

Canada funding world's largest telescope

The federal government recently approved a 10-year, \$243 million investment in what will become the world's largest telescope known as the "Thirty Metre Telescope" (TMT).

Slated for completion in 2023-2024 at an overall cost of \$1.5 billion (US) at the summit of Mauna Kea volcano in Hawaii, it is a joint venture with the United States, Japan, India and China.

Most of the money came from the National Research Council and Canada Foundation for Innovation. The scope was designed and constructed by Port Coquitlam, B.C., firm Dynamic Structures Ltd.

On its website, the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada touted the news as "a success for the Canadian astronomical community, and will pay scientific, cultural, and economic dividends now and in the future."

But the TMT, once completed, will not be able the world's largest telescope for long. European countries



Neel Roberts
The Sky's the Limit

are developing the European Extremely Large Telescope, which boasts mirrors 39 metres in diameter atop a Chilean mountain, Cerro Armazones, in the country's Atacama Desert with a planned activation date of 2024 at the earliest.

Sky watch

On Wednesday, July 1 look northwest-west after sunset for a short but spectacular near conjunction of Jupiter and Venus before they set at about 11:30 p.m. It should be visible in the daylight before dusk due to its brightness.

On Thursday, July 9 after sunset, look for Venus, the brightest object in the sky besides the moon, as Venus

is at its brightest all night long and for a few days after that.

Friday, July 31 will be the second full moon of the month. The first occurred on Thursday, July 2, and technically the moon won't turn blue, but the rarity of this event is what gave this occurrence this name.

On Wednesday, July 29 look in the southern sky a few hours before dawn as it is expected debris from comet 96P Machholz will fall at a rate of 15-20 per hour. With a near full moon, it will be harder to enjoy.

Public events

Mark Friday, July 10 at 7:30 p.m. on your calendar and join us at the Vulcan Tourism and Trek Station for our monthly stargazing session. The topic this month is the summer sky. A short indoor presentation will be followed by looking at the sky with our 11-inch telescope outside.

Participants can snap their own pictures of celestial objections with their smartphones through the

telescope.

Refreshments are provided, and all are welcome to this free event.

Further information is available by visiting www.vulcantourism.com or contacting Vulcan Tourism at 403-485-2994.

Join us for some good times and great viewing under wonderfully dark skies at the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's annual Star Barbecue, which takes place Friday, July 17 to Sunday, July 19 at the Eccles Ranch Observatory just north of Caroline.

Camping costs \$20 per vehicle, and the Saturday buffet is \$21 per person. For more information, visit calgary.rasc.ca/starbq.htm, or contact Roland Dechesne at Roland.Dechesne@cnrl.com or 403-510-4330.

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at (403) 485-2683 and Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com.