



THE FIELD OF VIEW (F.O.V.)  
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**“Where the Public Meets the Stars”**

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STARS-N-PARKS PROGRAMS IN FIVE SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO STATE PARKS

Fall 2009

**Engineering a Commercial Spaceport Career Aaron Prescott,  
first spaceport employee hired by executive director**

By Jessica Savage

As a college student majoring in aerospace engineering, Aaron Prescott was keeping a watchful eye on the communities bidding to become home of the first commercial spaceport but he never imagined it would be his first job after graduation.

“I thought I would have to wait until the industry matured,” said Prescott, business development director for Spaceport America.

In 2007, the recent graduate was offered a chance to help out with the New Hampshire primary and quickly accepted knowing it would give him access to candidate Bill Richardson and his staff – representing the state of New Mexico selected as the site of Spaceport America.

“It was about to break,” said Prescott, of the decision to put the spaceport in Southern New Mexico. Once New Mexico’s bid to become site Of the spaceport was successful and Steve

**Aaron Prescott continued**

Landeene was named executive director, Prescott wasted no time getting in touch.

“Within the first week I got the contact information and offered to come out,” Prescott said.

The newly educated aerospace engineer found himself offering his services to the still just a concept spaceport, and these services included “anything that needed to be done.” As it turned out Landeene was swayed by the enthusiasm of the young, inexperienced engineer and told his first hire the most immediate need was for fund raising. So the engineer became the business development director in early 2008, but also a whole lot more as he has worked 60 and 80 hour weeks and traveled as needed helping to create America’s first commercial spaceport.

Prescott recently got to play more of an engineering role when he sat at the controls of a UAV launch for aerospace manufacturing company Moog FTS and overseen by UP Aerospace in early August at Upham.

For Prescott, such events are educational opportunities to show the value of the spaceport to the community. “It’s not about putting rich people into space,” he said.



**Aaron Prescott and John Gilkison discuss some of the features of the 12 inch Meade SCT and it’s new Celestron German Equatorial Mount at the August 15th Presenter dinner held at the Gilkison home in Radium Springs, New Mexico.**

### Aaron Prescott continued from page one

Instead the spaceport itself represents economic development for the area, providing jobs for New Mexico graduates right here at home from industry, tourism, and education. "These will be good quality jobs to attract and retain local talent."

The Princeton graduate said that what New Mexicans did in attracting the spaceport and Virgin Galactic is actually a public relations coup. "It puts the spotlight on New Mexico globally," Prescott said, "This is branding as Spaceport America, as opposed to Japan or Europe."

It means the state can take a leadership role as the world's first commercial spaceport. "No one's ever done this before," Prescott said.

Part of the vision for the spaceport is that it will be a student lab for all of New Mexico's public schools. Students analyzed the data from the recent launch and have been present at launches. Prescott said he also sees astronomy observing playing a role at the spaceport.

"Astronomy is a gateway to STEM," he said. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and math, a term used by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to evaluate student programs it funds.

Astronomy programs and the spaceport create a natural synergy Prescott said, because of astronomy's connection to aerospace exploration and STEM. If astronomy programs become available at the spaceport, Prescott said potential observers would first interface with the program at a welcome center in Truth or Consequences, or Hatch, and then be driven out to the spaceport by shuttle.

"Astronomy is accessible, something everyone can do," Prescott said. "It opens the door for learning about space. It's food for the curious mind." ~~~~



### Fall 2009 Southern New Mexico Star Party scheduled for Wednesday October 7, to end Sunday October 11, 2009

by John Gilkison

The schedule is set for the Fall 2009 Southern NM Star Party to run from Wednesday October 7, 2009 until noon on Sunday October 11th, 2009. The SNMSP is held at City of Rocks State Park at the pavilion in the Orion Group Area where we will have access to the state park observatory and shielding from park traffic.

We have two scheduled NPO Stars-n-Parks programs to be held during the SNMSP, they are on Wednesday and Saturday night respectively. Matt Wilson will present on Saturday and I will conduct the program on Wednesday. We appreciate help from attendees of the star party. You can deduct one night of registration for helping us with public programs during the SNMSP. Since we are operating under a New Mexico State Parks grant for Reach For The Stars programs in the Fall the NPO is able to offer the programs seen on page three.

Hope we see you at the Fall 2009 SNMSP.

### Celestron First Scope to be raffled off at the Fall Reach For The Stars programs.

By John Gilkison

When we saw these bargain Celestron First Scopes, we decided to acquire a couple of them to see if they were suitable as a beginners telescope for the public. While the mount and the optics were good we felt that the Huygens eyepieces left a little to be desired. In testing different eyepieces we determined that Plossl eyepieces seem to work best with the spherical optics. We found a good deal on some Plossl eyepieces online and ordered them for this telescope. We will be raffling off the First Scope with two Plossl eyepieces at the Fall programs for \$1.00 a ticket. We will have the telescope at select programs to demonstrate it. The final drawing for this telescope will be held at on December 19th at City of Rocks State Park.

**The Celestron First Scope with two Plossl eyepieces to be raffled off at the Fall Reach For The Stars programs.**

**National Public Observatory  
Stars-N-Parks New Mexico State Parks  
program schedule from  
September of 2009 through December 2009**

**SP = State Park SS = Sunset, PS = Program Start,  
PE = Program End. N.M. State Parks Reach For  
The Stars Grant start in Oct. ends in March 2010.**

1) Saturday September 12, 2009 CoR SP, SS 7:10 PM, PS 8:20 PM, PE 9:50 PM, Jupiter in the SW near Neptune, Uranus rising, Summer Milky Way well presented, Andromeda Galaxy in the east, Matt Wilson presenting.

**The Fall 2009 Southern New Mexico Star Party Starts Wednesday (at noon ) October 7, 2009, and ends noon on Sunday Oct. 11, 2009. See registration form for joining us at City of Rocks State Park for this National Public Observatory special event.**

1) Wednesday October 7, 2009, 2009 CoR SP, SS 6:35 PM, PS 7:45 PM, PE 9:15 PM, Jupiter high in the SW near Neptune, Scorpius setting, Andromeda well up, John Gilkison presenting.

2: Saturday October 10, 2009 CoR SP, SS 6:35 PM, PS 7:45 PM, PE 9:05 PM, Jupiter high in the SW near Neptune, Scorpius setting, Andromeda well up, Matt Wilson presenting.

3 Saturday October 10, 2009 LDSP, SS 6:25 PM, PS 7:35 PM, PE 9:15 PM, Jupiter high in the SW near Neptune, Scorpius setting, Andromeda well up, Nils Allen presenting

4) Saturday October 17, 2009 PVSP, SS 6:25 PM, PS 7:35 PM, PE 9:15 PM, Jupiter high in the SW near Neptune, Scorpius setting, Andromeda well up, Sally Allen presenting.

Nils Allen (standing) and Aaron Prescott discuss astronomy at the 2009 Presenter dinner, August 15th at the Gilkison residence.

5) Saturday November 7, 2009 CoR SP, SS 5:05 PM, PS 6:15 PM, PE 7:45 PM, Jupiter on the meridian near Neptune, Uranus well presented, Sagittarius setting, Andromeda Galaxy high up, Matt Wilson presenting.

6) Saturday November 14, 2009 LDSP, SS 5:05 PM, PS 6:15 PM, PE 7:45 PM, Jupiter on the meridian near Neptune, Uranus well presented, Sagittarius setting, Andromeda Galaxy high up, Jeff Jenkins presenting.

7) Saturday November 14, 2009 RHSP, SS 5:05 PM, PS 6:15 PM, PE 7:45 PM, Jupiter on the meridian near Neptune, Uranus well presented, Sagittarius setting, Andromeda Galaxy high up, Sally Allen presenting.

8) Saturday December 5, 2009 RHSP, SS 5:00 PM, PS 6:10 PM, PE 7:40 PM, Mercury at elongation on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Orion well up by the program's end, Sally Allen.

9) Saturday December 12, 2009 LDSP, SS 4:55 PM, PS 6:05 PM, PE 7:35 PM, Mercury at elongation on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Orion well up by the program's end, Nils Allen.

10) Saturday December 19, 2009 CoR SP, SS 4:55 PM, PS 6:05 PM, PE 7:35 PM, Mercury at elongation on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Orion well up by the program's end, Matt Wilson.

