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Kid's museum to snuff out Kahunaville volcano

By *BETSY PRICE*
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Update: *Due to weather conditions, the volcano demolition has been postponed until Friday.*

A Wilmington Riverfront landmark will be torn down today.

The volcano on the corner of the old Kahunaville club and restaurant is set to be demolished, starting in late morning, to make way for construction of a Delaware Children's Museum.

"We tried to keep it. We wanted to keep it," said Julie Van Blarcom, executive director of the museum, which holds its groundbreaking ceremony Monday. The museum once thought it might be an excellent science exhibit, or could be morphed into something that would complement exhibits.

But the volcano is made of foam set over a steel structure, and is starting to disintegrate. It would not stand up to the possibility of children climbing on it.

"It costs \$14,000 to take it down, and it would cost a lot more money to preserve it," Van Blarcom said. "You can't just start digging into it. You have to saw into it and remove it in chunks.

The \$16.6 million museum will take up about 37,000 square feet, or about half the space made available when Kahunaville, a playground for adults that included concerts, video games and more, closed in November 2006.

The structure was built in the 1990s around a tropical island theme, complete with island hut and palm tree decor inside.

Moving the children's museum into the industrial space is seen as another step toward making the Riverfront viable. It will be just down the block from the Delaware Center for Contemporary Arts, and down the road from the new DuPont Environmental Education Center at the Russell W. Peterson Urban Wildlife Refuge.

New housing and new restaurants, such as Kooma and The Big Fish Grill, have opened in the area, just blocks from Frawley Stadium and the Center at the Riverfront.

The children's museum will announce its target opening date during the ground-breaking ceremony Monday.
