

# American Museum of Science and Energy Foundation now operating AMSE and the K-25 History Center

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of August 9, 2021)

On March 1, 2021, a new and exciting opportunity was provided to a group of dedicated individuals who form the American Museum of Science and Energy Foundation. This opportunity has the potential to positively impact heritage tourism in Oak Ridge.

AMSEF was initially established in September 1996 by some forward-thinking individuals ~~exists~~ to support the American Museum of Science and Energy by funding exhibits, special programs, and procurement of historic artifacts and other materials, as well as serving as AMSE ambassadors.

With the signing of a Cooperative Agreement with DOE on March 1, that Foundation has taken responsibility for operating both AMSE and the new K-25 History Center, as well as continuing to support the museums as it has historically done. Additionally, AMSEF will expand programming and exhibits at the museums through substantial fundraising efforts, initiatives to increase revenue, and increased memberships.

To accomplish the fundraising goals, additional staff members are being added. Additions include an Operations Manager who is now in place, and a Development Director to be hired in the future.

Additionally, key members of the board of directors have been added bringing the total membership to 18 as well as the selection of a National Advisory Committee of 12 members to provide advice to the foundation board and museum staff.

A new committee structure has been created to aid in the management of the operations of the museums. Expert assistance in personnel management is being provided through a subcontracting arrangement. The board members are anxious to bring new innovations to the museum operations.

Jim Campbell, Chairman of the Foundation's board of directors said, "The members of the Foundation board, many of whom are new, are really excited about the opportunities to tell the stories of science and technology that have truly transformed the world since the Manhattan Project. We are the **American** Museum of Science and Energy, and we want to tell our story to the world."

"The K-25 History Center is just a great new Museum that hardly anyone has seen. We want to make sure people know it's open, it's fascinating, and it's a great story of Oak Ridge's role in energizing the world."

The Executive Director of AMSE and the K-25 History Center, Alan Lowe, said "This is an exciting time for our museums. We appreciate the support this community has always given to us, and we look forward to making our museums even better resources for Oak Ridge, for Tennessee, and for the nation."

The museums reopened May 21, 2021 (AMSE) and May 24, 2021 (K-25 History Center) and both locations are bringing new and exciting exhibits and programs developed during the pandemic when the museum locations were not open to the public. So, we invite you to visit and see what is new.

For example, QR codes have been placed on different parts of the exhibits. Visitors can scan those codes with their smart phones and see short videos explaining even more that specific part of the exhibit. Additionally, new exhibit items that AMSE visitors will see include a Virtual Reality gallery, an exhibit case dedicated to the Nuclear Navy, and an interactive that lets them hear the sounds of the universe.

Museum staff educational team members have developed four new virtual/interactive classes. These classes include original curriculum and supplemental video content paired with live, virtual, interactive project sessions. Both Y-12 National Security Complex and Oak Ridge National Laboratory ~~AMSE~~ ~~educators~~ have supported the museum's efforts to provide this amazing content to the community in over

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50 interactive classrooms. In addition, educational videos featuring AMSE staff members have been created and posted online, and work is continuing on the first of what we will be many AMSE webinars.

The *AMSEcast* podcast, which debuted during the pandemic, has proven to be a great success. 10 episodes are available now on all major podcast channels, and nearly 40 more are either in production or scheduled. Examples of *AMSEcast* guests include Heino Falcke, who led the team that took the first image of a black hole; Simon Winchester, award-winning author of books such as *Krakatoa* and *The Perfectionists*; and Thomas Zacharia, Director of ORNL.

Last summer, a new Mission to Mars virtual camp was very well received. That camp provided two weeks of daily online activities, including five interactive sessions via Zoom, for over one hundred children from around the world.

Other online programs initiated during the pandemic include AMSE's Online Book Club, which you can find on Facebook, and a virtual Race to Space, details of which you can find at <http://amse.org>.

During the pandemic standard Covid protocols were developed and are in place for the safety of guests, staff members and volunteers. Hours of operation for AMSE and the K-25 History Center: Monday – Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM & Sunday 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Website: [www.AMSE.org](http://www.AMSE.org); [www.k25historycenter.org](http://www.k25historycenter.org)

Both the AMSE staff and AMSEF board members are excited to reopen to the public and to continue building on nearly seventy-plus years of service to this community. We are even more proud of the opportunity this new arrangement with the DOE offers.

The future is indeed bright for all Oak Ridge museums! In addition to AMSE and the K-25 History Center, other museums include: the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge (open); the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (open); the Oak Ridge History Museum (open); the Y-12 History Center (hope to see this ~~able to~~ open soon); and, the DOE Public Bus Tour (unsure yet of when these will restart) which will provide access to the National Historic Landmark X-10 Graphite Reactor at ORNL, as well as the K-25 History Center, the New Hope Visitor Center at Y-12, and of course AMSE.

If you are interested in joining the museums through a membership, please find the various levels of membership at: <https://amse.org/become-a-member/>

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A welcome sight, school buses bringing children to the American Museum of Science and Energy

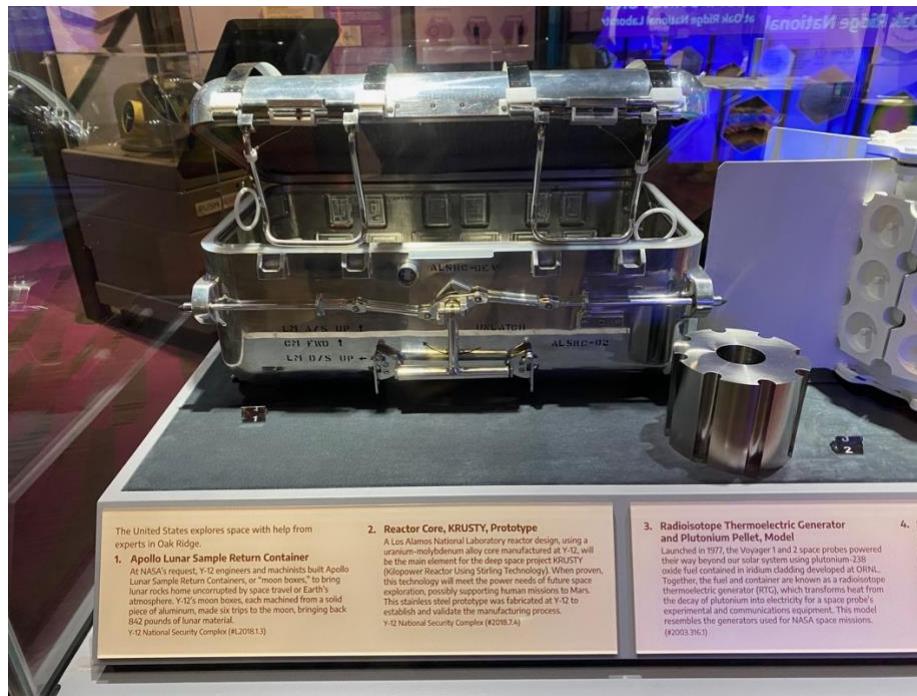


Tourist buses are coming to AMSE as well



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A favorite exhibit from Y-12 National Security Complex, the Moon Box and other space exploration exhibits



K-25 History Center is open after closing just three weeks after the grand opening in February 2020

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Entrance to the theater, first stop on your visit to the K-25 History Center



Quinn Argall, Collections & Exhibits Director demonstrates the Virtual Reality Exhibit – you really want to experience this new addition to AMSE!