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Bill Hogarth: Festival shows science can be fun

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The Second Annual [St. Petersburg Science Festival](#) is Saturday and it's going to be bigger and better than the first one last year. We'll have about 100 exhibits set up along Bayboro Harbor, from Poynter Park all along the USF St. Petersburg waterfront.

I got the idea of having a science festival a few years ago when I was dean of the College of Marine Science. I thought, we have all these scientists working here and a lot of people don't even know it.

In fact, the area clustered around this part of downtown St. Petersburg is one of the largest regional centers of science in the Southeast.

We have USF St. Pete, the USF College of Marine Science, [USGS](#), SRI International, [Florida Wildlife Research Institute](#), NOAA, Draper Laboratory.

So I thought, let's show it off and also show that science can be fun. So that's what we're going to do on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. We're joining forces again with Marine Quest, which has been around for 18 years. It's going to be a lot of fun. And this year we're going to have eight food trucks to add to the excitement. We'll have two research vessels open to tours, the Tampa Bay Rays will be talking about the science of baseball, wildlife the kids can touch and Lego robots.

I'm really proud of the exhibits USF St. Petersburg will have on display about sustainability. They're all student projects that were put together in collaboration with our faculty members, so I think it will be a good example to younger kids of what they can do if they go to college.

Science isn't just someone working alone in a lab mixing chemicals. It's math, biology, chemistry, technology. It stretches from the bottom of the oceans to the darkest depths of space. And there are jobs to be had, even in this economy.

Most of all we want people to have fun while they learn about science.

I hope I see you out there.

About the blogger



I am Interim Regional Chancellor of USFSP and Director of the Florida Institute of Oceanography. I also served three years as Dean of the USF College of Marine Science. Before joining USF, I was the former Assistant Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Services at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, appointed by President George W. Bush in 2001. I grew up in Jarratt, Virginia, a town of 600 people in southern Virginia. I received my bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Richmond in Virginia and a Ph.D. from North Carolina State University. To fulfill one of my childhood dreams, I took a break in marine research and returned to my hometown to operate a small neighborhood grocery store.