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Community investment with lasting impact

The Stamford Museum & Nature Center (SM&NC) has a long and proud tradition of serving the people of Stamford and the greater community, welcoming more than 200,000 visitors annually. Each year, thousands benefit from experiences they would be unable to receive anywhere else locally or regionally. This is not only a source of tremendous pride, but also a driving force behind continued program expansion.

To that point, recently we celebrated the grand opening of the Knobloch Family Farmhouse, the first major addition to the SM&NC 118-acre campus in 50 years. The 4,000-square-foot farmhouse includes an indoor gathering space for nature and agricultural experiential learning, an overlook terrace with views of the SM&NC's existing landscape and pastures of Heckscher Farm, as well as a large multi-purpose room and mobile teaching kitchen. In addition, the Maple Sugar and Cidering House has been rebuilt and relocated adjacent to the farmhouse. It's expected to create an additional 13 percent growth in programming — complementing the traditions of a working New England farm.

The farmhouse also provides

an extraordinary teaching environment for the highly successful SM&NC-Aligned-With-Our-Schools-Program, which has increased by 300 percent, serving 33,976 school-age children from 158 public, private and parochial schools from Stamford to Bridgeport. Additionally, the site will serve as the location for an entire suite of new cultural, social and culinary programs for adult audiences, as well as a premier site to host business meetings and gatherings.

An institution like the SM&NC, with such far-reaching impact, cannot possibly exist without corporate support. That is the lifeblood by which it can deliver such a high level of educational programming to multigenerational audiences.

First County Bank has also been part of the fabric of Stamford for decades and is proud to be a longtime supporter of the SM&NC. This partnership includes executive leadership participation on the board of directors and Campaign for Future Generations Committee, as well as support of year-round events including sponsorship of the annual Maple Sugar Festival and numerous other events throughout the

year. Additionally, First County Bank Foundation recently committed \$100,000 to help support ongoing educational programs that will take place in and around the new farmhouse.

Corporate engagement in local and regional nonprofits is a vital and important part of every company's identity. Employees want to work for a company that is a good corporate citizen, and we know that millennials demand it. Frankly, as business leaders, we have inherited an obligation to help find constructive solutions to local issues and problems where we work and live.

In today's business environment, corporate engagement takes many forms — from providing volunteers, to encouraging and supporting our executive teams to serve as non-profit leaders, donating products or services as well as providing critically needed ongoing annual support through business partnership programs.

Business Affiliates Membership at the SM&NC offers businesses a chance to get involved, give back to the community, and get their employees and their families outdoors in a healthy, fun, educational environment. These members un-

derstand that their investment in such a vital organization is an investment in quality of life for those in the community where they work, play and live. This investment also delivers great brand alignment plus tremendous value.

The SM&NC is a most beloved institution in Stamford and is in the midst of a significant transformation, with a new Astronomy & Physical Science Center on the horizon. So, in this season of giving, we invite the business community to join with First County Bank and other distinguished companies, large and small, in supporting the Stamford Museum & Nature Center mission to bring the wonders of art, nature, astronomy, and environmental education to our community and the surrounding region. We promise that you will not be disappointed in the direct community impact your partnership will have on our schools, our families and your employees.

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