3 million shy of its $16 million goal. Tax funding also contributed to the project.

The museum is located in the old Greenville County main library at 300 College St. Admission to the museum will likely be between $11 and $15, Scott said.