

# Exhibit sure to make a splash

SATURDAY, 23 JUNE 2012 02:00 WAYNE EMDE



Today marks the official opening of a new exhibit at the Okanagan Science Centre that focuses on an important feature of the Okanagan Valley - water. The WaterWorks display, a 464-square-metre exhibit, teaches about water in a fun and imaginative setting while promoting conservation and protection of this valuable resource. Children and adults alike are invited to play with water, harness its power and grasp its importance in our everyday lives - without wasting a drop. The Okanagan Science Centre has partnered with Vernon Moving and Storage, Okanagan WaterWise and the Okanagan Basin Water Board to bring the exhibit, built in Ontario and most recently on display in Santa Ana, Calif., to Vernon.

"We're thrilled to be able to bring this amazing, world-class exhibit to the Okanagan," said Sandi Dixon, executive director of the OSC, at a reception for media and invited guests on Thursday evening.

The display was created by Science North Centre in Sudbury, Ont., and has been touring the United States for the past three years, Dixon said. In making its way back to Canada, the display will be part of the science centre's feature exhibit until January 2013. And, thanks to a grant from the OBWB, one of the pieces from the exhibit will be on permanent display at the centre.

The normal fee for a three-month rental of the exhibit is \$150,000, but there was a need to store it for an extended time, so a deal was struck with Vernon Moving and Storage."

"We only had a week to pull it all together," said Dixon. "Part of the display didn't fit, so the people at OK Windows and Doors solved that problem for us. Then, when it arrived in two trucks, there was a bomb scare in Polson Park, so we had to evacuate. Walls had to be painted. In all, more than 200 volunteer hours went into setting up the display."

Anna Warwick Sears of the Okanagan Basin Water Board said exhibits like this help to educate people. "Kids can use hydraulic water pressure to lift 500-pound weights. It's fun," she said.

Other exhibits demonstrate, for example, just how much water a dripping tap can waste in a year or test visitors' knowledge of water facts.

"We're very happy to be partners in this venture," added Corinne Jackson, the OBWB's communications director and manager of its outreach initiative, Okanagan WaterWise.

"The Okanagan is nationally recognized as a region that faces serious water challenges. We have less fresh water available per person in this valley, but we use two times more than the average Canadian. We can all become more water wise. This is a fun and educational way to learn more about the critical role water plays in our lives and what we can do to protect it," said Jackson.

The exhibit includes 11 interactive stations plus a theatre featuring a fast-paced animated video that follows Walter, the adventurous water molecule, on his journeys through the water cycle.

"It's really a fun exhibit - one that will bring smiles, laughs and a sense of wonder to all ages," said Dixon.



Liza Voronkina and Tanya Ermolenko trace the journey of a water molecule in one of the many interactive displays at the WaterWorks exhibit at the Okanagan Science Centre in Vernon.