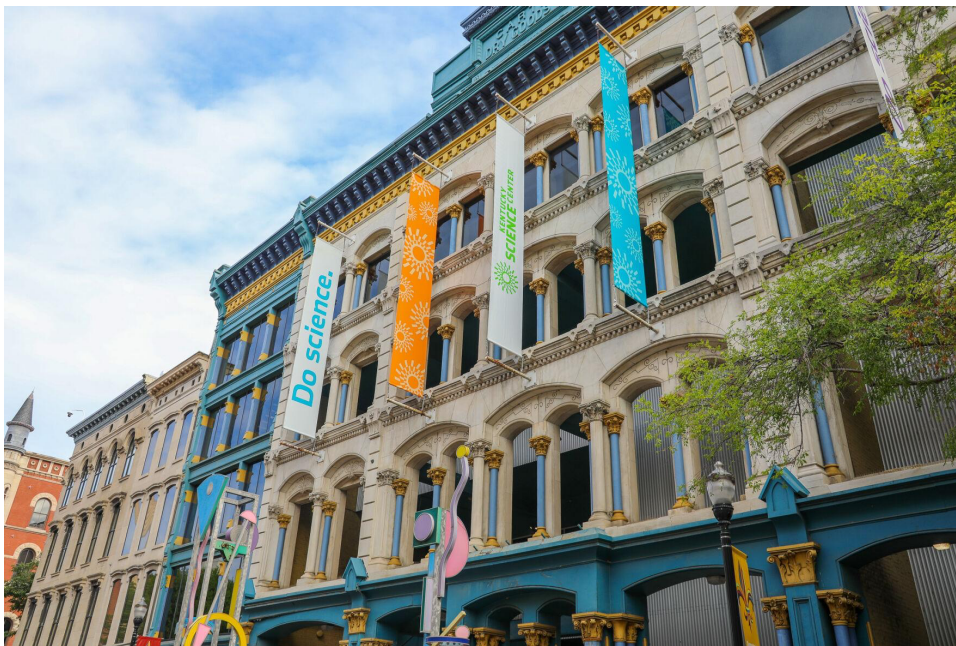


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# Kentucky Science Center eyeing expansion into Warren County

By JACK DOBBS jack.dobbs@bgdailynews.com

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The Kentucky Science Center in Louisville.

SUBMITTED

Mike Norman, CEO of the Kentucky Science Center in Louisville, said when it comes to expanding the museum into Bowling Green, “it’s no longer if we’re going to do it, it’s when are we going to do it.”

The museum, which provides science based education to the public, is eyeing opening a new branch in Bowling Green. Norman said the branch would not be just a carbon copy of the main museum in Louisville, rather it would be “authentic to the region.”

“It would be reflective of what’s in the area,” Norman said. “You think of the caves, you think of the Corvettes, horses and stuff that matters to the community. This is going to be truly Bowling Green’s.”



This is not the first time the museum has been active in Bowling Green. Norman said during the COVID-19 pandemic the museum installed one of its traveling exhibits at Greenwood Mall. He said the exhibit had a focus on early childhood education.

“It was great,” Norman said. “(There) was a good response from folks using it.”

Norman said the expansion is still in the planning stages, with site selection and fundraising for the facility coming later. He said the focus currently is making sure the expansion will maintain support from the community.

“I don’t want to build just the greatest thing in the world and then five years from now, we can’t keep it open because there’s no support for it,” Norman said. “I think the support is there. I just want to make sure that we’re putting in something that’s very sustainable and that the community can support.”



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Telia Butler, downtown development coordinator, said the museum reached out to the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce and was connected to Downtown BGKY.

“They took a site visit around Bowling Green and got to take a look at ... how there is clearly still a need for a science center like theirs in this area,” Butler said. “They were really impressed with what they saw in Bowling Green.”

To gauge community support, a group of Western Kentucky University students with the Hilltopper Consulting Group have created a public survey to learn where a suitable location would be for the facility.

Whitney Peake, a professor in the Gordon Ford College of Business at WKU, said in an email the students are conducting the survey for their capstone class. The survey will be open until April 7. Once the survey closes, the data collected will be analyzed by students and presented to the museum.

“The goal is to help the KY Science Center learn more about people’s preferences in Bowling Green and to think about potential locations,” Peake said in the email. “The students designed the survey and are attempting to help provide localized insights into interest in and support of a satellite branch of the KY Science Center here.”

A link to the survey can be found on Downtown BGKY’s Facebook page.

# JackDobbs