ITHACA, N.Y. — Charlie Trautmann, executive director of the Sciencenter — a nonprofit hands-on science museum in Ithaca, has announced his retirement from the organization, effective next spring. During his 25-year tenure with the museum, Trautmann has “shepherded the Sciencenter from a tiny, all-volunteer, storefront venture to a vibrant, welcoming, nationally recognized institution,” the Sciencenter contended in a news release. The Sciencenter said it now receives 100,000 visitors annually and reaches more than 1 million guests nationally through its traveling exhibitions and national programs. “The stars must have been in a favorable alignment when Charlie called to inquire about the position of executive director of a newly created science museum that only existed in the minds of a few enthusiastic people,” Sciencenter founders Debbie Levin and Ilma Levine said in the release. “He had faith in us and we put our faith in him. The result is a Sciencenter that the community built and that we all take pride in.” Trautmann has been involved in research and public STEM education for 40 years. Under his leadership, the Sciencenter expanded the traditional science museum family audience from the elementary school years (ages 5-11) to include programs for both preschool (ages 0-5) and middle school (ages 11-14) children. He also worked to boost museum access to families from low-income, rural, and minority backgrounds, the release stated. Trautmann is an adjunct professor in Cornell University’s School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and has chaired or served as an officer on many community boards. Following his retirement, Trautmann will spend six months on sabbatical leave at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich, Germany with funding from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His research will focus on how experiences with nature during the first five years of life affect attitudes and behavior related to the environment later in life, according to the release. Contact The Business Journal News Network at news@cnybj.com