

Press Release
Institute for Marine Mammal Studies (IMMS)
October 7, 2010 2 PM

IMMS selects Eley Guild Hardy Architects and TVS Design for new Ocean Expo Learning Center in D'Iberville

At the reception hosted last night by Governor Haley Barbour at the Governor's Mansion, it was announced that the new Ocean Expo Learning Center in D'Iberville, MS will be designed by Eley Guild Hardy Architects and TVS Design.

Eley Guild Hardy is the largest architectural firm in Mississippi and has designed Gulf Coast projects such as the Infinity Project in Bay St. Louis and the Ohr - O'Keefe Museum of Art in Ocean Springs. TVS Design, based in Atlanta, designed the Georgia Aquarium and has experience working with Eley Guild Hardy on the MS Coast Coliseum and convention Center.

The selection process began with an RFP for the project being sent to numerous architectural firms of international reputation. Many applicants applied, and after much deliberation, the team of Eley Guild Hardy Architects and TVS Design was chosen for the project.

Eley Guild Hardy has been in business on the coast since 1953 and was chosen to design the IMMS Center for Marine Education and Research located on the industrial seaway canal in Gulfport. David Hardy AIA says, "I am proud to have been chosen to design both the Center for Marine Education and Research, and now Ocean Expo. I'm working with a great team of people and I'm sure this aquarium will become an asset for the Gulf Coast."

The Ocean Expo Learning Center will be a hot spot for family fun and learning on the Coast. The Center will feature unique interactive exhibits and marine animal presentations as well as a restaurant, various shops, and a museum. Upon completion, the Ocean-Expo will employ more than 300 people and attract 750,000 to one million visitors a year.

"After the BP oil spill it is more important than ever for the need to educate students and the public to appreciate nature and preserve our marine ecosystems," says Dr. Moby Solangi, Director of IMMS. Currently the Center for Marine Education and Research is the only marine mammal rescue and rehabilitation center in Mississippi and has played a primary role in marine mammal and sea turtle response and rescue since the BP oil spill. The Center will continue to conduct research and rehabilitation for many years to come.

All of those who have been involved with the Ocean Expo project are eager to have everything move along as planned. Michael W. Janus, D'Iberville City Manager is "tremendously excited and is looking forward to breaking ground on the project. The bidding process has been highly competitive, but we've selected the best firm for the job." IMMS director Dr. Moby Solangi is also "delighted that the project is progressing smoothly."