

US group buys Tesla property, plans science center (Update)

May 7 2013, by Frank Eltman



An undated file photo provided by the Tesla Science Center at Wardenclyffe, shows a plaque affixed to a Shoreham, N.Y. building that was once the laboratory of physicist/inventor Nicola Tesla. The Tesla Science Center at Wardenclyffe, which raised \$1.3 million in a six-week online fundraising effort, has purchased the laboratory and property for \$850,000. (AP Photo/Tesla Science Center at Wardenclyffe, File)

A community group that raised \$1.3 million in a six-week online

fundraising effort has purchased a laboratory once used by visionary scientist Nikola Tesla.

"We're feeling very excited and gratified that we've reached this milestone," said Jane Alcorn, president of the Tesla Science Center at Wardenclyffe, on New York's Long Island. Her group announced last week that it had finalized the purchase of the Tesla lab and property for \$850,000.

Tesla was a rival of Thomas Edison who imagined a world of free electricity. He conducted experiments in the early 20th century at his laboratory in Shoreham, about 65 miles (105 kms) east of New York City.

Volunteers have struggled for nearly two decades to raise money to acquire the property with limited success.

Their effort got a jolt of support last summer from Seattle cartoonist Matthew Inman, a Tesla fan who started promoting a fundraising effort on his website, theoatmeal.com.

Within six weeks, they had raised more than \$1.3 million from 33,000 donors in the U.S. and 108 countries.



In this Thursday, Aug. 23, 2012 file photo, a brick tower rises above the Shoreham, N.Y., building that was once the laboratory of Nicola Tesla. The Tesla Science Center at Wardenclyffe, which raised \$1.3 million in a six-week online fundraising effort, has purchased the laboratory and property for \$850,000. (AP Photo/Frank Eltman, File)

Tesla abandoned the lab in 1917. For many years it was a photo chemical processing plant; in 1993, officials determined that the property's groundwater had been polluted with cadmium and silver. A remediation effort overseen by state environmental regulators was completed last year.

Alcorn said that the purchase of the property was a key first step but noted much work needs to be done before the group can realize its goal: "to create a fitting memorial to Tesla and a science center to benefit the entire world."

She estimated another \$10 million will be required to renovate the property, which is overrun with brush and includes several dilapidated buildings in the complex that will likely need to be demolished.

Alcorn said her group's first priority is to secure the property from further vandalism. Additional fundraisers are being discussed, but Alcorn had no specific details.

Among Tesla's accomplishments were developments in alternating current and research in the creation of wireless communication and radio. Born to Serb parents in modern-day Croatia, he died in New York City in 1943.

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