



ASTRO E-NEWS

AUSTIN PLANETARIUM

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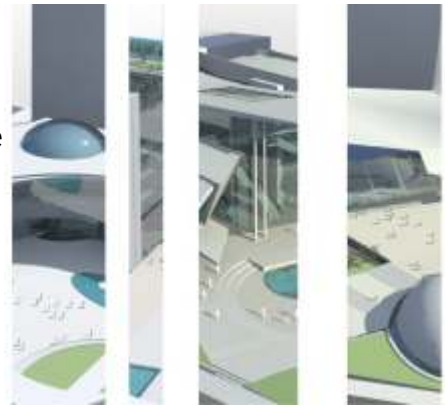
IYB 2010

As the International Year of Astronomy draws to a close, the UN has declared that this year, 2010, will be the [International Year of Biodiversity](#). Although, as Planetarium professionals, we are sad to see the focus shift from astronomy, biodiversity speaks strongly to the values we hold here at the Austin Planetarium.

As we have stated in our mission statement, the Austin Planetarium facility will be both state-of-the-art technologically and environmentally. It has always been our charge to create a facility that adheres to the most current principles in green building and do our best to be stewards of Austin's minds as well as Austin's environment. In 2010 one of our focal points will be the acquisition of a site for the Planetarium, Science Museum, and Technology Center facility; and in this process we will remain diligent in our efforts to produce a high-tech facility with a low environmental impact.

The Austin Planetarium in 2010

2010 will be a big year for the Austin Planetarium. Coming off the growth and successes of 2009, we will be taking the next big steps towards the development of Austin's first planetarium, science museum, and technology center. So what's in store for the Austin Planetarium in 2010?



We have a lot on our plate this year including the continuance of our efforts to establish lasting relationships with other like-minded organizations in the Austin area. The goal of which would be creating a network of groups able to provide insights into astronomy and information about science themed events around town, which could then be shared with the Austin Community through our [public calendar](#). It is our goal to become a nexus for all things science so that the Central Texas community will have a one-stop spot for all their science needs.

In addressing the goal of becoming a hub for astronomy in central Texas, we also plan to expand our website to include more usable content. Our public calendar will be linked to the agendas and events of a variety of institutions to provide the local science community a definitive source for astronomy themed activities. We will continue to offer more educational resources, as [free downloads](#) on our website, so that educators can have the tools they need to fulfill their student's cosmic curiosities. The [Astro News](#) section of our website will continue to grow and provide a place for

Furthermore, having the world focus on the maintenance of this planet's life-forms and environment is excellent practice for the future as humanity outgrows its terrestrial home to establish outposts elsewhere in the cosmos. Who knows what or who we might find? What a tragedy it would be to repeat the mistakes we've made in our own backyard in someone else's. We here at the Austin Planetarium welcome the International Year of Biodiversity.

Space Travel Goes Commercial...



Well, we may not be making our second trip to Jupiter like Arthur C. Clarke thought we would by 2010, but we are

definitely making some great leaps towards a world in which commercial space flight is not just a thing of Science Fiction. On January 11, 2010 Cecil Field, a Jacksonville Florida airport, became the eighth licensed commercial U.S. spaceport.

You may be thinking, "I didn't know there were *any* commercial spaceports in the U.S.?!". The most high profile one is New Mexico's [Spaceport America](#) which has become the headquarters for Sir Richard Branson's [Virgin Galactic](#) endeavor. However, Spaceport America is not fully constructed yet. What sets the Cecil Field Spaceport apart from the others is its unique ability to accommodate vehicles that take off and land horizontally. No other commercial spaceports offer this yet, and if you've been paying attention to the commercial space

Austinites to look for astronomy news of the day and information about their universe.

Perhaps most important of all, this year we will be firming up the site for the Planetarium, Science Museum, and Technology Center facility. The building fund was officially established at the last board meeting, and the groundwork for the required networking/politicking has been laid. As we negotiate the political terrain and assess the Austin landscape, we will keep you all informed of the progress through the website and our monthly newsletter.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all those who have supported the Austin Planetarium project in 2009. Be it through volunteering, donation, or simply spreading the word amongst friends; we appreciate all of your support. We hope you will continue to provide us with your time and patronage. Rest assured it won't be long before we are all basking in the glow of full-dome projection.

The Face of the Austin Planetarium

In our continuing effort to raise awareness for our project, we will be ramping up our volunteer program in the coming months. As you probably already know, we make numerous public appearances throughout the year at community events around town. We are annual participants at the [Zilker Kite Festival](#) and the bi-annual [Pecan Street Festival](#). We also set up shop at science themed conventions, like the [IEEE](#) (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and InnoTech conferences, when they are in town. In order to continue to have a presence at these functions we rely on help from our volunteers.

As the Planetarium movement grows, so does the need for a public presence. It is crucial that we continue to inform the public about our project and maintain a dialogue with the community so that we may better serve their interests as we move closer to the construction phase of the project. We are



race that has been brewing over the last decade, you probably know that many of the next generation of space vehicles will take off like a conventional airplane does, horizontally.

It's hard to believe that we have finally come to the day when human space flight is not just the privilege and honor of a few good men with the right stuff. In a few short years any of us will be able to throw down our hard earned dollars to take a ride to the edge of the world.

currently working to streamline our volunteer process by putting together a "volunteer gear" package which will contain all the necessary components to deploy a fully-functional Planetarium marketing-machine that can be manned (or womanned as the case may be) by one of our trusted Planetarium volunteers.

As the year progresses keep checking our website for volunteer opportunities and feel free to contact us to tell us about events that would provide a suitable venue to engage the public. With your help we can continue to raise public awareness for the Austin Planetarium project and continue to put our best foot forwards...yours.

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