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## **Build Earthquake-Proof Structures, Arches and Fast Boats at the Danville Science Center**

DANVILLE — Create a tall building with large foam blocks. Test it on a walk-on earthquake platform that shakes you and your structure. Assemble a seven-foot tall arch. Here's a hint — it takes teamwork. Strap on wings and step inside a wind tunnel. Can you figure out flight? Design and test speed boats, sailboats and paddle boats. Dream it up. Build it. Test it. The visiting exhibit **Engineer It** is at the Danville Science Center **Thursday, Oct. 1-Monday, Jan. 4.**

“**Engineer It** is filled with challenges, the materials to meet them and places to test them,” says Danville Science Center Director Jeff Liverman. “All you have to do is add yourself, your family or a group. **Engineer It** presents science as an open-ended discovery process. There are no right or wrong answers — just plenty of fun and creative things to do as you learn about engineering.”

What keeps a skyscraper from crumbling in an earthquake? Use large foam blocks to build a six-foot tower on an earthquake platform. The platform is designed to simulate ground movements from an earthquake and aftershock. Shake tables are available to test smaller structures. Ask a friend or two to join you in building a seven-foot Catenary arch. Build bridges with blocks or paper. Use a computer to design a bridge, then test it to see if it can support a bus, truck or train. Turn wheels on an 11-foot crane to load blocks onto a conveyer belt. Experiment with gears, belts and pulleys.

Want to build fast boats? Create a rubber band-powered paddle boat. Test it in a nearby water tank. Want it to go faster? Modify the boat and try again. Select a sail and a keel to create a sailboat. Test it in the tank with the fan to provide wind. If it's not fast enough to suit you, move the sail or change the keel. Design a speedboat to run on calm water. Test it in the long water tank. Find out what happens when you change the bow or stern sections of the boat.

Slide a pair of foam wings on your arms and try them out in a wind tunnel. Move the wings around, to figure out two important principles of flight — lift and drag. Just how good are your paper plane flying skills? Discover new ways to design paper planes from a computer. Then test your new plane in a wind tunnel. Design a windmill. Now make some changes. Trial and error is the way to go.

If all these activities have you wondering how you could do more, watch some videos of engineering students. You may find the career for you.

**Engineer It** is a creation of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in Portland. The exhibit is made possible by a grant from the National Science Foundation. Local support provided by the Kiwanis Club of Danville Foundation.

**Engineer It** is included with Science Center admission. Tickets are \$5 for ages 4-12 and 60+ and \$6 for ages 13-59. For Science Center information call 434-791-5160 or visit [www.dsc.smv.org](http://www.dsc.smv.org). The Science center is located at 677 Craghead Street.

The Danville Science Center is a division of the Science Museum of Virginia

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