

## **Burpee Museum Puts Rockford On International Map 65% of Burpee Visitors From Outside Winnebago County**

“Burpee Museum’s paleontology program put Rockford on the international map and keeps us there,” said Scott Williams proudly, Burpee Museum of Natural History’s director of science & exhibits.

### In Good Company

Our community is fortunate to have many talented people who contribute to make the Rockford area real and original. We continue to feature some of them through the “In Good Company” photograph and video exhibit created by Nels Akerlund Photography + Video.

This month we highlight Scott Williams of Burpee Museum, located in downtown Rockford.

### About Burpee Museum of Natural History

The world-class quality of its paleontology program, exhibits and educational programs draws around 50,000 visitors to Burpee annually. About 65 percent of them are from outside Winnebago County. Founded in 1942, Burpee has 10 full-time employees and up to 15 part-timers for school programming.

In 2002 the museum made international news when Jane, the world’s most complete and best-preserved juvenile *Tyrannosaurus rex*, was discovered in Montana and later introduced to the public. The 66 million-year-skeleton’s exhibit drew record crowds and was featured on CNN, National Geographic and more.

Another Burpee expedition to Montana led to the discovery of Homer, one of the best examples of a “teenaged” *Triceratops*. The exhibit “Homer’s Odyssey: From the Badlands to Burpee” opened in 2012.

The newest discovery is Pearl, a very rare 66 million-year-old oviraptorosaur fossil discovered by Burpee in 2013. The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Carnegie Museum of Natural History and the University of Maryland are collaborating with Burpee to prepare Pearl for its exhibit.

### Burpee’s International Reputation

Williams recently returned from the annual meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology held in Berlin, November 5-8, and attended by 1,500 paleontologists. Burpee staff made several presentations at the conference.

Williams said, “Burpee is known to these international paleontologists because of the high quality of our paleontology program. When we asked Dr. Fabio Dalla Vecchia, a well-known Italian paleontologist, to speak at PaleoFest 2015, he said ‘yes, I’ve heard of Burpee and I’ve been waiting for an invitation!’” PaleoFest is a

weekend-long event of family-friendly activities and informative lectures that brings international paleontologists to present their research.

Burpee's dinosaurs Jane and Homer have been ambassadors to other countries. More than 120,000 people saw Burpee's Jane exhibit in Osaka, Japan. The Homer exhibit was viewed by 110,000 in Osaka.

#### What's Next for Burpee?

- Burpee will present "Savage Ancient Seas" that showcases prehistoric "sea monsters" that lived around the same time as Jane and Homer. The January 17 through Labor Day exhibit will be shown for the first time in the Midwest at Burpee Museum.
- The next PaleoFest is March 14-15, 2015, and is co-hosted by the Smithsonian. There will be activities for all ages, including a workshop with Dr. Thomas Holtz, a celebrated paleontologist who will present his first workshop for children ages 10 to 14. There will be 24 presentations by world-renowned paleontologists on the beginning of the age of dinosaurs.

#### What Should Chamber Members Know About Burpee?

Burpee welcomes businesses as partners and visitors. Whether your business would like to rent one of Burpee's distinctive rooms for a meeting or party . . . or sponsor an exhibit, please contact Burpee Marketing & Development Manager MacKenna Atteberry at 815.965.3433 or [mackenna.atteberry@burpee.org](mailto:mackenna.atteberry@burpee.org).