

Ribbon Cutting Opens State of the Art STARBASE Facility

Building 659 swelled with activity as the Farnsworth Aerospace Band marched up Mustang Avenue in celebration of STARBASE Minnesota and their newly renovated facility. As STARBASE board members described it, the ribbon cutting was the culmination of 5 years of dreaming, planning and building as well as an extension of the partnership STARBASE has shared with the 133rd Airlift wing of the Minnesota Air Guard since 1993.



While the band played, visitors toured the remodeled facility. Inside, guests found that the old munitions storage building (which over preceding years was retrofitted as office space, a bar, training rooms, firearms simulators and finally the original STARBASE building) had been transformed into a state of the art learning center. In this environmentally conscious LEED silver building, classroom sizes increased and meeting spaces were created to facilitate the energy and creativity needed to thrust STARBASE into the future.



As they toured the classrooms visitors interacted with a sample group of STARBASE students from Andersen, Jefferson, and Pillsbury (Minneapolis Public Schools) and Farnsworth, Como Park and Phalen Lake (St. Paul Public Schools) schools. The students helped showcase some of the aspects of the STARBASE experience by conducting experiments, programming rovers and creating 3D designs on the computer.

In the classrooms visitors also took in the amazing artwork and design that helped transform each of the classrooms into engaging learning environments. Each classroom has a unique design theme ranging from the tiny world of nanorobotics to the grand and humbling scales of the cosmos. The vision and



execution of these rooms was outside the scope of the remodeling project and made possible through generous corporate sponsorships.

After touring the building visitors gathered in the Wings and Dreams. This new gathering space comfortably accommodates over 100 students and features two triple wide integrated projection screens. These screens create an immersive environment in which you can fly with a fighter pilot, enjoy a front row seat at a rocket launch or be transported to any environment imaginable.



Guests of the ribbon cutting gathered in the Wings and Dreams Room heard remarks from the STARBASE Board and its director Kim Van Wie on the building and its place in the history and vision of STARBASE Minnesota. Both Governor Mark Dayton and Senator Amy Klobuchar sent their congratulations and encouragements via letter. Congressman Keith Ellison gave a key note address in which he articulated to the students present that the answers to our current and future challenges are already fixed in their minds and through education

those solutions will emerge and effect positive change for all of us. Furthermore when addressing the full audience Rep. Ellison promoted cooperation and investment for facilitating an environment in which the young people can maximize their potential.

STARBASE Minnesota is a program of the Department of Defense and serves over 3300 students annually in and around the Minneapolis and St. Paul Public School districts with the mission of inspiring interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.