

Discover Engineering Family Day



Each year, the National Building Museum presents a series of free festivals that attract thousands of visitors from throughout the Washington metropolitan region and beyond. People of all ages enjoy learning about the built environment through the festivals' creative hands-on activities and demonstrations by experts in the building arts.

The National Building Museum's *Discover Engineering Family Day* is held each February in partnership with *National Engineers Week*, which involves young people from across the country in events celebrating the work and contributions of engineers. **The most recent attendance was 7,300 people on February 16, 2008.** *Discover Engineering Family Day* receives the largest crowd of the year among the Museum's four family festivals, and activities are appropriate for young children through adults.



Highlights of the event have included:

- appearances and demonstrations by stars of the PBS children's television show *ZOOM™*—many young Festival participants enjoyed the chance to meet some of their favorite personalities;
- US FIRST robotics competition and demonstration, which drew a large and enthusiastic high school crowd;
- Mars Exploration Rover model display, which was a timely and popular addition to the program and a hit with both children and adults;
- creating a model geodesic dome out of gumdrops and toothpicks to learn about the strength of this structure;
- building and testing a puff mobile to understand basic principles of aerodynamics;
- learning how engineers use different kinds of bridges to carry trains, cars, trucks, and people;
- building an arch to learn about the forces of tension and compression that keep buildings standing;
- participating in a live teleconference with the international space station;
- creating "flinkers" – something that neither floats nor sinks; and
- exploring the inner workings of a real race car.



Major funding for *Discover Engineering Family Day* in 2008 was provided by the National Engineers Week Foundation, and IEE-USA. Those interested in supporting or participating should call development at 202-272-2448.