

# 70th Anniversary Celebrations

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column On March 1, 2019)

Jim Dodson, says, "As an Oak Ridge City Councilman, I see the American Museum of Science and Energy as a great asset to our community. I would like to encourage everyone to come out on March 19 and support our internationally recognized museum as we celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and the anniversary of the opening of the gates to the secret city." Jim is excited about the possibilities open to us and the future of Science and Heritage Tourism. The event Jim mentions on March 19 is just the beginning of our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. Saturday, March 23, will also continue the celebration with activities at both AMSE and the recently formed Oak Ridge History Museum.

The American Museum of Science and Energy is an anchor of our community and is proud to celebrate a city that once only existed in a vision and now thrives. Oak Ridge, Tennessee, is forever etched into history as a major part of the Manhattan Project. The public first was allowed into our city on March 19, 1949, 70 years ago!

Until then, Oak Ridge, once the fifth largest city in Tennessee and not on any map, was restricted to only those who lived or worked here. That changed radically when the four of the seven gates were opened and the public gained access to the city. A ribbon cutting at Elza Gate was a must-see event with an electrical current signal from the Graphite Reactor igniting a specially coated ribbon to officially open the gates.

The checking stations were built to isolate the three government facilities and they still stand today as a reminder of the importance of the work ongoing in Oak Ridge even after the Manhattan Project. Although the fences and gates have been moved to the actual sites, two of the three facilities remain vital to our nation's security and important research and development.

Seventy years ago, steps were taken to preserve that original vision and recognize how the world was changed by the "Secret City." The American Museum of Science and Energy tells the story about how and why people learned to split the atom. On March 19, 1949, the city's gates and the nation's first atomic energy museum, named the American Museum of Atomic Energy, were opened to the public for the first time.

As the Secret City grew into the Atomic City, our community expanded its scientific outreach into material sciences, global security, atomic research, and supercomputing. Our museum evolved with the times and the community into the American Museum of Science and Energy, relocating three times. In its current location at 115 Main Street East, the newly designed exhibits focus on the latest innovations and also recall our origins.

On this 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary the museum staff is proud to welcome the public to some special events:

THE FIRST EVENT is a fundraiser reception, **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AMSE Foundation Fundraiser Party**, from 6-9pm on Tuesday, March 19, (recognizing the actual day our city was first opened to the public) for the American Museum of Science and Energy Foundation. We will be entertained by live music by the Tim Hughes Quartet, Heavy hors d'oeuvres and Cocktails will be served, and a live auction will be held. Tickets can be purchased at [www.eventbright.com](http://www.eventbright.com) and search for American Museum of Science and Energy 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

The Foundation exists to support AMSE with special events, outreach programs, rotating temporary exhibits and anything else that the normal funding does not provide for but is needed by the museum to provide the best possible experience for visitors and local groups. It is our plan to advance the capabilities of AMSE beyond the scope of the Department of Energy and to engage the community in the expansion.

We are looking to the future and see AMSE as the hub of Science and Heritage Tourism for this region of East Tennessee. We welcome you to help us by purchasing tickets to the reception and learn more about the exciting future we see for AMSE.

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The AMSE Foundation is also involved in supporting the Manhattan Project National Historical Park as the holder of the Friends funding account used to support special programs there as well. One example is the Teacher/Ranger/Teacher program where a teacher spends time as a Park Ranger and then returns to teaching with a special set of insights into our national parks.

Help us celebrate our long history, exciting changes, and bright future. Join AMSE, the AMSE Foundation, the Oak Ridge History Museum and the Oak Ridge Heritage and Preservation Association for three upcoming events uniquely honoring the 70 years of science and heritage and the people who shaped and redirected a pivotal moment in history for the betterment of all.

In addition to the March 19, 2019, **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AMSE Foundation Fundraising Party** reception from 6-9 pm at the American Museum of Science and Energy 115 Main Street East, Oak Ridge, TN, there are two additional events planned.

Other events are:

SECOND EVENT: Saturday, March 23, 2019 ***"The Secret is Out"***

Time: 10-5pm

Location: American Museum of Science and Energy 115 Main Street East, Oak Ridge, TN

The Secret is Out American Museum of Science and Energy's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Flag Pole Dedication & Sculpture Presentation

\$5 Admission all day - Members free!

Gaming competitions - Winners receive a limited AMSE 3D printed award!

Food trucks, hair-raising electrical demonstrations, and an exhibit on the history of AMSE.

And THE THIRD EVENT: Saturday, March 23, 2019 will be ***"Experiencing America's Secret City at a Critical Moment in History"***

Time: 11-4pm

Location: The Oak Ridge History Museum 102 Robertsville Rd. Oak Ridge, TN

11am: Ribbon Cutting

11:30: Cutting of Cake

12:00: Photo presentation of gate opening

12:30: Story telling from the original event in 1949

2:00: 1940s Swing Dancers

Free Admission all day

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Original Gate Opening Celebration



March 19 event: *70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AMSE Foundation Fundraiser Party*

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**70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration** **March 23, 2019**

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND ENERGY**  
115 MAIN ST. EAST OAK RIDGE, TN 37830

**10<sup>AM</sup>** FLAG POLE DEDICATION,  
SCULPTURE UNVEILING,  
CLASSIC GAMING:  
MARBLES, HOP SCOTCH, CHECKERS, HULA-HOOP

**12<sup>PM</sup>** GAMING COMPETITIONS  
WINNERS RECEIVE AN AMSE  
**3D** PRINTED AWARD!  
FOOD TRUCKS, AMAZING SCIENCE,  
NEW MEMORIES AND OLD FAVORITES

**OAK RIDGE HERITAGE AND PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION**  
102 ROBERTSVILLE ROAD, OAK RIDGE, TN 37830

**11<sup>AM</sup>** RIBBON CUTTING  
**11<sup>:30</sup>** CUTTING OF CAKE  
**12<sup>:00</sup>** PHOTO PRESENTATION OF GATE OPENING EVENTS  
**12<sup>:30</sup>** STORY TELLING FROM ORIGINAL EVENT IN 1949  
**2<sup>:00</sup>** 1940S SWING DANCERS

**FREE ADMISSION TO ORPHA EVENTS**

**AMSE** AMERICAN MUSEUM OF SCIENCE & ENERGY  
**AMSE** FOUNDATION  
**THE OAK RIDGE HISTORY MUSEUM**  
**Explore Oak Ridge**

March 23 events: ***"The Secret is Out"*** and ***"Experiencing America's Secret City at a Critical Moment in History"***