

"Better than Star Wars": Discovery Dome "Live on Green" reaches 5,500 at Pasadena Convention Center

The new Geo-Go-Dome™ from ePlanetarium (www.eplanetarium.com) and Go-Dome™ (www.Go-dome.com) and Go-Dome™ was the hit of the first "Live on Green" family festival Dec 29-31 in Pasadena, California. Celebrating the centennial of the National Park Service, there were exhibits and activities but the star of the show was the new geodesic Geo-Go-Dome™. With its open doorway and bright projector, it invited guests of all ages and abilities.

The NPS had originally contacted Rice University to loan a dome under the "Free Dome Loaner" program, originally part of the NASA "Future Space" program, part of the CP4SMP program. (<http://space.rice.edu/futurespace/index.php>). Rice has continued the program as resources allow, with one Discovery Dome system that can be borrowed by schools, tribal communities, small museums and science centers more than 100 miles from a modern public digital planetarium.

However, since the intent was to use it in a public festival, it was clear that the negative pressure Geo-Go-Dome™ would be able to handle the largest crowds.

So instead of Rice University loaning an inflatable, ePlanetarium sent the new Geo-Go-Dome™ and our International Sales Manager Dr. Antoun Daou to set up and run the dome. The ePlanetarium staff created a 10 minute program that included scenes from the National parks (from a selection of HMNS planetarium programs).

The program also included a message about dark sky awareness as presented in the IDA/Loch Ness Productions show "Losing the Dark" <http://www.lochnessproductions.com/shows/ida/ltd.html>. The rangers are especially eager to get the word out about light pollution, and that piece is excellent.

In total, the NPS estimated that 5,500 visitors came through the dome during the 32 hours that the dome was available to the public... basically a packed house virtually every ten minutes. ePlanetarium paid for all travel and staffing expenses and the cost of creating a custom piece, as a public service - part of our commitment to spend 30-50% of all profits for public education.

Our favorite comment from more than one visitor: **"This is better than Star Wars!"**

The NPS was ecstatic about our support of the event.

Dear Patricia,

We are extremely grateful that you shared your incredible dome technology and outstanding staff with our Live on Green event in Pasadena! This was a way for the National Park Service to begin celebrating our centennial year, while providing a fun and meaningful experience for visitors. Your generosity helped us accomplish this!

Antoun- Your professionalism and leadership were truly inspiring, and made it possible for us to build an 18' high x 20' diameter planetarium as a "centerpiece" for our exhibit space. Thank you for your amicable guidance, mentorship, and conversation throughout the event--getting to know you and your family was a highlight for myself and others!

Rebecca- Bravo! Thousands of visitors enjoyed the program you designed. The portion on night sky preservation provoked visitors to consider the dark sky as an endangered resource. The landscapes and "skylscapes," which you artistically wove together, were a true celebration of our National Parks!

Michael - Thank you for managing the task of shipping the dome out to Pasadena, and for your other logistical support!

On behalf of the National Park Service, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and the thousands of visitors who enjoyed the planetarium, THANK YOU!

Best wishes,

Robert

Robert Cromwell
Park Ranger, National Park Service
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

And another thank-you:

I'd very much like to second the sentiments! You were all so kind and encouraging from our first communications to our last. I was given a lot of "no's" and was about to give up on the dream of having a night sky component to the event until I reached your crew.

Thanks a ton and I hope you found value in being there as well!!

Sincerely,
Tori Kuykendall
Ranger, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
National Park System

Our next Public Service events will be to support the Mars Rover competition at the University of Houston January 30, and the USA Science and Engineering Festival in DC in April: <http://www.usasciencefestival.org>

Links to more photos and videos from the event can be found at the ePlanetarium.com site.

