

Science centre opens door to new journey

'HUGE TRANSFORMATION'

BY MICHELLE DIPARDO

The Ontario Science Centre's front yard just got a lot greener and a lot more fun — with a water maze, wind turbines and LED light caves.

Today the centre will unveil the 4,590-square-metre Teluscape — its new outdoor exhibition space and revamped entrance — that replaces a concrete former fountain that had become a wasteland.

"It's a huge transformation," says Anna Relyea, the centre's associate director of strategic communications. "In science you have to evolve and improve. The idea is, let's start the journey from the time you arrive."

Visitors to the Don Mills Road centre will now be greeted by an illuminated wetland, a 350-seat amphitheatre and the FUNtain, which children can use to make music by playing water like a flute to create notes.

They will be able to climb on three large spheres or attempt to navigate the water maze without getting wet.

Described as a "large outdoor science exploration plaza" by the centre, Teluscape is part of the \$47-million Agents of Change initiative aimed at updating, beautifying and modernizing the 37-year-old science centre.

A driving force behind Teluscape's concept is the centre's location: it is built on the side of a ravine created by the Don River.

"We wanted to bring the con-

nection to the wetlands," says Ms. Relyea.

Said Carolyn Brown, project manager from Reich + Petch, the international design firm that helped bring the concept to life: "It's a transition from urban city to this beautiful ravine space we're blessed with."

Teluscape — named for Telus's \$10.1-million donation — will be accessible even without paying the science centre entry fee.

"It was also designed for the community," says Lynn Roe, the centre's assistant director of operations and service management. "The community uses our parking lot for things like *tai chi*."

Teluscape has a strong emphasis on water, even though the old fountain was ripped out last year to make way for the new space.

According to Ms. Roe, that was both a practical and aesthetic decision.

"The fountain was not repairable. You couldn't see the entrance," says Ms. Roe. "We wanted people to be able to walk right in."

In the centre of Teluscape sits Fontaine, an art piece by Steve Mann, which the designers hope people will gather round and sit, eat and relax.

The centre has overhauled 30% of its indoor exhibition space as a result of Agents of Change including Kidspark, aimed at getting young children interested in science, expanded in 2004.

The next and final stage in the Agents of Change initiative will involve major art exhibits, set to take place later this year.

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