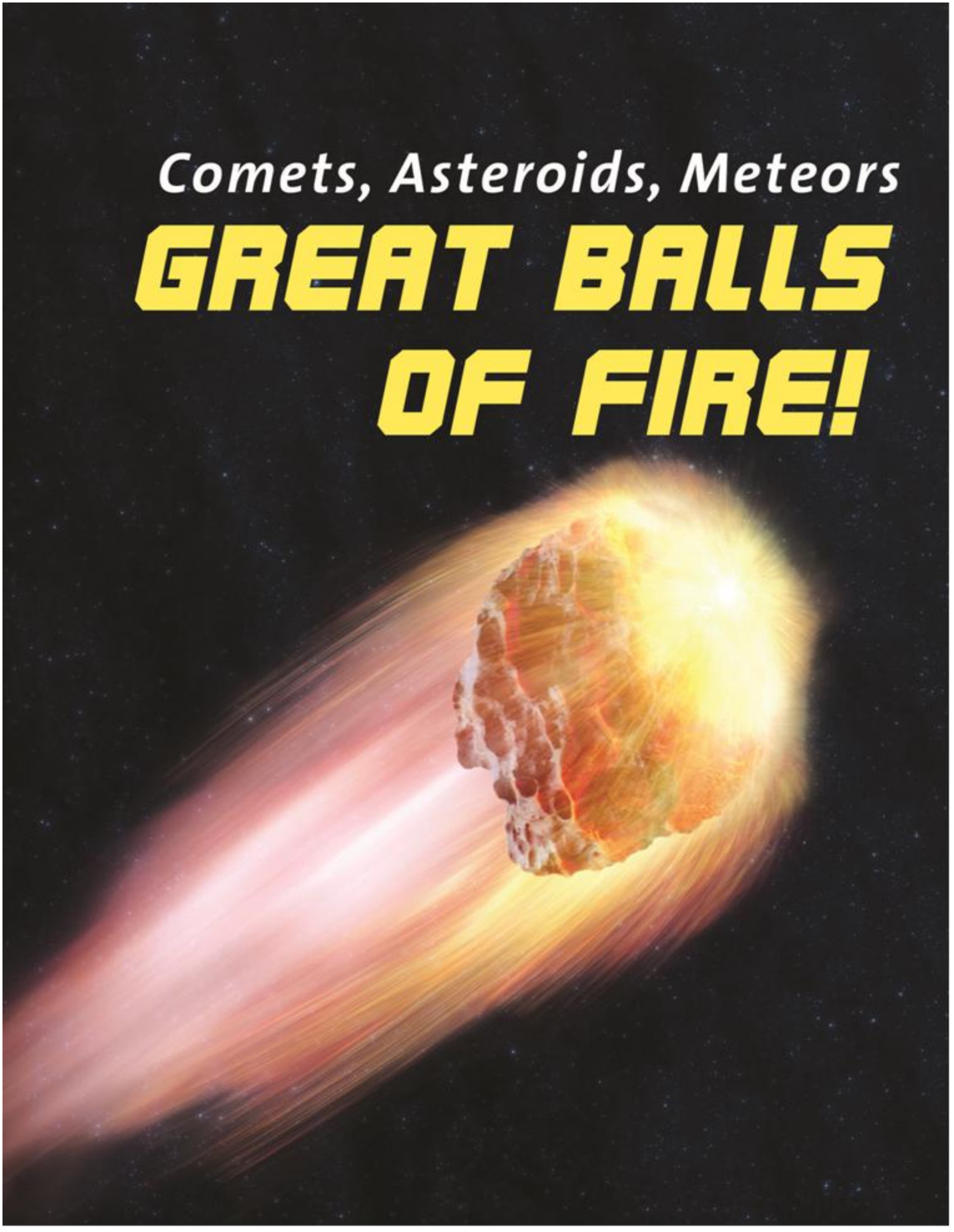
Comets, Asteroids, Meteors

GREAT BALLS OF FIRE!

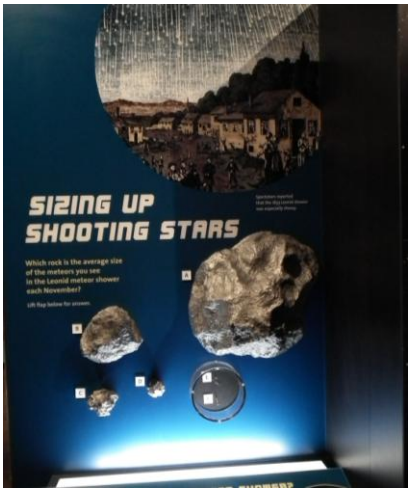


Description of Components in the *Great Balls of Fire!* Exhibition

The 1500 square-foot exhibition has three major focuses: Asteroids, Comets, and Impacts. It contains a variety of interactive multimedia experiences, including *Asteroid Encounter*-where visitors can climb into spaceship and explore the small bodies of our solar system. It also includes computer-based activities that calculate risks from impacts and allow visitors to see how accurate their favorite movies are. The following is a list of components, and their descriptions, that are in the small *Great Balls of Fire* exhibition.

S.01 Asteroid Encounter. This is an immersive experience for visitors to engage in an interactive, role-playing activity. It includes visualization of the formation of the Solar System with a focus on why asteroids and comets formed, where they can be found, and how they periodically impact planets.

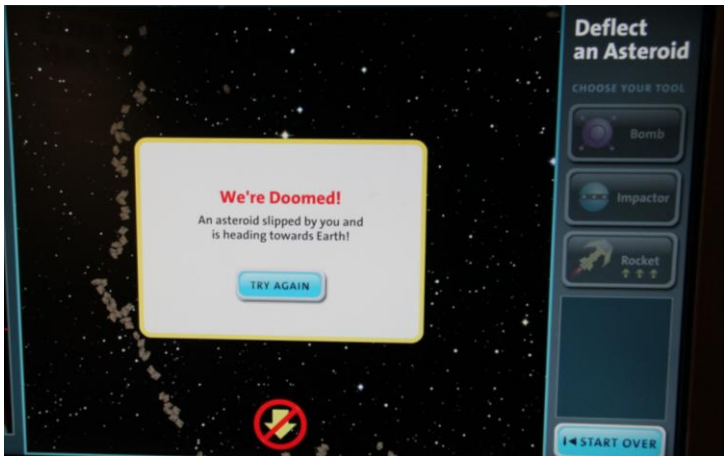
S.02 Itokawa Asteroid Model. A large replica of the Itokawa asteroid rotates with a model of the Hayabusa spacecraft on its surface.



S.03 Comet Observations Story Panel. A display of art and artifacts tells the story of comet observations throughout human history.

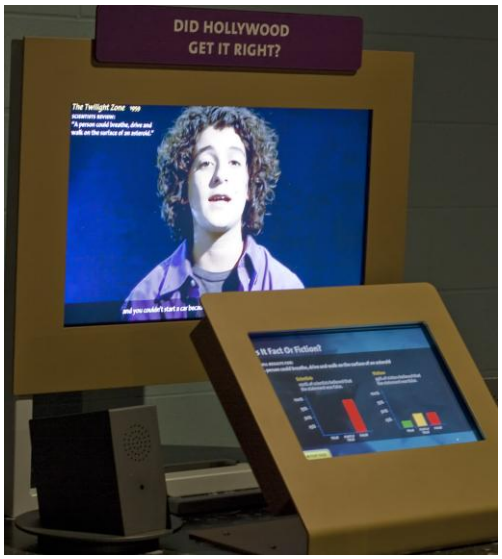
S.04 Sizing Up Shooting Stars. Replica meteoroids of various sizes are placed on a graphic panel of the Leonid meteor shower. Visitors are asked to select one that's the size of the average rock in a Leonids meteor event. Lifting a panel reveals the surprising answer.

S.05 *What If It Hit My Town?* Computer. Visitors select the size of an asteroid or comet and then enter the zip code of a place for the impact. The results appear on a Google Maps display. A second screen shows an animation of the impact with cross-sectional simulations.



S.06 Is It a Rock or a Meteorite? Visitors examine a collection of rocks and use a series of tests (magnetism, color, density/relative weight) to determine which one is a meteorite. Rock cross sections are viewed using a magnifier. They can touch a mounted iron meteorite.

S.07 Meteorite Display Case. Visitors examine a collection of real meteorites, Libyan glass, microtectites, shocked quartz, and two meteorite cross-sections. Each specimen is linked to a specific Earth crater and time period. A host venue may augment the exhibition by displaying its own meteorite collection or that of a local collector or institution.



S.08 Science Fact or Science Fiction Theater. Visitors watch clips from a variety of movies and television shows and then answer the question, "Did they get the science right, partially right, or wrong?" Their answers are compared to those of scientists and previous visitors.

S.09 Dinosaur Extinction Display. A mural display explaining why scientists think an impact may be responsible for the extinction of dinosaurs.

S.10 Murals: Dawn Mission to Ceres and Vesta, and **WISE Telescope Finding Dark Asteroids**

For more information about the exhibit, please contact:
Anne Holland, Exhibits and Outreach Manager
aholland@spacescience.org; 720-974-5876

And be sure to visit:
www.greatballsoffireexhibit.org
www.killerasteroids.org

