



cook museum  
of NATURAL SCIENCE





# STRATEGIC PLAN

## TABLE of CONTENTS

The Vision .....	3
The Plan .....	6
The Benefits .....	8
Education Program Goals.....	9
Now is the Time .....	10
Frequently Asked Questions .....	12
History of Cook's Pest Control .....	14

### THE VISION

In collaboration with corporate and community leaders of Decatur-Morgan County and North Alabama, the Cook family of Cook's Pest Control proposes to develop the new Cook Museum of Natural Science in the heart of downtown Decatur. This state-of-the-art facility will serve the people of North Alabama and the Southeast as an educational destination and cultural venue for various programs and meetings. The museum will offer significant tourist opportunities and will establish Decatur-Morgan County as a premier destination in the region.

The concept of a natural science museum in Decatur is nothing new. The Cook Museum's humble roots can be traced back to 1968 when John Cook, Sr., opened his professional insect collection, used in employee training, to the public by appointment. It later grew to include a wide array of mounted wildlife, touring malls throughout Alabama, Tennessee and Georgia. Finally, in 1980 additional collections of rocks, minerals, fossils, coral, sea shells, mounted wildlife and federally protected migratory birds were acquired and a 5,000-square-foot building was constructed. At that time Cook's Natural Science Museum came into existence as many know it today.

Mr. Cook's inspiration and motivation for the museum came from his desire to generously serve and support his local community and region, and to creatively display God's creation. It has been free of charge, seven days a week for 34 years, and has welcomed *more than 750,000 visitors since 1980.*



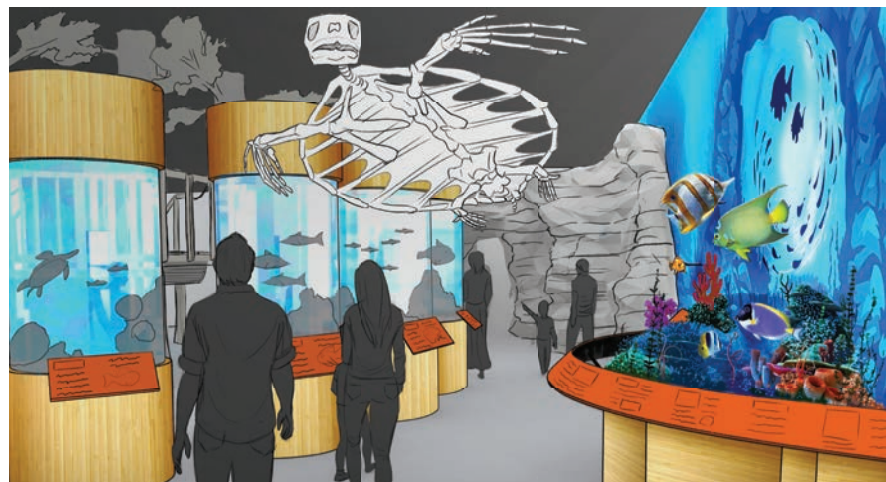
THE MISSION OF THE COOK MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE IS:

*“To engage, excite and educate visitors of all ages about the natural, created world around us.”*



The Cook Museum of Natural Science will explore and showcase many areas of the natural world such as:

- Rivers & streams of the Tennessee River Valley
- Caves
- Mountains & conifers
- Arctic tundra
- Deserts
- Oceans
- Bayous
- Hardwood forests of the east
- Insects
- The human body
- Our solar system & earth

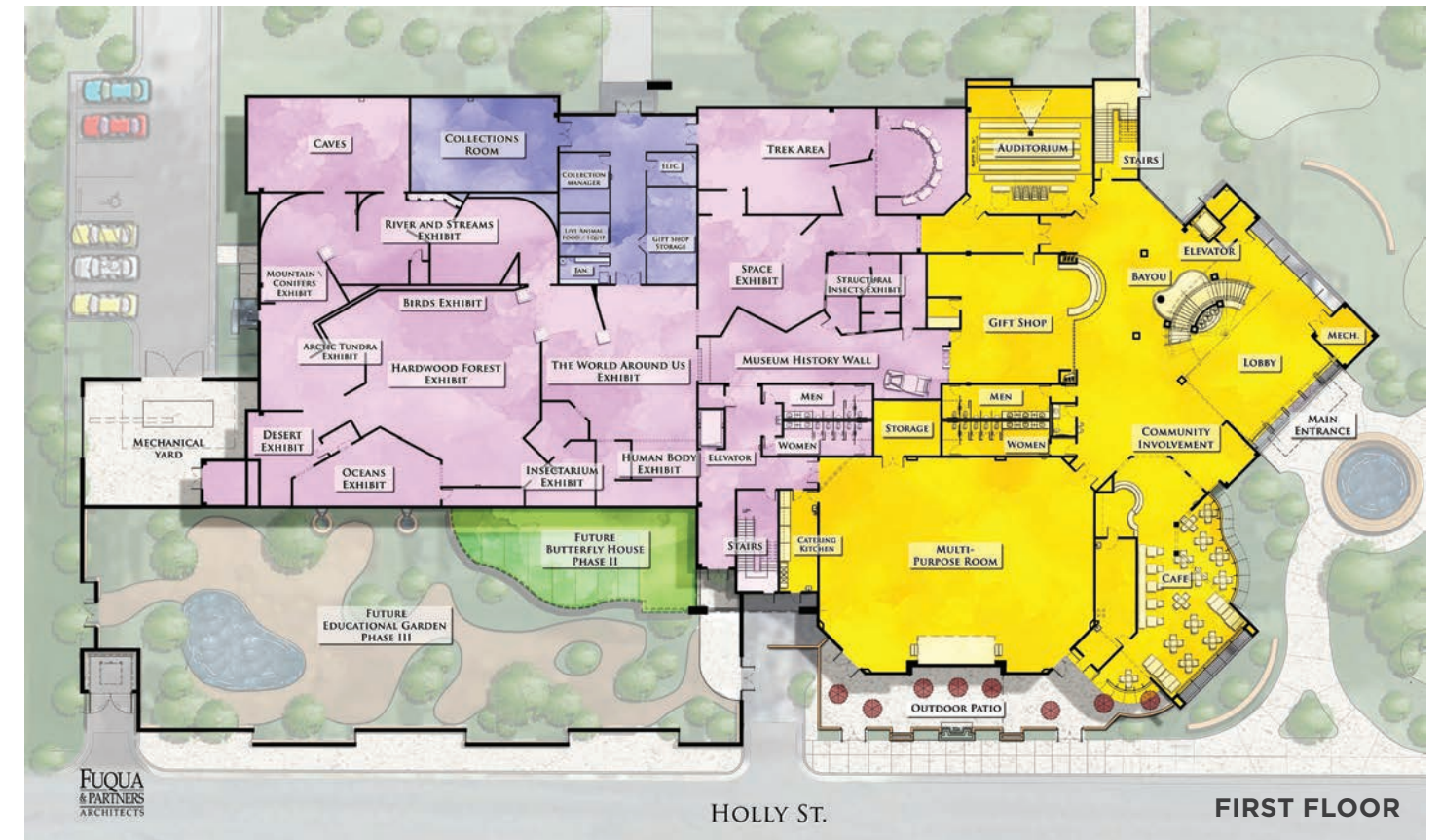


The Cook Museum of Natural Science will provide an interactive experience for young and old alike... for children eager to see and touch for themselves what they study in school... for adults looking for a wholesome family outing... and for visitors looking for something new and different to explore. All of these experiences will be available at the museum. From the exhibits, to education programs, to special events, the Cook Museum of Natural Science will become one of our state's most valuable community resources.

We are thrilled to share this compelling strategic plan with you in hopes of enlisting your collaboration and support for this extraordinary initiative.







## THE PLAN

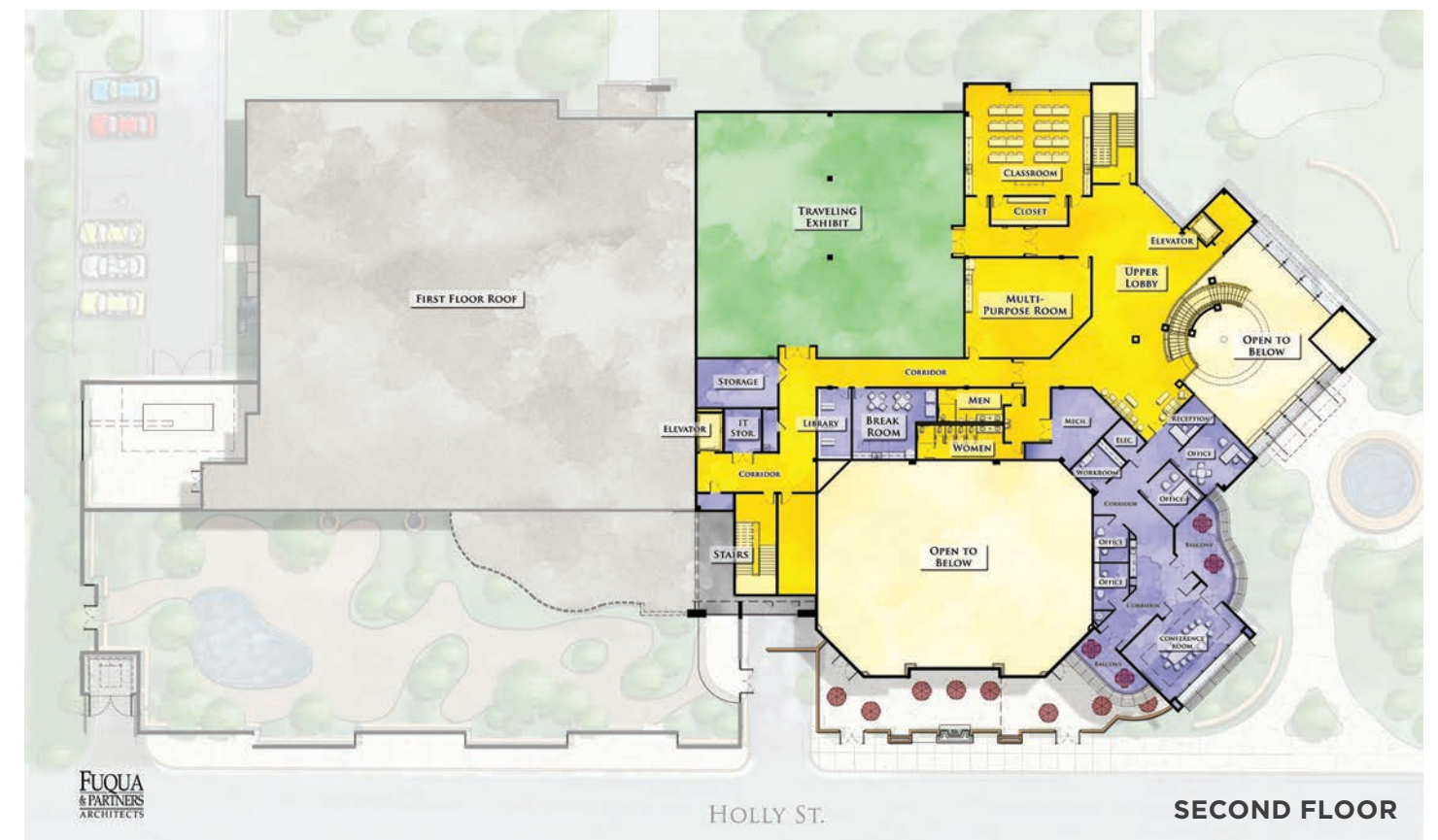
The Cook Museum of Natural Science will be a brand new 57,000-square-foot multi-purpose exhibition and visitor center that will support a wide range of programs and activities for the people of North Alabama. In addition to the museum, the facility has been designed to offer numerous options for activity and meeting space.

The museum will be constructed on 2.3 acres of prime real estate, located at the intersection of Lee Street and Fourth Avenue in downtown Decatur. This will bring the museum in close proximity to restaurants and shops in the area and will provide daytime and nighttime activities to enhance the revitalization and economic development of the area.

The museum campus will beautify the area with green spaces, a water feature and a courtyard. The building's architecture will offer a fresh vision of the future with a new look to Decatur's skyline. The museum's interior will offer numerous natural science exhibits and fun hands-on learning opportunities.

## KEY FEATURES:

- Interactive exhibits
- Live animals & aquariums
- Mounted wildlife from across North America
- Collections of rocks, minerals, fossils, shells, & coral
- Café with outdoor patio
- Two classrooms
- Theater with seating for 100
- Gift shop
- Multipurpose facility with AV
- Boardroom meeting space with AV
- Traveling exhibit space
- Butterfly house (future phase)
- Outdoor natural park area (future phase)





## THE BENEFITS

Research has shown that a child's visit to a museum or other free-choice learning venues is often one of their most vivid memories. When interviewed as adults, participants can describe in detail what they learned, what they saw and what they experienced on a trip to a museum. These visits become landmark memories and can lead to a lifelong interest in a topic they may have never considered before.

### DEFINITION OF NATURAL SCIENCE

Natural Science — A science (such as physics, chemistry, or biology) that studies the physical and natural world or the events that happen in nature. Any of the sciences (as physics, chemistry, or biology) that deal with matter, energy, and their interrelations and transformations or with objectively measurable phenomena.

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/natural%20science>

When scientists are asked what caused them to be interested in their field of study, many recount wide-eyed visits to a museum.

We also know that if we can simply change a child's perception of science and math from a negative to a positive, they are far more likely to choose a career in a **S.T.E.A.M.** field (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math).

The Cook Museum of Natural Science will serve as a source of pride to all Alabamians, adding to their understanding of the world around them and bringing the state's education and curriculum goals to life with inspiring examples of nature. It also will enhance the economic and cultural quality of life in Decatur-Morgan County and North Alabama. Through this state-of-the-art facility, the museum will serve all who live, work and play in the region.

Market research conducted by America's Research Group, Orlando, Florida, shows an anticipated attendance the first year of 214,000 visitors. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of individuals and families are projected to visit on Saturdays alone. Twenty-one percent (21%) will attend on Sundays and twenty-one percent (21%) during the week. It is important to note that school groups are not included in this number, though they will add significantly to the week-day attendance.

## EDUCATION PROGRAM GOALS

- Highlight the great biodiversity of Alabama and the Tennessee River Valley Region
- Promote stewardship of our environment and natural resources
- Provide high quality, science education programs for all ages
- Provide early childhood development experiences
- Provide programs that support Alabama State Science Requirements for students
- Provide programming for home and private schools and church groups
- Provide **S.T.E.A.M.** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) based programming to promote college and career readiness in participants
- Provide professional development for teachers in nationally and state accredited science curriculums.



Only about 5% of an American's lifetime is spent in a formal classroom.

## HOW IMPORTANT IS INFORMAL (LIFELONG) LEARNING?

95%

of an American's lifetime is spent outside of a classroom.

On average, only about 5% of an American's lifetime is spent in the classroom, and only a small fraction of that is dedicated to science instruction. Emerging data suggest that the **BEST WAY TO INCREASE THE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE IS TO REACH PEOPLE DURING THE OTHER 95% OF THEIR LIFE!**

Taken from FALK, J. H., and L. D. DIERKING. 2010. The 95 per-cent solution. American Scientist, 98:486-493.

Market research suggests

214,000

EXPECTED VISITORS IN THE FIRST YEAR





**NOW IS THE TIME**

The Cook Museum of Natural Science will add a significant dimension to the quality of life in North Alabama by providing a state-of-the-art educational and tourist destination, as well as a cultural venue for various community activities.

**MUSEUM VISITS PER YEAR:**



Forty years ago one out of ten people would visit a museum in a year. Today, that figure is six out of ten people. Museums are part of the fabric of our communities.

Providing hands-on, minds-on, interactive experiences through exhibits, classes, live animal presentations, special events, and museum-sponsored trips to local natural areas with qualified, expert staff members, the Cook Museum will be a valuable, educational resource that will meet the needs of the next generation of families, leaders, scientists and educators.

This extraordinary Vision and Strategic Plan represents the most logical, effective way to invest in the future we want for our children and grandchildren.

*We can, and should, proactively move forward.*

Now is the time for the corporate and community leaders of North Alabama to come together, establish this public/private partnership, develop the Cook Museum of Natural Science and invest in a shared future of growth and prosperity for our city, our region and our state.

*Won't you join us?*

*"The Cook Museum will bring integrity to natural science education. We look forward to partnering with them to provide comprehensive S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) education for our region."*

DR. DEBORAH BARNHART  
CEO, U.S. Space & Rocket Center

*"I have had the distinct privilege to have been involved with the early planning for the new Cook Museum. It is the most exciting project I've been associated with in many years. This new natural science venue will beautifully compliment the other technical and scientific opportunities in Huntsville for students and adults alike. I firmly believe this museum will be one of the most significant new additions to North Alabama to come along in decades."*

JIM ODOM  
Former Director, Hubble Space Telescope

**EXECUTIVE STAFF**



BRIAN COOK  
CAO, Cook's Pest Control



SCHELLY CORRY  
Executive Director



JEANNE PAYNE  
Development & Membership Director



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Cook Museum of Natural Science?

A: Previously known as Cook's Natural Science Museum, the Cook Museum is now a 501c3, non-profit operating foundation. Having served the greater North Alabama community for more than 34 years, the museum founders have developed a new vision that includes a state-of-the-art multi-purpose facility that will stimulate educational, economic and community development in the Tennessee Valley.

Q: What is the mission of the Cook Museum?

A: "To engage, excite and educate visitors of all ages about the natural, created world around us."

Q: What will the museum showcase?

A: The theme for the museum is "Life is Amazing" and will explore many areas of the natural world such as rivers and streams, caves, mountains, the arctic tundra, the desert, oceans, bayous, hardwood forests, insects, the human body, our solar system and planet earth. The museum's extensive collections will be presented in dynamic settings. The exhibits will have many hands-on, interactive, learning components.

Q: How will the museum promote exploration and discovery?

A: The museum will provide learning for all ages through innovative, hands-on exhibits, including The Naturalist Cabinet in the Hardwood Tree Walk, Stream Table in Rivers and Streams, and the Live Beehive among other live animal terrariums and aquariums. Our science programs will provide dynamic discovery opportunities at deeper levels.

Q: How much will this project cost?

A: Total phase one cost is estimated at approximately \$17 Million.

Q: How will the Cook Museum of Natural Science be funded?

A: The Cook Family has contributed \$7 Million to this \$17 Million capital campaign. The balance of the funding to complete the construction of the facility and furnish it with equipment and exhibits will be underwritten through a regional capital campaign.

Q: Who will benefit from the Cook Museum of Natural Science initiative?

A: Children of all ages, students and educators from across the southeast, along with North Alabama businesses and citizens, will benefit from the creation of the Cook Museum.

Q: How will the museum benefit Decatur-Morgan County and North Alabama?

A: There are five immediate benefits. The museum will:

- I. Establish a one-of-a-kind venue for the presentation of natural science and for the celebration of North Alabama and the Tennessee River Valley's beauty and natural resources.
- II. Provide a significant educational resource for students and educators in the region by offering insight into the earth's animals, insects and their natural habitat.
- III. Enhance the economic well-being of Decatur- Morgan County by becoming a tourism destination.
- IV. Provide a location that will complement other businesses, museums and attractions, and afford visitors and tourists a variety of activities to enjoy before and after their visit to the museum.
- V. Enhance the quality of life for all who live and work in the region.

Q: What will be the economic impact of the museum on Decatur-Morgan County?

A: The museum will have a significant impact on the area. Independent market research projects 214,000 visitors the first year, not including school groups. The response was highly favorable from those within a 100-mile radius.

Q: How will we be kept informed of the progress and achievements of the Cook Museum of Natural Science?

A: The general public will be kept informed through our website, social media and press releases. Founding partners and supporters will be kept abreast of more detailed progress through an annual report card. During its initial five years, the Cook Museum board of directors will generate an annual "report card" that will measure its progress in the accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the Cook Museum of Natural Science.

Q: Will we receive recognition of our investment in the Cook Museum?

A: Yes. There will be permanent recognition in the Founders' Hall for various contribution levels.

Q: Will there be naming opportunities in the museum?

A: Yes. There are various naming opportunities in and around the museum.

Q: Can I get additional information about the Cook Museum of Natural Science?

A: Yes. Please contact Dr. Jeanne Payne via phone at (256) 351-4507 or via email at [jeanne.payne@cookmuseum.org](mailto:jeanne.payne@cookmuseum.org).



John L. Cook began Cook's Pest Control in 1928, originally established as the North Alabama Termite Company. He was a pioneer in the industry, and as the years progressed, his conviction deepened as he envisioned a significant need to protect residential and commercial buildings.

When the elder Cook died in 1950, his son John R. Cook felt compelled to fulfill the five-year termite guarantees for which his father had contracted. Educated as an architect at Georgia Tech, the young Cook gave up a promising career in the field he loved and returned to Decatur with his wife Jo. Under his leadership, Cook's grew from one full-time employee and only a few accounts to become the 8<sup>th</sup> largest pest control company in the United States.

Early in their career, John and Jo Cook dedicated their lives, their family and their business to God for His honor. Operating under Biblical values and principles, they stressed basic themes of honesty, courtesy, respect, and a solid work ethic. Their corporate philosophy of providing quality customer service and a good place to work has been the foundation of the company. Cook's attributes its success to quality service, genuine concern for all people, and ethical performance in all phases of business.

The family's inspiration and motivation for creating the museum will be reflected on the museum history wall and will include the following Bible verse:

*"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will teach you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?" (JOB 12:7-9)*

It is through their leadership and love of community that the Cook family is developing the Cook Museum of Natural Science in Decatur, Alabama.

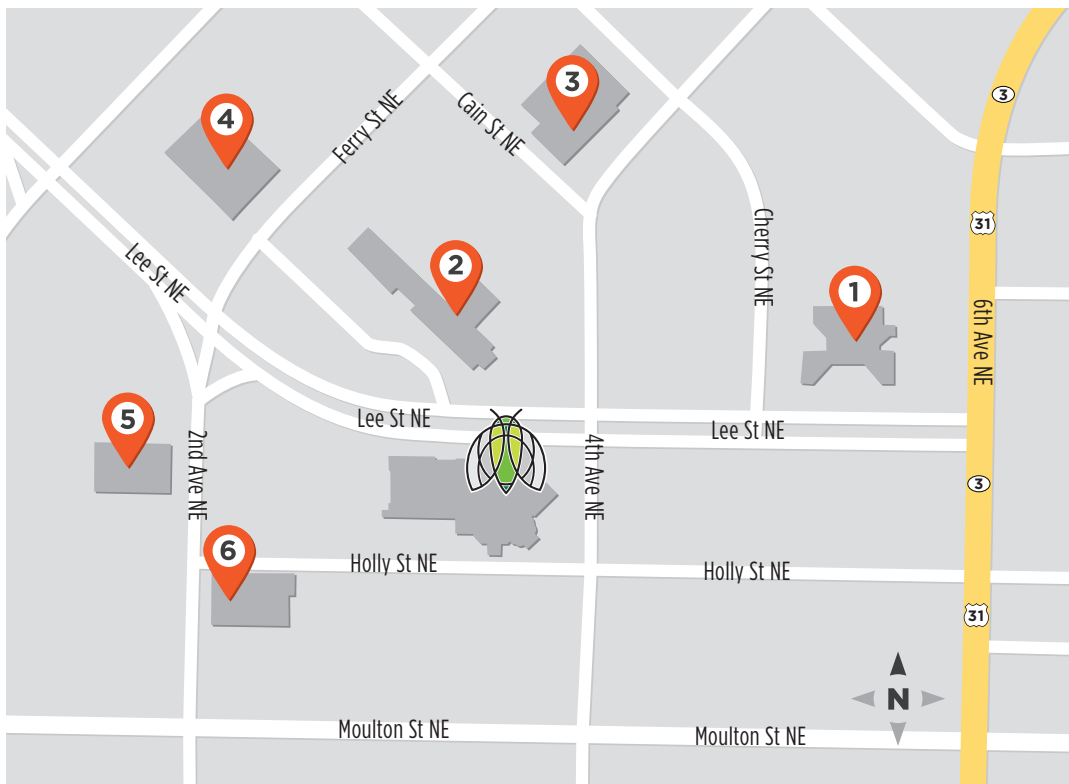
# HISTORY *of* COOK'S PEST CONTROL



## COOK'S TIMELINE

- 1928 John L. Cook established the North Alabama Termite Company.
- 1950 John L. Cook dies & John R. Cook returns to Decatur, AL to run the family business.
- 1952 Cook's Pest Control opens its first branch office in Huntsville.
- 1961 Cook's Pest Control expands to Tennessee.
- 1968 **Mini-Zoo & Museum** (the precursor to the Cook's Natural Science Museum) was established in the back of Cook's Warehouse & opened by appointment. The original collection of insects was used to educate & train employees.
- 1975 Cook's Pest Control expands to Georgia.
- 1980 **Cook's Natural Science Museum** (5,000 SF) was constructed & opened free to the public as a way to benefit the community & creatively display God's creation.
- 2004 John Cook, Jr., named Chairman of the Board & Lyn Cook named Secretary-Treasurer. John R. Cook becomes Chairman Emeritus & Jo Cook becomes Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus.
- 2008 Brian Cook, grandson of John & Jo Cook, joins Cook's Pest Control as 4<sup>th</sup> generation.
- 2009 John R. Cook, Sr., dies. Cook's Pest Control expands to Mississippi.
- 2014 Brian Cook is appointed Chief Administration Officer of Cook's Pest Control. Cook's Pest Control has 34 offices in 26 cities in Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia & Mississippi.
- 2015 **Cook's Natural Science Museum** is open 7 days a week; includes over 100 displays of insects, minerals, shells, animals, reptiles, birds & wildlife. Since 1980, the museum has welcomed more than 750,000 visitors.





POINTS of INTEREST

1. Decatur Public Library
2. City Hall / Police Department
3. Post Office
4. Morgan County Courthouse
5. Alabama Center for the Arts
6. Princess Theatre

