



**Your organization is invited to participate in the Year of Science 2009, a nationwide effort to engage the American public in activities that will stimulate their interest in and appreciation of the process of science.**

*Progress in science has been so great that it is taken for granted, and even breeds a widespread complacency... The biggest challenge to the scientific enterprise today is not to achieve deeper understanding of genomes or ecosystems or black holes--that understanding is coming along just fine. The challenge that matters now is to make sure that science is taken seriously. Scientists need to convince people that we have developed honest procedures for understanding how the world works, that we can put confidence limits around most of our conclusions, and that our track record shows we have achieved reliable, if still incomplete, knowledge.<sup>1</sup>*

A general public with an understanding and appreciation of the nature of science is a prerequisite for a skilled workforce able to compete in a knowledge-based global economy, able to make informed decisions about relative risks such as medical treatments and other quality of life factors, and prepared to engage in public policy discussions involving science and technology. An insufficient understanding of science leads to exclusion from much of the discourse of modern society, an inability to distinguish science from non-science, and a vulnerability to special interests attempting to drive public perceptions of science in their favor.

**Year of Science 2009 activities will include:**

**1. A national year-long celebration of science** to engage the public in science and improve public understanding about the nature and processes of science.

**2. Integration of efforts with the Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS: [www.copusproject.org](http://www.copusproject.org)),** a grassroots effort linking universities, scientific societies, science centers and museums, advocacy groups, media, educators, businesses, and industry in a peer network having as its goal a greater public understanding of the nature of science and its value to society.



**3. A Year of Science 2009 website at [www.yearofscience2009.org](http://www.yearofscience2009.org)** to coordinate and promote 2009 activities and provide for the sharing of online resources. The website is online now and is being developed to include suggested activities and kits, a searchable database of events, an interactive map of events, a blog, chat rooms, a document library, a

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<sup>1</sup> Futuyama, D.J. (AIBS President, 2007). Science's Greatest Challenge. *BioScience*. 57(1): 3

press room, and links to content in the Understanding Science website currently under development at [www.understandingscience.org](http://www.understandingscience.org).

**4. Opportunities to mark 2009 as the anniversary** of seminal events in the history of science: the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin as well as of Abraham Lincoln, founder of the National Academy of Sciences; the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*; and the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Johannes Kepler's first two Laws of Planetary Motion.

**5. Collaborations with communications experts** on framing scientific communications most effectively for general public understanding as well as for specific public constituencies and audience-levels.

**6. Summary reports**, other deliverables, and follow-up plans after the end of 2009; opportunities to continue collaborating on public understanding of science projects via the COPUS network.

Participating organizations in the Year of Science 2009 become part of the COPUS network and have access to the brands, logos, media coverage, other publicity materials and database content that are developed for this and related COPUS projects. They will receive regular updates on what organizations will be doing for this year-long celebration and will receive assistance in planning events to conform to the overall themes and branding that will be used throughout 2009.

To learn more about Year of Science 2009 and how to participate, go to [www.yearofscience2009.org](http://www.yearofscience2009.org) or contact [admin@copusproject.org](mailto:admin@copusproject.org).

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