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Story and photos by Brandon Steinert

Barton Planetarium to 're-boot' with all-new technology; three days of demonstrations planned

The Barton Community College Planetarium is getting a "re-boot," as the staff is calling it.

During the re-boot, the 1960s technology previously in use will be on display, then lowered into its housing to make way for a high-definition projector, using a series of precisely curved mirrors to proportionally project the image onto the Planetarium's 365-degree dome.

The re-boot will be a series of open-house events on Thursday, April 24; Friday, April 25; and Sunday, April 27, during which the public is invited to enjoy short educational movies and tours of the night sky. The movies and star tours will be on a half hour rotation during the dates and times outlined in the accompanying info-graphic.

Astronomy Instructor Tim Folkerts said he's ecstatic about the update and what it means for Barton and the surrounding communities.

"After 40 years, it was time for some major upgrades to bring us into the 21st century," he said. "The upgrade will give us new flexibility in how we can use the facility. The Planetarium now becomes a digital dome theater. We can see the night skies in whole new ways, or even fly to the moon to watch an eclipse. We can also show a wide variety of educational and entertaining movies that appeal to people of all ages.

"Science and learning should be fun and interesting. This upgrade will provide some 'wow' factor to the facility and hopefully get more people excited about the universe around them."

The new, improved planetarium will provide many new capabilities for a diverse range of groups to take advantage of, including:

- **Astronomy Class** will be able to study how the sun, stars, planets and moons move from day-to-day, month-to-month, and year-to-year.
- **School Field Trips** for K-12 students can expand on ideas learned in the classroom. We have a series of short lessons for K-8 that can be tailored to meet the needs of specific classes.
- **Star Tours** will introduce the public to the wonders of the night sky in each season. We can zoom in on specific constellations, planets and galaxies for an up-close look.
- **Educational Videos** are available for a variety of topics, many of which were designed to display proportionally on the dome, providing an immersive experience.
- **Our 60-Seat Theater** can show nearly any movie, PowerPoint presentation or computer-generated image.

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