

SCIENCE ON THE SQUARE

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View up State St in downtown Madison during Science on the Square - Madison Night Market fusion. (Ueda Photography).

Experience science, fun, and local flavor!

October 17, 2024—What a night! The seventh annual Science on the Square blended the wonders of science with the buzz of the Madison Night Market for an unforgettable evening in downtown Madison. From 5 to 9 p.m., State Street came alive with a mix of hands-on STEM activities, live entertainment, and vibrant local businesses showcasing their unique offerings. Here's a recap of the night's highlights—whether you were there relishing the fun or missed it and need convincing to join next year, this will spark some serious FOMO!

What is Science on the Square?

Science on the Square brings science to life right in the heart of downtown Madison - transforming State Street into a bustling hub of discovery where outdoor STEM-themed activities with local business and vendor tents lining the streets. From live demonstrations to interactive science stations, you found something exciting at every step while exploring all that Madison has to offer.



Alice in Dairyland teaches about soil at the Madison Children's Museum's Free Family Night during SotS. (Ueda Photography)

Indoor venues across downtown Madison also hosted special exhibits, engaging talks, and exclusive product or menu specials. It was the perfect opportunity to explore the everyday science that surrounds us while also enjoying Madison's local culture.

Block-by-Block Magic

100 Block: Where Physics and Food Meet

Here, science truly came alive. UW-Madison Physics wowed the crowd with "Spooky Action at a Distance" demonstrations, while Ian's Pizza kept everyone fueled with their buzzing slice special. For the curious foodies, the Wisconsin Cheese Mart teamed up with the MDTP Fermentation Club to delve into the microbiology behind cheese and beer. Nothing like science to make your taste buds tingle!



Attendees are wowed by the live demonstrations at the Wonders of Physics show at the top of State St. (Ueda Photography).

200 Block: Robots, Codes, and Climate Resilience

The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art collaborated with Wisconsin Robotics to showcase how robots "see" the world—a fascinating peek into AI and visual systems. Meanwhile, the tea lovers at Sencha Tea Bar partnered with the UW-Madison Lankau Lab to explain how fungi could be the secret to saving forest ecosystems. Plus, visitors could create their own binary bling with Code to Connect, turning names into sparkling computer code art!



Wisconsin Robotics showed off their electric friends inside the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. (Ueda Photography)

300 Block: Stargazing and Brain Games

The rooftop of Parthenon Gyros turned into a celestial observatory, thanks to the UW-Madison Astronomy Club's Sip & Stargaze event. Down on the street, the Neuroscience Training Program offered hands-on exhibits to explain how our brains communicate with our bodies—science that literally got inside your head.



UW-Madison Astronomy took over the rooftop at Parthenon Gyros to help visitors explore the stars. (Ueda Photography)

400 Block: Music, Ice Age Mysteries, and Zoo Secrets

At Lisa Link Peace Park, live music from Lake Collective and the Wisconsin Singers kept the energy high while attendees learned about how glaciers sculpted Wisconsin's landscape through the Ice Age Trail Alliance's scavenger hunt. Meanwhile, the Henry Vilas Zoo wowed animal lovers with insights into how adaptations help species thrive. The mix of music and science proved to be a show-stopper!



The Ice Age Trail Alliance shared all about the glaciers that define Wisconsin's geology and geography. (Ueda Photography)

A Perfect Fusion of Science and Community

The beauty of Science on the Square is the way it brings science out of the lab and into the heart of the community. Whether you're marveling at live physics experiments or sipping tea while learning about fungi, the night seamlessly combined discovery with delight. Add in the amazing local vendors and shops of the Madison Night Market, and it was clear this event wasn't just about learning—it was about celebrating everything that makes Madison vibrant.



Potato racers with the USDA researchers caused major excitement to attendees. (Ueda Photography)

See You Next Year!

If you couldn't make it this time, mark your calendar for next year's Science on the Square - October 16, 2025. Whether you're a science enthusiast, a foodie, or just looking for a unique night out, this event has something for everyone. Until then, keep exploring the world around you—because, as this event showed, science truly is everywhere.