

Stargazing sessions have been running for four years at Trek Station

Stephen Tipper
Editor

This Friday's stargazing session at the Vulcan Tourism and Trek Station marks the fourth anniversary of the monthly look at celestial bodies.

Technology has really helped attract people to Vulcan for the sessions, said Neel Roberts, an organizer of the monthly stargazing event and a member of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

People can now take pictures using their smartphones through the telescope, and this gives Vulcan an edge, said Roberts.



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— Devan Daniels,
Vulcan Tourism Society
administrator

"You can't do that on your own," he said. "You have to come to someone who has the equipment."

These photos are keepsakes, said Roberts.

"It's something that's unique, and they go tell all their friends," said Roberts.

Roberts said people come from all over to the sessions. On average, one to two dozen people attend the sessions.

"Sometimes, on the bigger events, we get 100," said Roberts.

And the Trek Station is an ideal venue, he said, with it being warm in the winter and refreshments being available, he said.

Devan Daniels, administrator for the Vulcan Tourism Society, said Vulcan Tourism receives many general comments about how much fun people have at the stargazing sessions, how good the sessions are and how much they look forward to them.

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Stephen Tipper Vulcan Advocate

Vulcan Tourism Society Administrator Devan Daniels, left, shakes hands with Neel Roberts, who has been involved in organizing the monthly stargazing sessions at the Tourism and Trek Station since they began. This Friday's event marks the fourth anniversary of the monthly look at celestial bodies.

Vulcan Tourism will also talk to people the day of a stargazing session and they often stick around Vulcan or come back, if they're able to, for the event, said Daniels.

"It is worthwhile — it's educational, and it's fun, and it's free," said Daniels.

The stargazing sessions do attract people to Vulcan, and visitors who are already in the county want to stay longer to take in a session, Daniels said.

"It promotes the town and the county for sure because it's just one more thing that we offer that people can talk about," he said.

Daniels said he'd like to see an expanded program in the future.

"We think we need to

brainstorm a little about how we can do that within the confines of our funding and Town support, because this is obviously a rented building" (from the Town of Vulcan), he said.

"Down the road, and I do mean well into the future, I'd like to see some really great things happening, but again, baby steps to get there."

Daniels said he would like to see an events calendar, perhaps jointly with the astronomy group or perhaps taken on by Tourism.

"Expand the program in those types of ways, or maybe introduce a couple of new components to the existing program — what those might be

I don't know," he said.

Stargazing sessions take place on the second Friday of the month, starting at 7:30 p.m., at the Trek Station.

The next one takes place this Friday, when organizers plan to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the sessions.

As usual, an indoor presentation will be followed by looking at the night sky through telescopes, including an 11-inch telescope that stays at the Trek Station. This month, a Christmas theme will be explored.

This summer during Spock Days, national astronomer, author and lecturer Alan Dyer will be the key speaker on Friday, June 12, said Roberts.