



October 1, 2008

For Immediate Release:
Local Observatory Construction to Begin

After three years of fundraising, researching construction designs and receiving the donation of several large telescopes, the Westminster Astronomical Society, Inc., has been issued building permits for the construction of a publicly accessible observatory. It is to be built at Bear Branch Nature Center, located in Hashawha Environmental Area. The observatory will compliment the already existing planetarium and will add a unique opportunity of learning to navigate the sky, as well as other astronomical related topics.

The observatory will be open to the public twice a month for observing and educational programming. The equipment will have the capability of “professional” astronomical research on various topics such as asteroidal eclipses, searching for supernovae and other interesting science projects.

When the observatory opens it will house three telescopes of various types and sizes; these include a 14 inch Schmidt-Cassegrain, a 12 inch Newtonian and 5 inch refractor. Phase two will include the installation of one of the largest telescopes to be ADA (American Disabilities Act) accessible in the state of Maryland and possibly on the east coast.

The Groundbreaking ceremony is expected tentatively by the end of October, and date will be announced by mid-month. Among those invited to the ceremony are public and park officials, the astronomical community (professional and amateur), and former astronauts.

The Westminster Astronomical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization, and all donations are tax deductible. Donation and membership information can be found at www.westminsterastro.org.

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