

# GRAY FOSSIL SITE VISITOR CENTER

*east tennessee state university*

JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE

The brand new Gray Fossil Site Visitor Center is an immersive introduction to the nearby dig site, which is boasting a rapidly increasing list of fossils found to date including ancient rhinos, tapirs, turtles, alligators, short-faced bear, weasels, red panda, rodents, and others, plus fossilized plant remains. The 4.5 million to 7 million year old dig, first discovered by state road crews in 2000, is the only Miocene Epoch site in this part of the country. The exhibit design centers around a large basketball-court-sized landform Explus has recreated, which imitates the epoch site, complete with fossils peaking out of the ground in various states of reveal. This realistic simulated earth and rock ground form of a Tennessee Miocene environment includes earthen and rock formations, small bunches of grass and moss, simulated water, and cast articulated specimens. One of the highlights is a fossil alligator skeleton which appears to emerge from one of the recreated ponds. Other highlights include fossil "puzzle" parts that will go into interactive drawers for the kids to reassemble. Explus collaborated closely with Gallagher & Associates on the design phases of this project, detailed, fabricated and installed the exhibit elements for the interactives, metal structures as well as the graphics, murals, and large earth structures. The entire exhibit creates an important and informative experience using hands-on interactives, media, graphics, artifacts and reproductions, scenic and sculptural elements.



## PROJECT INFORMATION:

Location: Johnson City, TN

Size: 5,900 Square Feet

Design Firm: Gallagher & Associates

Contract/Project Type: Bid Build