



THE FIELD OF VIEW (F.O.V.)  
National Public Observatory Newsletter  
***“Where the Public Meets the Stars”***

Astronomy education, dark skies and quality experiences for ALL!!  
www.Astro-npo.org

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STARS-N-PARKS PROGRAMS IN FIVE SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO STATE PARKS

Winter 2009

## Spaceport tourism – the future is now

Jessica Savage

LAS CRUCES—One of the biggest economic booster shots Spaceport America will provide to the area will be the result of tourists seeking an experience at the first commercial spaceport, according to government, business and education officials speaking at a recent public forum.

National Public Observatory officials this fall attended the Leonard R. Sugerman Public Forum, “Building a spaceport community,” the kickoff event for the International Symposium for Personal and Commercial Spaceflight organized by the New Mexico Space Grant Consortium. The consortium has contributed funding to the NPO Stars-N-Parks astronomy outreach program.

Education panelists speaking at the forum specifically mentioned astronomy as an aspect of spaceport tourism and education.

“We should use New Mexico assets to develop a world class informal education opportunity – astronomy, Sunspot, Holloman AFB, the Space History museum, for example,” said Aaron Prescott, Spaceport America Development Director, in announcing his academy concept for the region.



### Spaceport tourism continued

Prescott also directs activities of the Spaceport America Institute, a non-profit arm of the spaceport for developing educational opportunities with formal educational institutions including other non-profits like the NPO who provide astronomy education through its programs.

Although Prescott didn’t announce any specific programs, he said astronomy represents a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) educational component or an applied learning opportunity, which will feed into the spaceport tourism interest.

“Tourism is already here,” said Steve Landeene, spaceport executive director, in announcing “Hard hat tours,” in which symposium participants were to be taken out to the site where spaceport construction is occurring.

Other spaceport officials said tourism would play a pivotal role in developing a spaceport community. “We need to develop tourism infrastructure for the spaceport,” said Chad Rabon, spaceport infrastructure director.

Officials from regional communities recognized the role spaceport tourism would play. “People are always asking when they can go and see the spaceport,” said Jerry Stagner, Citizen’s Bank president in Truth or Consequences.

“The first phase of economic development is tourism,” said Davin Lopez, president and CEO of the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance. Rabon also said in 10 years tourism would be one of the major businesses to be developed in the area as result of the spaceport.

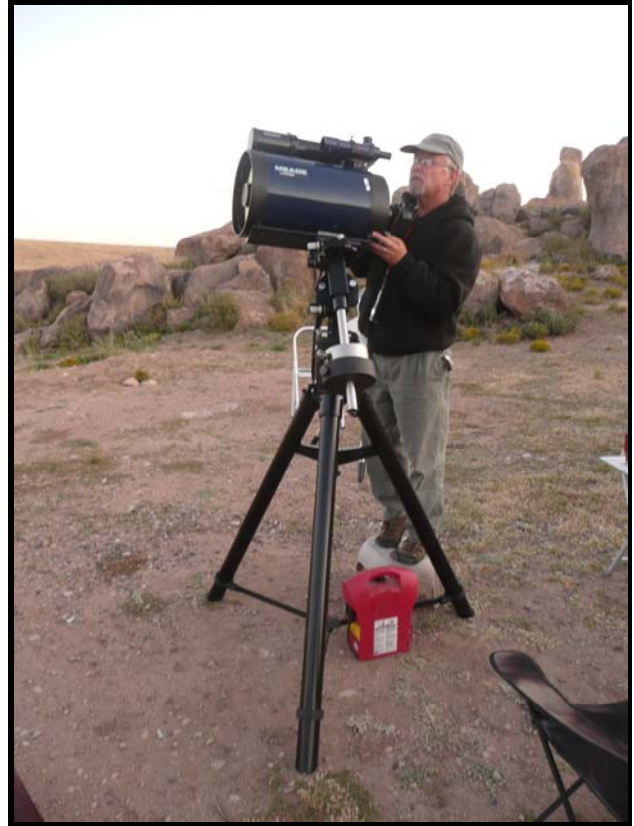
**Spaceport Development panel meeting at The Farm and Ranch Museum on October 18th, 2009. NPO Secretary Lana Gilkison and NPO Publicist Jessica Savage attended the event. Photo by Lana Gilkison.**

### Spaceport tourism - the future is now cont.

Tourism is tied to educational opportunities involving STEM in the minds of the officials involved with building a spaceport community. Examples were the student rocket launches that have already taken place, astronomy, and space camps. Brienna Henwood, business development and marketing manager of NASTAR Center, said her organization is considering a "NASTAR light" facility at the spaceport. Based in Pennsylvania, the center provides aerospace training and includes education for visitors, students, parents and teachers.

So far the only formal commitment to tourism facilities the spaceport has announced are the welcome centers in Truth or Consequences and Hatch. In October the New Mexico Spaceport Authority announced the T or C welcome center would be established in the old fire station downtown. According to a release, Landeene said, \$500,000 had been budgeted by the authority to renovate the 6,000 square foot firehouse. Another \$175,000 was committed by the city for parking facilities. Another welcome center will be established in Hatch the release said.

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### Celestron First Scope to be raffled off at the Fall Reach For The Stars programs.

By John Gilkison

When we saw these bargain Celestron First Scopes, we decided to acquire a couple of them to see if they were suitable as a beginners telescope for the public. We will be raffling off the First Scope with two Plossl eyepieces at the Fall programs for \$1.00 a ticket. We will have the telescope at select programs to demonstrate it. The final drawing for this telescope will be held at on December 19th at City of Rocks SP.

### The Celestron First Scope with two Plossl eyepieces to be raffled off at the Fall Reach For The Stars programs. Drawing December 19, 2009.



### Spring 2010 Southern New Mexico Star Party scheduled for Thursday April 8, to end Sunday April 11, 2010

by John Gilkison

The schedule is set for the Spring 2010 Southern NM Star Party to run from Thursday April 8, 2010 until noon on Sunday April 11th, 2010. The SNMSP is held at City of Rocks State Park at the pavilion in the Orion Group Area where we will have access to the state park observatory and shielding from park traffic.

We have only one scheduled NPO Stars-n-Parks program to be held during the SNMSP, on Saturday night. Matt Wilson will present on Saturday. We appreciate help from attendees of the star party. You can deduct one night of registration for helping us with public programs during the SNMSP. Since we are operating under a New Mexico State Parks grant for Reach For The Stars programs in the Fall of 2009 and the Spring of 2010 the NPO is able to offer the programs seen on page three.

Hope we see you at the Spring 2010 SNMSP. April 8th 2010 through the April 11th of 2010 at City of Rocks State Park.

**National Public Observatory  
Stars-N-Parks New Mexico State Parks  
program schedule from  
December of 2009 through May 2010**

**SP = State Park SS = Sunset, PS = Program Start,  
PE = Program End. N.M. State Parks Reach For  
The Stars Grant start in Oct. ends in March 2010.**

8) Saturday December 5, 2009 RHSP, SS 5:00 PM, PS 6:10 PM, PE 7:40 PM, Mercury at elongation on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Orion well up by the program's end, Sally Allen.

9) Saturday December 12, 2009 LDSP, SS 4:55 PM, PS 6:05 PM, PE 7:35 PM, Mercury at elongation on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Orion well up by the program's end, Nils Allen.

10) Saturday December 19, 2009 CoR SP, SS 4:55 PM, PS 6:05 PM, PE 7:35 PM, Mercury at elongation on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Orion well up by the program's end, Matt Wilson.

11) Saturday January 16, 2010, City of Rocks SP, SS 5:20 PM, PS 6:30 PM, PE 8:00 PM, Jupiter and Uranus in the west, Mars rises at 6:45 PM, Orion in the east, Matt Wilson presenting.

12) Saturday February 6, 2010, Leasburg Dam SP, SS 5:40 PM, PS 6:50 PM, PE 8:25 PM, Jupiter low in the west, Mars in the east, the Winter Milky Way is well presented, Jeff Jenkins.

13) Saturday February 13, 2010, City of Rocks State Park, SS 5:45 PM, PS 6:55 PM, PE 8:25 PM, Mars in the east, the Winter Milky Way is well presented, Matt Wilson presenting.

14) Saturday March 6, 2010, Rock Hound SP, SS 6:05 PM, PS 7:10 PM, PE 8:40 PM, Mars in the east, Saturn rises at 7:16 PM, the Winter milky Way is well presented, Sally Allen presenting.

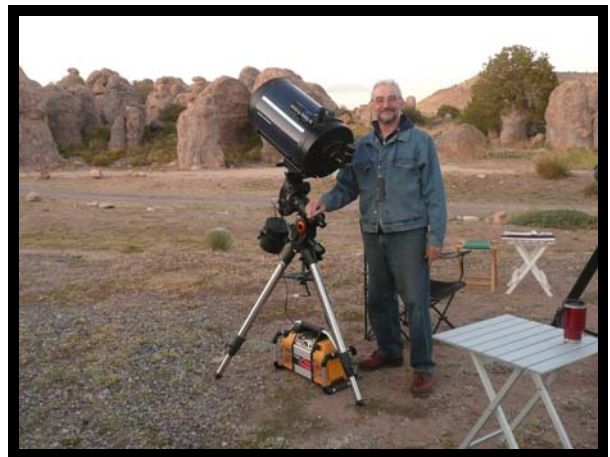
**The Spring Southern New Mexico Star Party runs from Thursday April 8, 2010 to Sunday April 11, 2010, held at the pavilion in the Orion Group Area at City of Rocks State Park, the public program free, but the SNMSP is a register and pay for event, registration forms available on the NPO website [www.astro-npo.org](http://www.astro-npo.org)**

Saturday April 10, 2010, City of Rocks State Park, SS 7:25 PM, PS 8:35 PM, PE 10:05 PM, Mars overhead, Saturn in the SE, the Spring constellations are rising. Matt Wilson presenting.

Saturday April 17, 2010, Leasburg Dam State Park, SS 7:25 PM, PS 8:35 PM, PE 10:05 PM, Mars overhead, Saturn in the SE, the Spring constellations are rising. Nils Allen presenting.

Saturday May 8, 2010, City of Rocks State Park, SS 7:45 PM, PS 8:55 PM, PE 10:25 PM, Mars and Saturn are high at program start, Venus is low in the west, the Spring constellations are rising. Matt Wilson presenting.

**Upper right page 2 Matt Wilson with his new German Equatorial Mount, below John Gilkison and his new Celestron GEM.**



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| Student or Retiree           | \$20   | n/a     | n/a       | n/a     | n/a      |
| Astronomy clubs < 80 members | \$50   | n/a     | n/a       | n/a     | n/a      |
| Libraries                    | \$50   | n/a     | n/a       | n/a     | n/a      |
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**ABOUT THE NATIONAL PUBLIC OBSERVATORY PROJECT**

*Tens of thousands of people visit major U.S. research astronomical observatories every year. These research facilities do not advertise, and quite altruistically, set aside monies and time from their limited budgets to accommodate the public. Many people travel great distances for the opportunity to observe through a world-class telescope but due to the high cost of telescope time, this generally is not feasible. Where observatories have been able to set aside a night for public observing, it is often booked up well in advance.*

*While some upscale observatory/lodge facilities have been developed, none have been established to reach families or individuals looking for an intimate public park/camping experience with the proper telescopes, facilities, and knowledgeable tour guides.*

*The National Public Observatory, Inc. has been established to provide this kind of facility and we need your help.*

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