



Lake Afton Public Observatory

FOR: Immediate Release

FROM: Lake Afton Public Observatory
WSU Fairmount Center for Science and Mathematics Education
Robert Henry, 316.978.3991 or Greg Novacek, 316.978.3854

DATE: October 8, 2012

RE: Astronomy Day 2012 Celebration at the Lake Afton Public Observatory.

Celebrate Astronomy Day At The Observatory!

Astronomy day is coming up on Saturday, October 20, so get ready for an educational and fun-filled afternoon of activities and contests followed by an exciting evening of stargazing. This year you will have the opportunity to build and fly a water powered bottle rocket; you can watch our CO₂-powered rocket go-cart race around the parking lot; you can observe the Sun through the Observatory's telescope; and more! Then, beginning at 7:30 pm, as the day turns to night, you can observe the Moon's craters and maré and Uranus through our big telescope. And here's the best part of all ... astronomy day is free so bring the kids out and have an out-of-this-world adventure at the Lake Afton Public Observatory.

The Observatory always has many interesting exhibits that enhance your observations through the telescope. You can learn about some of the amazing economic and technological rewards that have come directly from the space program over the last 50 years. Another exhibit explores what astronomers knew about the universe in the 1920's and what we've learned since. Other Observatory exhibits give you a chance to make a telescope, investigate the properties of light, and touch a rock from space. Visitors may also use our computers to go on a scavenger hunt through the solar system or practice landing a spacecraft on the moon. In addition to our exhibits inside, we also have small telescopes and binoculars outside that visitors may use to try their hand at finding objects in the night sky.

Location

The observatory is located about 20 miles southwest of downtown Wichita on MacArthur Road at 247th Street West in Lake Afton County Park. It is immediately north of the lake, just off MacArthur Road. Lake Afton can be reached by any of the following routes: west from Wichita on U.S. 54 to the Lake Afton sign at Viola Road three miles past Goddard, then three miles south and one mile east; or southwest on K-42, 7 miles to Schulte and nine miles west on MacArthur.

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Office:
1845 Fairmount
Wichita, KS 67260-0032
(316) 978-3191

Program Information:
(316) WSU-STAR
Internet:
<http://webs.wichita.edu/lapo>

Observatory:
20 mi. SW of downtown Wichita
on MacArthur Rd. at 247th St. W.
(316) 794-8995

Astronomy Day Schedule of Events

3:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Solar Observation

– Learn about the Sun and safely look at it through our big telescope.

3:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Bottle Rockets – Build and Decorate

– Design and build a water powered bottle rocket then decorate it to be the best looking rocket in the skies when we launch them later in the day.

– Note: You don't have to wait for Astronomy Day to build your rocket for the competition. If you would like, you can build it at home ahead of time and just bring it with you on Astronomy Day. See our website for helpful links on how to build a good bottle rocket: <http://webs.wichita.edu/lapo>

4:15 pm & 5:15 pm

Scale Model of the Solar System

– Walk through a giant scale model of our solar system and discover its vastness..

5:00 pm

Rocket Powered Go-Cart Demo

– Watch as our CO₂ powered go-cart zooms around the parking lot track.

5:15 pm

Bottle Rockets – Judging

– Judges decide whose bottle rockets are the best looking and will award prizes.

5:45 pm

Bottle Rockets – Launch

– Win a prize if your bottle rocket stays in the air the longest.

7:30 pm – 10:00 pm

Universe of the 1920's – Moon & Planets

– Observe the Moon and Uranus and find out what we have discovered about them over the last 90 years.

The Lake Afton Public Observatory is operated by the Fairmount Center for Science and Mathematics Education, a part of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Science at Wichita State University.

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