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New museum says dinosaurs were on Noah's Ark

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By Andrea Hopkins

PETERSBURG, Ky (Reuters) - Like many modern museums, the newest U.S. tourist attraction includes some awesome exhibits -- roaring dinosaurs and a life-sized ship.

But only at the Creation Museum in Kentucky do the dinosaurs sail on the ship -- Noah's Ark, to be precise.

The Christian creators of the sprawling museum, unveiled on Saturday, hope to draw as many as half a million people each year to their state-of-the-art project, which depicts the Bible's first book, Genesis, as literal truth.

While the \$27 million museum near Cincinnati has drawn snickers from media and condemnation from U.S. scientists, those who believe God created the heavens and the Earth in six days about 6,000 years ago say their views are finally being represented.

"What we've done here is to give people an opportunity to hear information that is not readily available ... to challenge them that really you can believe the Bible's history," said Ken Ham, president of the group Answers in Genesis that founded the museum.

Here exhibits show the Grand Canyon took just days to form during Noah's flood, dinosaurs coexisted with humans and had a place on Noah's Ark, and Cain married his sister to people the earth, among other Biblical wonders.

Scientists, secularists and moderate Christians have pledged to protest the museum's public opening on Monday. An airplane trailing a "Thou Shalt Not Lie" banner buzzed overhead during the museum's opening news conference.

Opponents argue that children who see the exhibits will be confused when they learn in school that the universe is 14 billion years old rather than 6,000.

"Teachers don't deserve a student coming into class saying 'Gee Mrs. Brown, I went to this fancy museum and it said you're teaching me a lie,'" Dr. Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education, told reporters before the museum opened.

A Gallup poll last year showed almost half of Americans believe that humans did not evolve but were created by God in their present form within the last 10,000 years.

Three of 10 Republican presidential candidates said in a recent debate that they did not believe in evolution.

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