



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS: **Kate Johnson, In Your Shoes Marketing**
262-210-5804
kate@inyourshoesmarketing.com

Tracy Shilobrit, In Your Shoes Marketing
262-825-2613
tracy@inyourshoesmarketing.com

USA Science & Engineering Festival Illuminates Science's Role in Hollywood Movies and TV Shows

WASHINGTON – October 31, 2011 — When you sit down to watch television or go to the movies, you don't have to look far to see science and engineering hard at work. It's in the high-tech gadgets used to analyze crime scene evidence, the medicine developed to stop the spread of disease, amazing super powers and phenomenal fight scenes – it's everywhere. But, have you ever wondered how Hollywood gets it right?

Individuals and families can learn about the science behind Hollywood's crime dramas, superhero feats, medical shows and special effects at the [USA Science & Engineering Festival](#), hosted by [Lockheed Martin](#) — the nation's largest celebration of science and engineering that will take place April 28-29, 2012 in Washington, D.C. The festival will feature exhibits, performances and appearances by scientists and organizations that work closely with Hollywood film and TV producers to make sure that they are portraying science and engineering realistically.

One of those organizations is [The Science & Entertainment Exchange](#), a program of the National Academy of Science that puts the likes of Nobel Prize winners on speed dial for Hollywood TV and film producers. "Since we've started, we've facilitated more than 350 consults – an average of 2 to 3 each week – for movies like *Iron Man 2*, *TRON: Legacy*, *Thor*, *Green Lantern* and the upcoming Disney film *The Avengers*, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive," said Ann Merchant, Deputy Executive Director for the Office of Communications for The National Academies. "We're not the accuracy police, more like the plausibility patrol – it's not about making a movie a textbook, but we do try to make sure that there are more realistic elements included in the stories on which we consult," continued Merchant.

Several performers at the USA Science and Engineering Festival will give participants the opportunity to experience the science of Hollywood up close and personal, including:

- Learning the science behind the wizardry of Harry Potter and the magic from Hogwarts Academy in demonstrations showing how science can make objects levitate or disappear, from San Diego State University Professor and former NSTA president, Dr. Alan McCormack.
- Simulating the rapid spread of the H1N1 virus through the Walter E. Washington Convention Center – similar to the epidemic in the movie *Contagion* – utilizing bar code and Quick Response (QR) tags as a surrogate for the virus, at an exhibit by the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute at Virginia Tech.
- Competing in robot battles like those seen in the movie *Real Steel* and operating various other robots throughout the festival, including the robotic tools used to find the Titanic on the ocean floor. Ocean exploration pioneer, David Gallo, discoverer of the Titanic is scheduled to appear at the Festival.
- Touring the vehicles that chase tornados and extreme weather in the popular reality show *Storm Chasers*. Dr. Josh Wurman, founder of the Center for Severe Weather Research, which operates the Doppler on Wheels (DOW) – a mobile radar unit that observes tornadoes, hurricanes, wild fires and other phenomena from close range – will give a talk and meet with fans.

- More -

USA Science & Engineering Festival and Hollywood/Page 2

- Exploring how scientists use technology to detect life on other planets and meeting Seth Shostak – an alien chaser that the movie *Contact* was based upon.
- Meeting the inventor and inspiration for the *Iron Man* movies in which he makes a cameo appearance, Elon Musk, who also serves as CEO and chief technology officer of SpaceX, the producer of the Falcon 1 and Falcon 9 rockets.

A festival favorite, Jim Kakalios, will mesmerize the crowd with a presentation on the science of superheroes, explaining the plausibility and the scientific basis for super powers from all of our favorite comic books. Kakalios is the author of the [Physics of Superheroes](#), a book that explains physics principles in an easy-to-understand and often humorous manner.

A physics professor at the University of Minnesota, Kakalios was connected to the filmmakers of *The Watchmen* by The Science & Entertainment Exchange to consult on the translation of the graphic novel to the big screen for the 2009 Warner Bros. film. He has also consulted for the recent film *The Green Lantern* and the upcoming film *The Amazing Spider Man*, in theaters next summer. “The real benefit for me is that I get to interact with fun, nice people [in Hollywood] who are turned on by ideas and they want to do their best to make it realistic,” said Kakalios. “When I watch TV or films and I see them get it right, it’s like catching a little inside joke. I appreciate it and hope that the audience will learn a little something about science.”

Science Celebrities:

The USA Science & Engineering Festival will also feature leading science celebrities like Bill Nye the Science Guy and Jamie Hyneman and Adam Savage of the MythBusters, who will appear live during the finale Expo. Also scheduled to appear are Jeff Lieberman from Discovery Channel’s series Time Warp and Apollo Robbins, the Gentleman Thief from National Geographic’s Brain Games.

Influential Scientific Authors:

The USA Science & Engineering Festival Book Fair will feature several authors who have changed science in the media. Dr. Robin Cook has written more than 30 best selling novels – including *Coma*, which was made into a successful feature film by Michael Crichton and *Outbreak*, which served as the basis for NBC’s “Virus.” Dr. Cook’s writing transformed the media’s representation of the medical profession from what it used to be in the days of Marcus Welby, MD to what we are used to seeing to see in shows like ER and Grey’s Anatomy. Homer Hickam took us into the world of opportunity with his biography — a quest to become a rocket scientist — that became the hit movie *October Sky*. Illustrator Bruce Degan brought Joanna Cole’s words to life in the books and eventual TV enterprise the *Magic School Bus*, which has delighted and enlightened youth about the possibilities of science for the past 25 years.

About the USA Science & Engineering Festival:

The USA Science & Engineering Festival is the country’s only national science festival, and was developed to increase public awareness of the importance of science and to encourage youth to pursue careers in science and engineering by celebrating science in much the same way as we celebrate Hollywood celebrities, professional athletes and pop stars. Lockheed Martin is again the presenting host of the USA Science & Engineering Festival and is joined by many other Festival [sponsors and partners](#). The USA Science & Engineering Festival is a grassroots collaboration of over [500 of the United States leading science and engineering organizations](#). For more information on the USA Science & Engineering Festival, please visit the [Festival website](#).