



FOR THE JOURNAL

Onlookers gaze at the wonders of space in Kinard Hall's planetarium.

Starry, starry night to return to Clemson Planetarium

Facility remodeling includes digital technology

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CLEMSON — Sometimes a journey into space can be as close as a drive to Clemson University.

And, the interplanetary trip just got better thanks to a total makeover and some high-tech innovations.

The new Clemson planetarium is as state-of-the-art as it was when it first opened in the Kinard laboratory in 1961, utilizing a mirror system to display stars and constellations on the domed roof. Since then, countless visitors have witnessed the marvels of deep space while relaxing in the university's reclining chairs.

However, the passing of time wore on the planetarium, and replacement parts became more elusive; the outdated technology was being replaced rapidly by its digital counterpart.

In 1994, the planetarium shut its doors due to budget constraints, but later reopened with the help of volunteers from within the department. In 2010, the entire facility was shut down **once** more and was subsequently gutted, stripping away old machinery and making way for the latest in technological innovations.

Now the planetarium has reopened once more, complete with new seats, high definition digital projectors and surround sound audio. By defining astronomical objects like planets and stars in 3D, the viewer can better understand the make-up of the cosmos.

Operators can take the audience on a tour through nearly a million celestial objects, while the audience zooms past stars and planets, gazes at nearby galaxies and finds themselves at the **brink** of the observable universe.

Clemson astronomy students lead the shows and the audience can view ready-made programs, or even ask questions and see exactly what they are interested in, like the constellation Orion or even far away nebulas.

The planetarium will be organizing regularly scheduled public shows starting this spring. Large group visits can be scheduled in advance by calling (864) 656-3416. Once the showing schedule is finalized, groups and families alike can attend this phenomenal show about our universe.