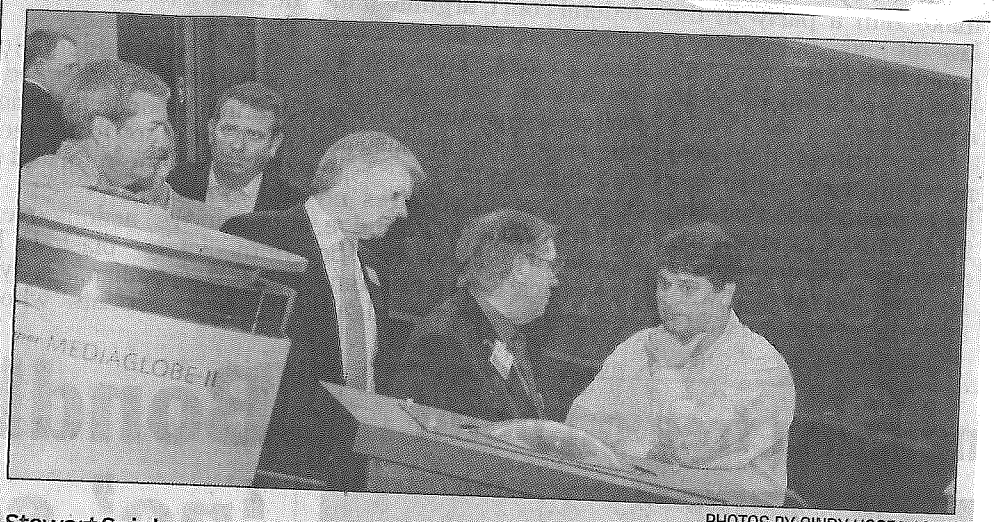


PHOTOS BY CINDY HOSEA / Staff

Stewart Spinks, center, and other community and business leaders get a chance to inspect the Super Mediaglobe II projector at the Roper Mountain Science Center.

Roper Mountain hopes to add dimension to science

Center planning to raise private funds for 3-D planetarium projector

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Imagine zipping through the galaxy at the speed of light, or traveling back in time a million years, or taking a virtual voyage inside the human body.

Those are just a few of the things schoolchildren across the Upstate will be able to do virtually at the Roper Mountain Science Center if it is successful in raising more than $500,000 for the Super Mediaglobe II, a high-definition 3-D digital projector that was demonstrated Wednesday at the center's planetarium.

It would give Greenville the first such device in North America, according to Larry Rinne, president of the Roper Mountain Science Center Association. The current 25-year-old projector is the only one of its kind still in use in the country, officials said at a kickoff for the fundraising campaign.

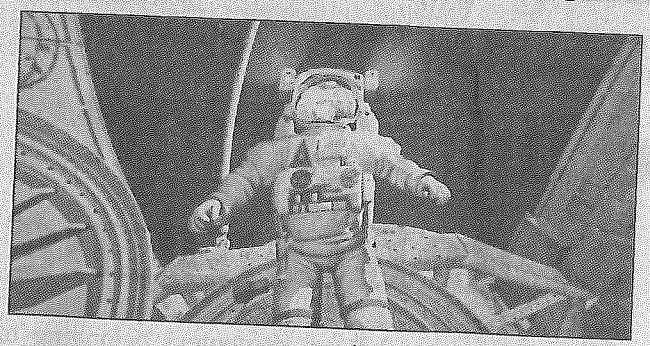
All the money for the projector would come from private sources.

U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis was among the guests — most of them potential donors — who were wowed by a presentation that included close-up looks at Saturn and one of the moons of Mars, and animations of life inside a shark tank and a train ride through the Milky Way.

The projector has numerous applications beyond astronomy, such as architecture, biology and math, scientists at the event said.

Inglis, a member of the House Science Committee, said the device could help the enter spark an interest in science in young people who could go on to help solve such problems as the high cost of energy.

Organizers of the fund drive planned a $100-a-plate dinner Friday to start the ball rolling.



Space images were part of a demonstration at the Roper Mountain Science Center of the Super Mediaglobe II planetarium projector.