

# Tulare County Office of Education

*Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools*

February 13, 2009

## **For Immediate Release**

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**Tulare County Office of Education Announces:**

## **Peña Planetarium offers three February evening shows**

**February 20 & 27, 2009 • 2500 Burrel Ave., Visalia**

*Visalia* - The Sam B. Peña Planetarium, operated by the Tulare County Office of Education, is pleased to offer the following public shows this month:

### **February 20, 7:00 p.m. - *The Explorers***

“The Explorers” focuses on the human spirit of exploration throughout time and space. The dome is used to identify constellations, to observe what daily motion can tell us about way-finding, and to study changes in the sky as the observer's latitude changes. During a live section in the program, the audience will get a chance to apply their knowledge to navigate with techniques used by Polynesians for thousands of years. Then . . . it's on to Mars!

### **February 20, 8:00 p.m. – *Dawn of the Space Age***

*Dawn of the Space Age* is the world's first 360-degree, 3D stereo movie. The show utilizes the planetarium's new “full-dome” projection system. This program accurately portrays man's first

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steps into space – from the launch of the first artificial satellite Sputnik, to the magnificent lunar landings and privately-operated space flights.

## **February 27, 7:00 p.m. – *The Ring of Fire: The Bright Stars of Winter***

The third segment in the “Tulare County Night Skies” series, this program highlights the constellation Orion – the great hunter – and the “Ring of Fire,” which is also known as the Winter Hexagon. “Tulare County Night Skies” is a program produced in conjunction with the Tulare Astronomical Association, and authored and narrated by the Association’s president, Dave Adalian. After the 20-minute program, the audience can meet with members of the Tulare Astronomical Association, who have telescopes available outdoors for stargazing. This program is recommended for older children and adults. The programs in the “Tulare County Night Skies” series give audiences a more in-depth look at constellations and DSOs (or deep sky objects), which are visible at this time of year. This program is thorough enough for amateur astronomers and informative for beginning star-gazers.

The Planetarium is located on the southwest corner of West Main Street and Woodland Drive in Visalia, in the Educational Enrichment Center. “The public is enjoying 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 *Dawn of the Space Age*, are a fantastic experience, much like an IMAX theater.”

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**Tickets can be purchased at the Impact Center Office 30 minutes before show time or in advance on weekdays between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. Tickets are \$4 for adults and \$3 for children under 12. It is strongly recommended that tickets be purchased in advance as shows sometimes sell out. 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](http://www.tcoe.org/ImpactCenter).

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