

**Discovery Park Article for The Messenger
August 5, 2009**

Kirkland Foundation Seeking New Architect

New design to be developed for Discovery Center

On July 8, 2009 the Kirkland Foundation announced the termination of its contract with Douglas Cardinal Architects for the design of the 50-acre, multi-million dollar Discovery Park of America. The project is planned for a site just south of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. plant and west of Union City Second Baptist Church, between Everett Blvd. and the future Interstate 69. The Foundation said that as a result of problems with Cardinal Architects of Ottawa, Canada, it concluded that termination of the contract was the appropriate and best action to ensure successful completion of Discovery Park.

This week Robert Kirkland, the visionary and principal benefactor of Discovery Park, with his wife Jenny answered questions regarding the current status of the project and plans for the future.

The primary question on most people's minds is whether the change in architects will affect the future of Discovery Park. Do you still intend to build Discovery Park? Yes, Discovery Park will be built. There is no change in our intent to build a world-class venue for education and tourism at the site on Highway 51. These problems have already slowed construction, and the selection of a new architect will take some time, causing further delay. However, we'd like to emphasize that this project will definitely continue as quickly as possible.

Will you continue with the design for Discovery Center that was developed by Douglas Cardinal Architects?

No, the new architect will develop a different design.

Do you expect the new design to be as unusual as the earlier design? Yes, we believe it's very important to have an attractive and compelling design for Discovery Center to garner attention for Discovery Park and help attract visitors. Discovery Center will be the flagship attraction within Discovery Park and we want a building design that gets attention and makes people wonder what's inside. Discovery Park will be an exciting and entertaining place for people to learn. We

want the Discovery Center building design to provide excitement and entertainment as well as the exhibits inside.

Have you already contacted potential new architects? We've just begun to contact potential architects. However, many architects have already contacted Discovery Park and expressed interest in our project since hearing that the Cardinal contract has been terminated.

When do you expect to select a new architect? As soon as possible, but it's a process that will take some time and we want to make sure we get the right architect for the job. After a first review of interested firms, we'll create a short list for a complete assessment with a portfolio review and interviews. Then we'll make our selection and finalize a contract with the selected architect. We'll do our best to get this done in 2 months...by the end of September. But it's more important to do this right than to do it fast.

Can any work be done while the new architect is being selected? Yes, we plan to do some things. We're hiring an engineer to do the site design for Yesteryear Village so that we can layout the village and relocate some of the historical structures to the site. We hope to proceed with the layout of the gardens area as well.

Any final thoughts for our readers? We'd like to emphasize that there is no change in the commitment of the Kirkland Foundation to get this project done. We are determined to help build a venue that is world-class and one that the citizens of Union City and Obion County will be proud is here. We want a facility that will benefit this region for many, many years.

I'm disappointed that this problem occurred and has slowed our progress but I'm optimistic for the future. We'll learn from this situation and build an even better facility.