

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Stacey Carroll

801-350-0624

[scarroll@riester.com](mailto:scarroll@riester.com)



**Clark Planetarium partners with NASA for *Flight to the Moon***

Planetarium documents mission to find water on the moon

**SALT LAKE CITY (June 11, 2009)** – [Clark Planetarium](http://www.clarkplanetarium.org) and NASA have partnered to create a "newsreel" ([http://www.clarkplanetarium.org/nowplaying\\_movies.php](http://www.clarkplanetarium.org/nowplaying_movies.php)) program describing NASA's next mission to the moon, the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) and Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite (LCROSS) missions to search for the most precious molecule for life in the universe – water.

On June 17, these two unmanned spacecraft will be launched together in one rocket from the Kennedy Space Center. The LRO spacecraft will map the moon in unprecedented detail while LCROSS will drop a massive projectile into a lunar crater, creating an impact plume for the spacecraft to fly into and analyze if water is present.

Clark Planetarium has worked closely with NASA to create a production depicting these events in a full-dome, three-dimensional mini-show allowing audiences to be virtually transported to the moon with these remarkable spacecraft.

"Clark Planetarium has utilized the discoveries of NASA previously, but we've never partnered before on a project," said Mike Murray, Programs Manager. "This is a great opportunity for the planetarium and it's exciting to be a part of such an historic event. Americans briefly visited the moon 40 years ago, now it's time to explore that world to help prepare for future explorations of the moon and Mars."

NASA chose Clark Planetarium to tell the story of the LRO/LCROSS mission because of the planetarium's extensive experience creating scientifically accurate visualizations of astronomy and space science missions with strong public appeal. Clark Planetarium's experience and ability to create and distribute the program to other planetariums and science centers around the world was a major reason for NASA's partnering with the planetarium on this project.

***Flight to the Moon*** begins playing at Clark Planetarium on June 12. The 10-minute production plays weekly on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday before the [Night Vision](#) program, a live-narrated presentation about what's happening in the current night sky and in the world of astronomy. Updates on the LRO/LCROSS mission will also be available on planetarium's website. Visit [www.clarkplanetarium.org](http://www.clarkplanetarium.org) for a complete listing of show times and to purchase tickets online.

Clark Planetarium's mission is to create and present stimulating educational programs that effectively share astronomy and space exploration information with Salt Lake County residents, Utah students, educators and families, and visitors from around the country and the world.

-more-

**SIDEBAR:**  
**About LRO/LCROSS**

NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) will circle the moon in an elliptical polar orbit, periodically dipping to within 30 miles of the lunar surface, to photograph the moon with more than ten times the detail of any previous lunar survey. The LRO will map the Moon's chemical resources, look for ice, search for potential landing sites and measure the radiation environment.

The second spacecraft, the Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite (LCROSS) will ride piggybacked onto the LRO until shortly after the Centaur upper stage rocket accelerates them on a course for the moon. After this final burn of the Centaur rocket, the LCROSS and LRO will separate. The LRO's course will be adjusted to enter into lunar orbit while LCROSS's path (both the Centaur rocket and the LCROSS observing platform) will be directed towards an impact near the moon's South Pole, where water ices are thought to exist within lunar craters that are in perpetual shadow.

-###-