

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Clark Planetarium offers experience in conjunction with White House “Star Party”** Presentation features news feed of Presidential address, free activities

**SALT LAKE CITY (October 6, 2009)** – Tomorrow evening, President Obama will host a “Star Party” on the White House lawn. Clark Planetarium is excited to participate in this unique event, providing local residents a chance to celebrate the International Year of Astronomy.

On Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2009, beginning at 6 p.m. MDT, President Obama will host an event at the White House including more than 20 telescopes set up on the White House lawn focused on Jupiter, the moon and select stars, giving 150 middle school students a special view of the nighttime skies.

An official statement from the White House Office of the Press Secretary explains that the event is being held to, “...highlight the President’s commitment to science, engineering and math education as the foundation of this nation’s global technological and economic leadership and to express his support for astronomy in particular – for its capacity to promote a greater awareness of our place in the universe, expand human knowledge and inspire the next generation by showing them the beauty and mysteries of the night sky.”

In Salt Lake City, Clark Planetarium will host a free public event in conjunction with the White House Star Party to share the event with the community and to promote a greater public appreciation for the wonders of the night sky. The event is one of many being held in 2009 as part of the International Year of Astronomy, celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Galileo’s first use of a telescope as an astronomical instrument.

In addition to hosting a live feed of the President’s address in the Hansen Star Theatre, the planetarium will use its state-of-the-art technology to show audience members high-resolution images of the planets and stars that White House Star Party attendees will be seeing.

Clark Planetarium will open the Hansen Dome Theatre beginning at 5:30 p.m. to begin showing images and descriptions of planets that can be seen in our skies. At approximately 6 p.m., the theatre will use a live feed from NASA-TV to project the Presidential address onto the dome. Following President Obama’s remarks, audiences will be invited to learn about different types of telescopes and observing techniques. When the skies become dark (at approximately 7:30 p.m.), planetarium staff will set up high-power telescopes on the corner of 100 South and 400 West for public viewing of Jupiter and its moons.

“We are proud and excited to take part in this event on a local level,” explained Programs Manager Mike Murray. “To have the President share in our enthusiasm for astronomy as we celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Galileo using a telescope to explore the night sky gives us another chance to reach our community with a message of how important science is in our everyday lives.”

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. Additional information on this event can be found on the Clark Planetarium website, [www.clarkplanetarium.org](http://www.clarkplanetarium.org).

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