

DISCOVERY BUILDING EXPO FIELD TRIP DAY

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“What’s that?” “Wow!” “Can I try?” These are just some of the exclamations from eager students during the Discovery Field Trip Expo on October 22nd. The expo was part of the 2025 Wisconsin Science Festival, a 10-day celebration of science, art, and technology spanning 56 counties in Wisconsin. This year—the festival’s 15th—the theme was rock and roll and highlighted the music, motion, and geology that shape Wisconsin. This festival theme engaged audiences of all ages by blending earth science, physics, and music to create a dynamic, interactive, and appealing way for kids, families, and lifelong learners to explore science.



Awed by the collections at the UW Geology Museum. Photo credit: Ueda Photography.

During the expo at the Discovery Building, more than 230 presenters created over 70 hands-on stations and shared their science with nearly 1,200 students from across Wisconsin. These students spanned 3rd-12th grades, with schools joining from Madison, Milwaukee, Edgerton, Glendale, Fox Lake, and beyond.



Getting hands-on in the Discovery Building. Photo credit: Ueda Photography.

At one of the dozens of hands-on science stations, participants made their own “sound sandwiches,” using straws and popsicle sticks to learn how sound is made. Just steps away, other participants made flashlights and learned how electricity is conducted. Across the room, other students learned about how coding works and made bracelets to represent their names in binary code. The curiosity was endless!



Learning the basics of coding through bracelet-making with the UW Code to Connect group. Photo credit: Ueda photography.

In addition to the hands-on science stations, students also had opportunities to take in live science shows like the Wonders of Physics show and explosive chemistry demonstrations. The chemistry show included a special guest - Beesly, the Wisconsin Science Festival mascot, who was buzzing with excitement to help with the live experiments.



Beesly and Mr Jim demonstrate the fascinating field of chemistry - both being sure to wear their safety glasses!

Students also had the opportunity to explore some of the active research labs in the Discovery Building. High school students toured some of these labs and learned about ongoing research spanning astrophysics, plasma, quantum computing and more. Meanwhile, younger students learned about the physics of sound by making their own musical instruments!

Not only was the Discovery Building brimming with curiosity, other campus locations, such as the Geology Museum, UW Planetarium, Babcock Dairy Observation, the Dane County Trash Lab, and Wisconsin Energy Institute, hosted additional experiences for these field trip groups. One, in partnership with the Wisconsin Sea Grant and Wisconsin Book Festival, even offered students the opportunity to learn about the importance of sturgeon. Each student received a copy of the new book *Saving Our Sturgeon*, written by Wisconsin author and teacher Rebecca Hogue Wojahn.

As tired students boarded the buses back to school, a buzz of curiosity and excitement lingered in the air. There were still so many questions to explore. Luckily, the Wisconsin Science Festival will return in 2026, and we look forward to seeing more aspiring scientists there!

For any school groups interested in attending future field trip expo days, check out [WiSciFest.org/Educators](https://wiscifest.org/Educators) to learn more about how to get involved or visit [WiSciFest.org/Activities](https://wiscifest.org/Activities) for lesson plans and hands-on STEAM programs to do in your own classrooms or at home.



Students explored hands-on experiments with the National Society of Black Engineers and raced potato cars with USDA researchers. Photo credit: Ueda Photography



Attendees played 'rock and roll' games at the Wisconsin Science Festival station to learn more about the 2025 festival feature.