

Early risers are rewarded Saturday with lunar event

**BY SUSAN QUINLAN
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Skywatchers are set to enjoy a unique event early Saturday morning when a lunar eclipse occurs, with Albertans set to have a near front-row seat.

“What’s so unique about this darkening is not only will western Canada get the best view, but the covered moon will be setting while the sun rises in the opposite direction ... almost unheard of considering the earth is necessary to create the shadow,” said Neel Roberts, astronomy co-ordinator for the Vulcan Tourism and Trek Station.

The last lunar eclipse occurred about a year ago, when the full moon passed through earth’s shadow and appeared rusty red, said Roberts.

Members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Calgary) will have telescopes and binoculars available at the Vulcan Tourism and Trek Station so visitors can get a good look at the blood-red moon, which should be visible for two hours. In Alberta, the best view will occur at about 7 a.m.

If you can’t make it to Vulcan, astronomy experts suggest you head to a site with clear skies and little light pollution. Find an unobstructed view of the western horizon where you can watch the full red moon descending in the northwest while the sun rises in the southeast.

The Vulcan Tourism and Trek Station invites the public to view the eclipse beginning at 5:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 10. There is no admission fee and refreshments will be served.