

Smithsonian Project Update for the Patent Public Advisory Committee (PPAC)

2013 Innovation Expo – Over 40 applicants drawn from major corporations, universities, federal government agencies, and the independent inventor community were selected to exhibit at the event planned for June. Unfortunately, the event was cancelled for budgetary reasons. However, we learned valuable lessons from the experience that will be useful as we move forward collaborating with the Smithsonian on the Arts and Industries Building. It is clear, based on responses to the proposed expo, that there is tremendous support from our stakeholder community for this type of event and the USPTO’s relationship with the Smithsonian.

The Future – In September, 2014, the Smithsonian’s Arts and Industries Building on the National Mall will reopen its doors and invite visitors to experience innovation: what drives it, how it happens, who makes it possible, and how it has shaped America and our world. The newly reimagined venue—to be named the Smithsonian Innovation Space at the Arts and Industries Building—will be an interim seven-year use of the building. Essentially, it will be a “pop-up museum” where the USPTO and the Smithsonian will host educational activities, events, and changing visual displays rather than permanent exhibitions. The heart of the building and the focus of the USPTO’s efforts will be the Innovation Pavilion. Activities at the pavilion will feature the stories and perspectives of inventors of all kinds and illustrate how innovation results in new technologies and inventions. The space will support a range of public programming and events, including regular demonstrations of new inventions and technologies that inspire the next generation of inventors, entrepreneurs, and creative thinkers. Beginning in early 2015, the Smithsonian and the USPTO will host an annual Innovation Expo on the scale envisioned for the event that would have occurred this summer. The yearly expo will occupy the entire space of the Arts and Industries Building and possibly spill out onto the Mall.

Prototype Programming and Website Launch – In anticipation of the Arts and Industries Building reopening, the Smithsonian and the USPTO are currently developing prototypes to determine what will make for the most meaningful visitor experience with our target audiences. This fall, in collaboration with the Smithsonian, we will offer:

Innovation Family Day, Saturday, October 5 – Held in multiple Smithsonian venues on the National Mall, this event will feature a series of activities designed to offer parents and children hands-on opportunities to learn how innovation happens. Three exhibitors selected for the canceled Innovation Expo will participate in this event.

Innovation Conversations, Sunday, October 6 – Intended as a guest speakers program, this event will invite members of the millennial generation to interact with leading innovators and inventors from a number of diverse fields and explore the connections and parallels across disciplines and industries. Acting Under Secretary Rea will speak at the program.

Innovation Website, Fall Date TBD – Innovation comes to life online with a new Smithsonian website devoted to showcasing exciting stories, features, and videos that explore innovation, the intellectual property protection system, the role of the USPTO, and the people who make it all possible. The USPTO will continue to work closely with the Smithsonian to develop ongoing content for the new site.