



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WHITAKER CENTER OPENS NEW PNC INNOVATION ZONE FEATURING
FIRST-OF-ITS KIND “PURPOSEFUL GAMING STUDIO”**

PNC INNOVATION ZONE AT WHITAKER CENTER INCLUDES 40-FOOT DIGITAL CINEMA, ESPORTS SPACE AND STEAM EDUCATION

HARRISBURG, Pa. (May 17, 2022) – Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts, together with PNC Bank, announced the grand opening of the new 7,000-square-foot PNC Innovation Zone at Whitaker Center. The PNC Innovation Zone combines Whitaker Center’s existing 40-foot-tall Select Medical Digital Cinema with a newly constructed world-class purposeful gaming studio, designed by leading educational design architects Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates in collaboration with entertainment and technology giant Clair Global. To power the PNC Innovation Zone, Whitaker Center has also partnered with Comcast to become one of the region’s largest “Lift Zones” offering free, robust Wi-Fi to all guests.

This ground-breaking, first-of-its-kind facility will capitalize on the massive popularity of video games and esports while offering educational, experiential learning in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) to children eight years and older.

“Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts was founded more than 20 years ago by a group of extraordinary community and business leaders whose vision was to bring science and the arts together under one roof,” said Whitaker Center CEO, Ted Black. “Purposeful Gaming at the PNC Innovation Zone is a natural extension of our founders’ visionary leadership. By leveraging the popularity of video games and esports to stimulate interest in STEAM activities such as coding, graphic design and computer networking, PNC Innovation Zone will break down gender and equity barriers to technology and, ultimately, inspire the digital leaders of tomorrow through the science, art, and technology of purposeful gaming.”

With more than [90% of children playing video games](#) and the [explosive growth of esports worldwide](#), Whitaker Center saw an opportunity to offer students and their families a cool space to reconnect, share passions for gaming and esports, coding, art and the technology embedded in video games. The PNC Innovation Zone will host weekly activities, led including creative design coding with Minecraft and Bloxels, building with Scrap Mechanic and Poly Bridge, as well as competitions, Girls in STEM and Surgery Live! camps.

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“The PNC Innovation Zone at the Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts is a wonderful resource that combines play with learning to help our young people explore their interests in STEAM,” said Jim Hoehn, PNC Bank regional president of Central Pennsylvania. “As a Main Street Bank and a technology leader, PNC is committed to making investments like this one in our community to plant the seeds for the skilled, diverse, and innovative workforce of tomorrow.”

PNC Innovation Zone features:

- 2,000-square-foot Purposeful Gaming Studio
 - Capacity for up to 30 gaming stations and 12 gaming consoles
 - 10 75-inch, high-definition flat screen televisions
 - 12-foot, high-definition projection screen
 - Esports tiered seating for spectator viewing
 - Hi-tech conference room
 - 3,000 square foot lobby renovations
 - 40-foot-high screen for purposeful gaming in Select Medical Digital Cinema

“When we first learned about this visionary project, we immediately became interested in joining the design team to help build out this space,” said Shaun Clair, Vice President of Sales at Clair Global. “As a global leader in technology and production, we are thrilled about the prospect of empowering young people to explore STEAM in a new and exciting way.”

The PNC Innovation Zone hosts one of the region’s largest Comcast “Lift Zones” which provides free Wi-Fi access outside the home in neighborhood community centers. This effort is part of Project UP, Comcast’s comprehensive, 10-year, \$1 billion commitment to help build a future of unlimited possibilities.

“Comcast is proud to provide connectivity to all those who spend time in this incredible new space at Whitaker Center,” said Alka Patel, vice president of Government and External Affairs for Comcast’s Keystone Region. “We look forward to partnering to provide a truly distinctive opportunity to promote digital equity and STEAM education.”

“Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates’ is proud to provide architectural and interior design services for the new purposeful gaming studio within the new PNC Innovation Zone,” said Arif Hasanbhai, senior project designer for Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates. “We understand the importance and impact the educational spaces at the Whitaker Center have on our community having recently provided these services for the STEM Design Studio in the Harsco Science Center.”

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The PNC Innovation Zone at Whitaker Center was made possible by many organizations, including:

- Clair Global
- Comcast
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Honorable Tom Wolf, Governor in Partnership with Dauphin County Industrial Development Authority
- Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates
- Dauphin County Commissioners
- Alexander Grass Foundation
- Bill and Sue Rothman
- Carole DeSoto
- Hal McGinnes
- Lois Grass
- Senator John DiSanto (RACP grant)
- The Kline Foundation
- The McCormick Family Foundation
- The Nexstar Media Charitable Foundation
- The PA Esports Coalition
- Tres Bonne Anne 2020 Fund-A-Need Donations
- PNC Bank

For more information about PNC Innovation Zone at Whitaker Center and a complete listing of educational STEAM programs and camps, visit <https://www.whitakercenter.org/pnc-innovation-zone>.

About PNC Bank

PNC Bank, National Association, is a member of The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC). PNC is one of the largest diversified financial services institutions in the United States, organized around its customers and communities for strong relationships and local delivery of retail and business banking including a full range of lending products; specialized services for corporations and government entities, including corporate banking, real estate finance and asset-based lending; wealth management and asset management. For information about PNC, visit www.pnc.com.

About Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts

Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts is a non-profit center for the arts, education, entertainment, and cultural enrichment located in the heart of Harrisburg's vibrant downtown. Whitaker Center is home to the PNC Innovation Zone, Sunoco Performance Theater, Harsco Science Center, STEM Design Studios and Select Medical Digital Cinema. Visit whitakercenter.org for a full list of events, shows, hours of operation, and ticket rates.

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