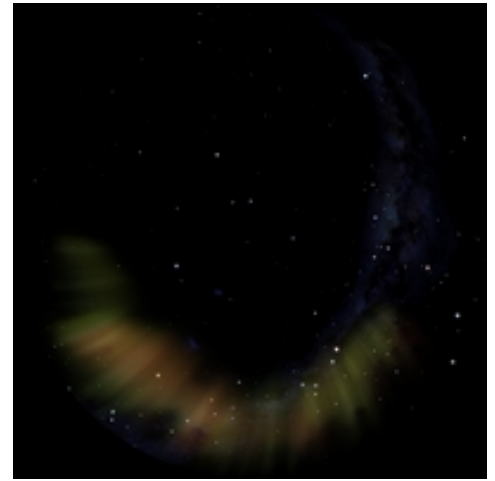




PRESS RELEASE

Highlands School District
Natrona Heights, PA
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FAST FACTS: FAIRMOUNT PRESENTS PLANETARIUM

What: *Digitalis Planetarium*

Facts & Figures:

The diameter of the dome is 3.7 m at the zenith, and has a diameter of 6 m. It can seat approximately 40 adults or 60 small children. Entry and exit is through a zippered doorway, and it is wheelchair accessible. It utilizes a full dome projection system, and has a full sky, or 180 degree field of view. The planetarium can:

- demonstrate beginning through advanced astronomy concepts
- simulate the sky from any point on Earth or from other planets and moons
- move forward or backward in time
- show annual motion , including retrograde planetary motion
- simulate celestial phenomena such as transits, eclipses, and meteor showers
- display orbits of the planets
- display paths of the planets against the stars
- display ecliptic, celestial equator, meridian, and the equatorial and azimuthally grids
- show constellation outlines, names, and artwork
- show constellations from multiple cultures
- label the sky in different languages
- play full-dome video shows with 5.1 channel surround sound support

Teachers **Mrs. Carol Fraser** and **Mrs. Jennifer Kosior** have been trained to fully utilize the planetarium for all of its educational benefits. In addition, they have been invited by the NASA Pennsylvania Space Grant Consortium to present the planetarium and lessons for more than 2,000 students anticipated to attend the Exploration Day at Penn State on April 17, 2010. Exploration Day is a large, interactive K-12 science event sponsored by the NASA Pennsylvania Space Grant Consortium.

The planetarium not only will help students to grasp astronomical concepts in a way that no book or video is able to do; it can be the beginning of a life-long love of science, and the spark that many of our students need to encourage other endeavors in their education and career paths.

“We are very excited to offer this new piece of science technology to the students of the Highlands School District. This technology, which was purchased with PA-Pact money (The state ACT tax money that was collected and given to districts that applied), will allow students to engage in a wonderful learning experience that will focus on the solar system and the world around us. We look forward to learning and sharing together.”

- **Mr. Charlie Mort**, Principal, Fairmount Elementary School and Highlands School District Science Facilitator, Gr. K-5