

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

Peña Planetarium offers November and December evening shows

November 14 & 21 and December 5 & 12 • 2500 Burrel Ave., Visalia

Visalia - The Sam B. Peña Planetarium, operated by the Tulare County Office of Education, is offering four evening programs for November and December, including a new show entitled *Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*, which utilizes the theater's full-dome technology.

November 14, 2008, 7:00 p.m. - The Peña Planetarium will present *The Skies of Autumn* from its *Tulare County Night Skies* series. Seasonal constellations are explored as well as many deep sky objects such as star clusters, galaxies and nebulae. Ancient mythology is deeply woven into the descriptions of these celestial phenomena. This 20-minute program is authored and narrated by the Tulare Astronomical Association's president, Dave Adalian. After the program, Tulare Astronomical Association members will have telescopes available outdoors to give visitors an opportunity for some firsthand stargazing. This program is recommended for older children and adults.

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November 21, 2008, 7:00 p.m. - Climb aboard a magical cardboard rocket with two young children and depart on an extraordinary ride through space in *Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*. Experience a breathtaking, up-close look of our solar system's planets. You'll see each fascinating planet as never before — including Mercury, which has the shortest year, and Mars, the famous red planet with its volcano that is larger than the state of Utah! You'll zoom through the crackling ice-and-rock rings of the “gas giant” Saturn, right after you investigate another gas giant — Jupiter, whose size equals 1,000 “earths.” You'll navigate around our other planets, and find yourself hurtling toward the outer reaches of our system to our final destination — the remote, frozen planet of Pluto. This show utilizes the planetarium's new full-dome technology.

December 5, 2008, 7:00 p.m. – In the perennial favorite, *Santa Snork Saves the Seasons*, we discover why we're cold when we're looking at the winter constellations. Is it like this everywhere on Earth and, more importantly, why does the Earth have seasons? Planetary investigator Sam Snork not only saves the seasons, but he also presents an alien interpretation of “A Visit from Saint Nicholas.”

December 12, 2008, 7:00 p.m. – *A Christmas Story* is show narrated lovingly by a father for his young daughter. During the story, he explains the origins and importance of some of our holiday season traditions. After dinner, the family is off to the planetarium for a brief introduction to the winter sky and some possible explanations for the Star of Wonder.

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The Planetarium is located on the southwest corner of West Main Street and Woodland Avenue in Visalia, in the Educational Enrichment Center. “The public will really enjoy the enhancements we’ve made to the projection system in the Peña Planetarium,” says County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “The full-dome shows, like *Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*, are a fantastic experience, much like an IMAX theater.”

Tickets can be purchased at the Impact Center Office 30 minutes before show time or in advance on weekdays between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. Tickets are \$4 for adults and \$3 for children under 12. No late seating is offered once the planetarium doors close. For information, call (559) 737-6334.

For more information about the Peña Planetarium, visit www.tcoe.org/ImpactCenter.

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