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EDVENTURE ANNOUNCES MERGER WITH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA, SC – Officials with EdVenture and the Children's Museum of South Carolina (CMSC) announced today that they plan to merge the two museums located in Columbia and Myrtle Beach, respectively, effective March 1. The combined museum will maintain the current two locations while pursuing plans to develop a new museum in Myrtle Beach, uniquely designed to better accommodate families with special needs.

For the past 18 months, EdVenture has managed the day to day operations of the Myrtle Beach museum through a management agreement with CMSC's Board of Directors. "This was the natural next step in a partnership that began several years ago," said Melody Breeden, a Myrtle Beach native, principle attorney at Breeden Law Firm and President of the CMSC's Board of Directors. "We were able to 'try out' the relationship and we continued to see advantages for both organizations. As a Board, we believe this is the best possible route to a fiscally sound and robust children's museum for our community."

CMSC was started by community volunteers in 1993. Since opening in 1994, the 7,000 square foot museum has been visited by more than 800,000 people. EdVenture, the largest children's museum in the Southeast, is perennially listed among the nation's top children's museums since opening in 2003, seeing more than 220,000 annual museum visitors while providing community programs across the Midlands and state. Karen Coltrane, EdVenture's president and CEO, will lead the combined museum.

"When you have two organizations truly committed to the same mission of service, it makes partnership very easy, and CMSC's leadership has been great to work with," said Coltrane. "There are economies of

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scale in what we do, and this merger will let us take full advantage of those.” Coltrane said the two museums have already combined administrative functions, the savings from which are enhancing service in both communities. “For example, instead of putting temporary exhibits in storage when not in use, we can now rotate between the museums so visitors can enjoy different experiences.” Members of the two museums already enjoy free reciprocal admission to both facilities, and Coltrane anticipates more benefits in the future, including a potential new, bigger location in Myrtle Beach.

“Of course, that will depend on the Myrtle Beach community’s interest in partnering with us on such a project,” Coltrane continued. “Our vision is to create a museum designed from the ground up to accommodate all families, including those with special needs. We love that Myrtle Beach is emerging as a national leader in creating adaptive places. We hope that a universally-designed children’s museum will contribute to Myrtle Beach’s appeal as a destination, as well as a great resource for local families.”

The combined museums will currently keep their respective names. However, EdVenture officials would like to expand program offerings in Myrtle Beach that have worked well in the Midlands, such as after school, health, STEM and overnight programs.

“We believe this merger makes both museums stronger,” said Dr. John H. Dozier, chief diversity officer at the University of South Carolina and chairman of EdVenture’s Board of Trustees. “Each museum has strengths, and we plan to capitalize on those for the benefit of families and visitors to the Midlands and the Pee Dee region. We believe strongly that informal learning is the best way to connect a child’s academic world to the real world. When children are excited about learning, they perform better in school, which leads to more success for them, and all of us. We take our role as the ‘entry ramp to workforce development’ very seriously, and are looking at every opportunity to expand our impact.”

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About EdVenture

The mission of EdVenture is to inspire children to experience the joy of learning. EdVenture is dedicated to lifelong learning through its 92,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor interactive exhibit space and in its educational outreach programs and afterschool programs. The museum has welcomed visitors from all 50 states and 18 foreign countries, creating shared experiences and memories for families learning together. For more information about EdVenture, visit www.edventure.org or call 803-779-3100.