

## **Interview with Retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, the Administrator of NOAA, on Grand Opening of new Smithsonian Sant Ocean Hall**

**[NOAA.gov]** I'm here today with Retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, the Administrator of NOAA. Admiral Lautenbacher has worked for several years on conceiving and developing the new Smithsonian Sant Ocean Hall and on the eve of its grand opening, we sat down with him to get his thoughts.

**Admiral, you've had the opportunity to see the new Sant Ocean Hall. What was your first impression?**

[Lautenbacher] It's absolutely spectacular. I was extremely impressed when I first saw it in its final form. It's a very large space. Its action packed. It's filled with exciting displays from physical oceanography to biological oceanography. It shows modern technology as well as the evolution of life on our planet.

**[NOAA.gov]** Do you have a favorite exhibit yet?

[Lautenbacher] *Laughter* - Favorite exhibit? That's kind of hard to really hone in on because I think there are many exhibits that people will like. I certainly am partial to many of the NOAA exhibits that are in there. Science on a Sphere<sup>®</sup> is one. That's a fascinating exhibit that shows the ocean as you might be able to see it sitting on a satellite in geostationary orbit; or in the Space Shuttle; or as a scientists sitting on a platform on the ocean or in the ocean that provides all the background for temperature and currents and salinity; or in the air looking at hurricanes. It's a marvelous display.

**[NOAA.gov]** What role did NOAA play in developing the new hall?

[Lautenbacher] NOAA's been involved with this for over five years now from the time we were able to get some funding for it. We have been involved from the very beginning in terms of helping to shape the layout, comment and provide criteria for the content of the exhibits in the hall and actually developing that content. Many displays have been either created or added to by NOAA personnel. The material you see on an exhibit and explaining the exhibits has been, in many cases, developed and edited by NOAA personnel. We have been involved in every facet of the development of this marvelous instrument of education.

**[NOAA.gov] How important is NOAA's partnership with the Smithsonian in furthering ocean literacy?**

[Lautenbacher] We have a very good partnership with the Smithsonian. We've had it for many, many years – many years before the concept for the Sant Ocean Hall was developed. And that partnership has been quite valuable as you know. I think all the folks familiar with NOAA understand that we manage marine fisheries. Our work with the Smithsonian has been both useful in terms of both our understanding of the evolution of fisheries and our provision of new information to the Smithsonian to help them catalogue and build upon one of the world's largest collections of specimens of marine fisheries.

**[NOAA.gov] Thank you very much for your time, Admiral.**

[Lautenbacher] I thank you very much.