



NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Julie Renninger 361-881-1321
www.texasstateaquarium.org

Flint Hills Resources Provides \$250,000 Grant For Environmental Discovery Center

Corpus Christi, Texas, September 18, 2002 — Flint Hills Resources has donated \$250,000 to fund a 2,000-square-foot Environmental Discovery Center as part of the Texas State Aquarium's Dolphin Bay expansion project. This contribution is the largest one-time gift from Flint Hills Resources (formerly Koch Petroleum Group) to the aquarium. Flint Hills Resources has been a long-time supporter of the aquarium.

"Flint Hills Resources is committed to environmental stewardship and education, and this contribution will help advance this vital initiative," said Joe Coco, vice president of manufacturing and manager for Flint Hills Resources' Corpus Christi refining complex. "The Environmental Discovery Center will provide environmental education resources, tools and related technology that will be of value to youth, educators and parents."

The new Environmental Discovery Center will build on the aquarium's unique position as a leader in science education in the region. An important component of the aquarium's *Dolphin Bay* capital campaign project, the center will be geared toward learners of all ages. It is designed as a hands-on education facility for both the general public and the school groups that visit. Various components of the center will correlate with the state standards for science, math, language, reading, and history curricula.

- **Discovery Center** – Children learn by "doing" or "making". This multi-purpose area will feature a variety of family activities that will inspire appreciation and wonder of the Gulf of Mexico.
- **Resource Center** – Parents and teachers can always use resources to help them understand schoolwork and the world around them. This resource area will offer support for curriculum development, TEKS materials, and family science and math.
- **Library** – Story time at the Aquarium will use literacy to introduce environmental concepts. The expansion of our current library will be a wonderful opportunity for visitors to utilize "cutting edge" resources, such as internet ready computers, interactive games, educational CD-ROMs, marine-themed internet sites, and Gulf of Mexico research sites and data.

- **Distance Learning Studio** – This studio will increase the Aquarium’s ability to transmit its education programs to even broader audiences. Virtual field trips will offer exciting, interactive learning experiences for students who are unable to visit the Aquarium. The rural counties of Texas could “visit” the Aquarium in real time, “feed” a shark, “help train” a dolphin, interact with instructors, and supplement their curriculum without the cost of a long-distance field trip.

Flint Hills Resources’ \$250,000 donation is part of the \$13.25 million already raised for the *Dolphin Bay* Capitol Campaign and will help to make the *Environmental Discovery Center* at the Texas State Aquarium a reality. “A multi-use, family friendly, area within the Aquarium, specifically focused on our educational programming, has always been in our master plan. Now this wonderful gift from Flint Hills Resources will finally allow us to realize this dream that we’ve been pursuing for 12 years,” said Tom Schmid, executive director of the Texas State Aquarium.

An unveiling of the previously anonymous donor and check presentation took place at a 10:30 a.m. news conference today in the lobby of the Texas State Aquarium. Schmid led invited guests on a behind-the-scenes tour of the area expansion still under construction.

The mission of the Texas State Aquarium is to promote appreciation and wise stewardship of the Gulf of Mexico by providing educational, entertaining programming to a diverse audience; developing exhibits that engage and inspire; and by promoting and practicing environmental conservation and rehabilitation.

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