

# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## ***Jane: Diary of a Dinosaur* Wows Crowds at Burpee Museum of Natural History**

The most complete & best-preserved juvenile *T. Rex* in the world!

**ROCKFORD, IL --** After 66 million years underground and 10,000 hours of painstaking restoration, the world's most complete juvenile *T.Rex* dinosaur named "Jane" met her public in *Jane: Diary of a Dinosaur*, a permanent exhibit which opened in June 2005, at Burpee Museum of Natural History. CNN TV dubbed Burpee "The Little Museum That Could," because the modest museum not only discovered, but also excavated, transported, identified, restored and kept a dinosaur that's the envy of the world's biggest and best dinosaur museums.

In the first two months of her opening, Jane saw more than 20,000 visitors, including renowned paleontology experts. "Jane is certainly one of the top paleontological finds in my lifetime," says Peter Larson, Founder/President, Black Hills Institute of Geological Research, Hill City, SD.

Ever since her discovery in 2001 by a Burpee team of amateur dinosaur-hunters on an expedition to the southeast Montana Badlands, Jane has stirred world-wide debate among paleontologists. Was she a *Nanotyrannus*, a "pygmy tyrant" related to *Tyrannosaurus rex*? A juvenile *T.rex*? Or something else? After much consideration, Jane was found to be a juvenile *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

"She was only 11 when she died, at a crucial stage in her life cycle...just before a dramatic 'superpuberty' growth spurt transformed her into the massive, lumbering adult we know as *T. rex*," says Michael Henderson, Museum Curator. For three years, Henderson, the leader of Burpee's "Jane Team," journeyed throughout the US and Canada, conferring with expert paleontologists and scientists to determine Jane's identity and her proper place on the dinosaur family tree.

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“Jane is the gold standard by which every other juvenile *T. Rex* will be measured from now on,” explained Henderson. “Her skeleton is in fabulous condition and is 80 percent complete by bone mass. All the important bones are there.”

*Diary of a Dinosaur* not only reveals Jane’s true identity, but also traces her amazing life story via a 2,000-square-foot permanent exhibit that delights and fascinates dino-afficianados of all ages. It features colorful graphics, computer-generated animations and hands-on inter-actives.

The exhibit’s magnificent centerpiece is Jane herself, a statuesque 7.5 feet tall at the hips and a slender 21 feet long from nose to tail-tip. She is a perfect example of the three qualities paleontologists value most: rarity, completeness and quality of preservation. Her fossilized skeleton is in exquisite condition, from her skull containing six-inch-long razor-sharp teeth and tiny channels for nerves and blood vessels, to her long, powerful legs and graceful tail. The surrounding exhibit is arranged in four “chapters:”

- **Jane’s World:** A flat-screen TV shows the barren landscape where Jane was found. With the press of a button, it transforms into the lush forest of 66 million years ago, and Late Cretaceous creatures appear, along with Jane.
- **While Jane Lay Buried:** A time-line spans the 66 million years from Jane’s life to her discovery, and interactive stations explore the possible causes of extinction of dinosaurs, the rise of mammals, the spread of grasslands and the Ice Age glaciers.
- **Discovery:** Visitors to a replica of Camp Needmore (the expedition’s base camp) can watch “home movies” about Jane’s discovery and excavation, flip through photo albums, see other Montana fossils and pick up a phone to hear Burpee benefactor Jane Solem talk about how she felt about loaning her name to Jane.
- **Stories Written in Jane’s Bones:** The *piece d’ resistance* is a fully-restored skeleton of Jane, zeroing in on her prey, a smaller, plant-eating dinosaur called *Thescelosaurus neglectus*. A pterosaur glides by overhead, and a full-grown *T.rex* lurks in the shadows.

Burpee Museum of Natural History is located on the west bank of the Rock River at 737 N. Main St. in downtown Rockford's River District. It began in 1941 as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) program in two historic mansions. Today, a modern three-story addition includes exhibits such as *The First People* (life-sized Native American dwellings), *Windows to Wilderness* (wildlife of the Rock River Valley), a Carboniferous Coal Forest, an Ordovician Sea Floor, life-size skeletal casts of a *T. rex* and a Colombian Woolly Mammoth, plus many more fossils and mineral specimens. Museum hours are: Monday-Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 12 noon to 5 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$4 for students/children ages 3-17. Wednesdays are free days for everyone. (Admission is always free for members, and the \$55 annual family membership fee includes free admission to the Chicago Museum of Science & Industry and more than 200 other science museums throughout the United States.) For more info, phone 815-965-3433 or log on to [www.burpee.org](http://www.burpee.org).

Rockford is located in north-central Illinois, at the juncture of I-90, I-39 and US Highway 20, halfway between Chicago and Galena. Burpee Museum is adjacent to the two-story Discovery Center Museum, chosen by *Child* magazine as one of America's top four children's museums. Rockford is also home to Magic Waters Water Park, Midway Village & Museum, Volcano Falls Adventure Park and other family attractions.

For those who wish to fly, both Northwest Airlines and Hooters Air serve Rockford's Northwest Chicagoland International Airport, along with several charter airlines. For details, log on to [www.flyrfd.com](http://www.flyrfd.com). Car rental is available at the airport.

For help in planning your visit, phone the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau at 800-521-0849 or log on to [www.gorockford.com](http://www.gorockford.com) or [www.visitjane.com](http://www.visitjane.com).

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