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## ***NEW THINGS TO “SEA” & DO*** **12 MONTHS OF MISSION-DRIVEN UPGRADES UNDERWAY AT GREATER CLEVELAND AQUARIUM**

CLEVELAND – Visitors to the Greater Cleveland Aquarium will notice some changes in the coming months. **The attraction is investing more than \$250,000 in a new website, animal life support system upgrades, experiential and theming enhancements and the introduction of approximately a dozen new species.** Many of the Aquarium’s galleries, a few key exhibits and two breakout areas are part of the improvements. Staff estimate that nearly 75% of the Aquarium’s public spaces will be touched. “In 2014 we reimagined the look and content of our Ohio-focused gallery, featuring native and invasive species and using trees, scents and sounds to create a forest atmosphere,” says the Aquarium’s Director of Artistic Production & Operations Bruce Orendorf. “We want to immerse guests to better connect them with the animals’ natural habitats.” Orendorf will leverage internal talent and resources—fabricating décor using upcycled, in-house materials whenever possible.

The renovations are planned in stages over a 12-month period so the Aquarium can stay open throughout the capital improvement process with minimal distractions for guests. In 2017 the Aquarium, operated by Jacobs Entertainment Inc., experienced its highest annual attendance since it opened on the West Bank of the Flats in January of 2012. The family-friendly attraction welcomed nearly 1.5 million people in its first six years of operation. “From finding ways to highlight the building’s industrial history and its relationship to the Cuyahoga River to giving toddlers opportunities to engage with the Aquarium through play, guest feedback is informing all of the publicly visible changes,” explains Aquarium GM and Splash Fund Director Tami Brown. “For example, guests have shared how much they value learning about important issues like plastic in our water supplies, disappearing wetlands and shark finning, so we will be expanding our spotted turtle conservation exhibit and adding information throughout the Aquarium about simple changes anyone can make to help minimize their impact on the environment.”

Work has already begun to transition the first section of ‘Lakes & Rivers of the World’ into an ‘Asia & Indonesia’ gallery. The first phase of upgrades, running now through June 2018, also includes the development of a Coastal Boardwalk around the stingray touch pool and the second floor Exploration Station’s conversion from an open craft and storytelling area to an imaginative play-space where young children can pretend they are aquarists, SCUBA divers or exhibit designers. “We are also busy working with other aquariums and zoos to

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bring interesting new species here including Solomon Island leaf frogs, a frilled lizard, spiny lumpsuckers and weedy seadragons,” says Brown.

Later projects include updating the second floor education classroom and transforming exhibits throughout the first floor. All construction is slated to be complete by the spring of 2019.

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**GREATER CLEVELAND AQUARIUM** Did you know male seahorses are the ones who give birth? That moon jellyfish don't have brains? Or that some sharks lose up to 30,000 teeth in their lifetimes? To take a closer look at aquatic life and conservation, call 216.862.8803 or visit [greaterclevelandaquarium.com](http://greaterclevelandaquarium.com).