

ABOVE: The NM EPSCoR Uranium Exhibit Science Team in front of the new Uranium exhibit at the Nuclear Museum, led by Bonnie Frey (front, right)

OPPOSITE: The NM EPSCoR-Explora solar energy exhibit



NEW MEXICO INFORMAL SCIENCE EDUCATION NETWORK

NM EPSCoR understands the need to communicate scientific concepts to the public to increase science literacy, especially for future generations. The New Mexico Informal Science Education Network (NM ISE Net) increases the ability of informal educators, such as museum staff and citizen scientists, to support STEM learning and education. Year 5 activities included an exhibit evaluation training in a collaboration between Explora and *Energize New Mexico's* external museum evaluator, and a lecture series about sustainable energy research at the Farmington Museum that featured three NM EPSCoR researchers.

The final Network meeting was held in conjunction with a two-day training on the state's science standards. New Mexico's largest celebration of science, the NM Science



Museum Exhibits

Two museum exhibits funded by NM EPSCoR opened to the public in Year 5. The Solar Exhibit at Explora explains the difference between organic and conventional solar cells and short videos showcase NM EPSCoR's solar energy research. The Uranium Exhibit, "What's Up with U?", is housed at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History and highlights research of the Uranium team. Museum staff and Uranium team researchers have collaborated closely on the content and structure.

Additionally, the computer game from our Year 4 exhibit at the NM Museum of Natural History and Science Bioalgae exhibit has been launched as a web-based application, which allows it to be remotely accessed and used at outreach events like family science nights and school-based programs. The NM EPSCoR office has used it at Navajo STEM events at Chapterhouses across the Navajo Nation and at "UNM Day" at the New Mexico Legislature.

In sum, these museum exhibits provide a vehicle for NM EPSCoR research to be shared with hundreds of thousands of members of the general public, on a much larger scale than could be accomplished through traditional outreach activities.

Fiesta, took place the week of May 14–21, 2018, with participation by all NM EPSCoR research components and many NM ISE Net organizations, and attracted over 5000 visitors.

NM ISE Net also worked closely with NM EPSCoR scientists to communicate *Energize New Mexico* research to the public by providing mini-grants with funding up to \$3000 for events and programming. Two were awarded in Year 5: one to support the NM Science Fiesta and one to support professional development for two ISE Net members around K-12 science. A mini-grant awarded in Year 4 to the Albuquerque Biopark to develop algae education materials for Tingley Beach, a city-owned facility used for public recreation, completed its scope of work in Year 5 by unveiling new educational material developed in conjunction with Bioalgal Research co-lead Becky Bixby and hosting a public event.