

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Winans' New Space Museum is Popular and Cost Effective.**

**Novato, CA** – When people think of new museums, they often think of the California Academy of Sciences, or the new San Francisco Exploratorium with its huge price tag of approximately \$220 million dollars.

But, a new type of museum opened last October in the San Francisco suburb of Novato. One that offers a quality experience for local residents and tourists alike without the high construction costs and government subsidies required for the on-going operations of most museums.

Investment manager and philanthropic collector Ken Winans has served as a trustee to several large, Smithsonian affiliated museums, and felt there had to be a more efficient and effective way to offer the public a quality museum experience during this time of fiscal austerity.

With an entrepreneurial frame of mind, he contacted the owners of an upscale shopping center in Novato's Ignacio neighborhood with a unique idea:

The W Foundation (founded in 2002 by Mr. Winans and his wife Debbie Wreyford) will set up and operate a small space exploration museum using rare items from their extensive collection of space artifacts in one of the strip mall's vacant retail space for \$1 per month.

The neighborhood and local schools gain a unique educational venue free of charge, and the Pacheco Plaza Shopping Center will get increased traffic and new customers for its existing commercial tenants. When the retail space gets rented in the future, no problem, the museum can move to a different location - a nomadic space museum!

The Walter Kieckhefer Company agreed, and after a ribbon cutting ceremony last October with legendary astronauts Rick Searfoss, John

Herrington and Dick Gordon in attendance, "The Space Station" museum opened to the public last November.

With an emphasis is on space exploration, and how its discoveries in science and technology have benefited all of mankind, this museum was designed to be truly different:

1. Admission is free and 100% privately funded through donations and in-kind support from local businesses.
2. In order to keep costs contained, the museum is 100% volunteered staffed and is open 3 days a week or by appointment.
3. Exhibits are changed 3 times a year by the volunteer staff to help encourage visitors to frequently return.
4. The public is given a unique tactile experience as they are allowed to touch some of the space-flown artifacts.

The Space Station museum is a tremendous success!

1. Since its opening 6 months ago, the museum has averaged 642 visitors per month while only being opened 3 days per week. Total attendance from all Space Station events in the Pacheco Plaza Shopping Center over the past 10 months has exceeded 4,952 visitors. This figure equals 10% of Novato's entire population. Visitors have come from all parts of the Bay Area and as far as away Las Vegas, NV. Remarkably, marketing has been limited to "word of mouth", Internet blogs and social networks.
2. The W Foundation's volunteer base has increased from 18 to 36 with another 23 individuals who have stopped by the museum signed up to volunteer in the future.
3. The donations have largely covered operational expenses.

The nimble Space Station museum is moving to a new location in the Pacheco Plaza Shopping Center in June and is planning an outdoor event called "Space Fest" on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

More information can be found at [www.thewfoundation.org](http://www.thewfoundation.org)  
[www.thespacestationca.org](http://www.thespacestationca.org) [www.kenwinans.com](http://www.kenwinans.com)

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