Collaborative Culture Is On Display at Museums

TOURISM: Council Gives Sites Visibility, Visitors and a Voice

Since being formally incorporated as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) in 1977, the San Diego Museum Council, headquartered in Point Loma, has grown to a regional network of more than 40 museums of art, culture, history, science and nature from all over San Diego County which are said to have an economic impact of $1.1 billion annually.

Celebrating its 31st anniversary this year, the San Diego Museum Council, also known as SDMC, boasts a total annual operating income in excess of $108 million per year, according to board president Rebecca Hambelman.

"SDMC is a regional network that connects museums and cultural institutions with visitors and with each other," said Hambelman. "That is to say, we widely..."

ENERGY: Startup mPower looks to reshape market with unusual solar cell

SPECIAL REPORT: Office sector settling down in suburban submarkets

Solana Beach Project Plans Both to Standout and Fit In

PROPERTY: Mixed-Use Brings New Product, Preserves Views

A long-awaited project that will replace what many said was an eyesore in the heart of Solana Beach is starting construction.

Developer Zephyr Partners has started work on Solana 101 — a mixed-use project that will include apartments, office space and room for a restaurant and retail shops.

“We wanted to create something that’s unique and quite walkable,” said Ryan Herrell, senior vice president of Zephyr.

The nearly two-acre site on Coast Highway at Dahlia Drive had been taken up by an abandoned mobile home park, a vacant service station, two vacant single-family homes and a drive-through coffee kiosk — all of which have been cleared.

Dubbed Solana 101, the 93,764 square-foot project Zephyr is building would include 45,562 square feet of offices, 10,562 square feet of retail space and 3,920 square-feet for outdoor dining, 4,142 square feet of retail space, 25 apartments in 33,473 square feet and two levels of underground parking with 366 parking spaces.

Construction is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2021.

Replacing an Eyesore

"For years, we lived with an abandoned piece of property and an eyesore in the neighborhood. The eyesore is going to go away," said John Steed, president the Condominium Organizations of South Sierra Avenue, which he said is a loose coalition of homeowner associations near Solana 101.

"I am personally, but more importantly our homeowner association, our Condominium Organizations of South Sierra Avenue has unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed the Solana 101 project," Steed said. "It solves a many-years problem."

Equally enthusiastic, Vince Amela, who lives across the street from the Solana 101 site, said the project was "really an enhancement for the community."

Amela said he particularly likes the prospects of having a new restaurant in the neighborhood.

DTx Takes on Delivery of RNA Meds

PHARMA: Co. Came Through S.D. Ecosystem, Raises $10.6 Million

Pharmaceuticals are seizing on a hot area of research that inhibits problematic genes — and DTx Pharma wants to play a vital role.

The San Diego biotech last month closed a $10.6 million Series A round, on the promise of its method to improve on the delivery of RNA medicines.

These therapies are having a moment, thanks to companies like Carlsbad-based Ionis Pharmaceuticals. In Ionis' case, its drugs bind to RNA instead of proteins,
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promote the local museum community through programs like ‘Museum Month’ and ‘Kids Free in October’, and we offer a variety of co-op advertising opportunities such as the KPBS ‘Museum Arts Brief’. We also connect museums with one another through quarterly membership meetings, networking opportunities, and a private Facebook group for local museum professionals.

The Funding

Funded through a combination of government grants, corporate sponsorships and membership dues, the San Diego Museum Council has 42 members, 1,500 museum employees, 8,200 volunteers and 83,801 museum members, said Handelman. Members range from smaller, free museums such as Barona Cultural Center and Museum, the La Jolla History Society and the Miniature Engineering Craftsmanship Museum, to larger institutions such as the San Diego Museum of Art and USS Midway Museum, she said. Other members include aquariums, nature centers and historic sites such as the Juniper Serra Museum, Whaley House, Mimbres and Mission San Luis Rey Museum, Handelman said. Memberships costs are on a sliding scale between $350 and $1,092 yearly depending on the annual operating budget of each museum.

Benefits

“Membership benefits include a rack card (a sort of membership card that is distributed to more than 200 locations in San Diego),” she said, “a heavily visited website that allows each museum to have a profile page and list their events and programs, email marketing and social media support, inclusion in promotions like ‘Museum Month’, ‘The Big Exchange’ and ‘Kids Free in October’, and member meetings, exclusive roundtable and networking opportunities. You are also allowed to participate in reduced-cost advertising co-ops.”

According to Beth Chee, director of marketing at Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, being a member of the San Diego Museum Council means “more accessibility to the community as well as to the network of museums around town.”

mPower:

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and change, especially in the space industry. Despite the challenges, mPower said it’s seeing early success in introducing its innovative solution.

“It’s hard to break into a new space market with technology in general, but over time it’s easier and its becoming increasingly commercialized,” Hell said. “We’re getting a lot of early success but it’s a challenging market.”

Early last year, Hell was appointed president and CEO as the company transitioned into its commercialization phase. Initially founded by Murat Okandan, who now serves as chief technology officer. To date, the company has over 20 patents on their technology, with 17 of them licensed by the Sandia National Laboratories.

US Army Contract

In 2019, mPower Technology was awarded a Phase II Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contract by the US Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (CCDC) Soldier Center. The partnership seeks to demonstrate how textiles built with DragonSCALES technology will meet the Soldier Portable, Expeditionary Maneuver remote power requirement.

Business Model

The primary way mPower brings in revenue is by selling its modules to major space prime contractors. The company said it’s also looking at licensing models to assist in the development of smaller markets for potential market opportunities.

Currently the company employs 12, and expects to double that amount within the upcoming year. It’s engineering, R&D and tech development staff will remain in Albuquerque, according to the company.