

To: Huerfano County Board of County Commissioners
From: Colorado Springs Astronomical Society
Date: 10 July 2023
Subject: Rocky Mountain Star Stare 2023

July 10, 2023



Dear Commissioners,

I thought you might find it interesting to receive some information about this year's Rocky Mountain Star Stare (RMSS) which was held 14-18 June on property owned by the Colorado Springs Astronomical Society and located about 5 miles north of Gardner.

It was a successful event for us, with 426 participants registered and 330 attending. Attendees were checked against the registration list as they arrived and directed to the check-in site where they received their registration packets and identification badges. In their registration packets were rules to be followed regarding no open flames, smoking only in vehicles, and other rules regarding safety.

Our attendees came from all over Colorado and 21 other states – many traveling from as far as Florida, North Carolina, and Washington to attend RMSS. Also in attendance were two students from Pikes Peak State College who were awarded academic scholarships to attend RMSS.

RMSS is a family friendly event. We had 47 children age 12 and under registered free of charge along with 20 teens between 13 and 18 years old registered at a reduced rate. We conducted several age-appropriate activities for children and teens, including a solar system walk, paper rockets, spectroscopy demonstration, and games.

Karen Wilson, owner of The La Plaza Inn, worked with the Cheesecake Factory Food Truck to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner for the entire event. A very popular amenity Karen has now provided for 4 years.

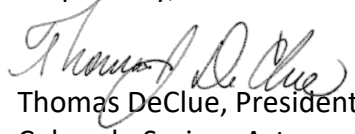
Our program of events included several talks on various topics of interest to the amateur astronomer, as well as a talk by our Youth Speaker on the topic of planetary nebula. Our keynote speakers were Dr. Brian Kloppenborg, Director of the American Association of Variable Star Observers, and Dr. John Spenser of the Southwest Research Institute in Boulder, CO. Our schedule of activities included a photo contest, amateur telescope making contest, door prize giveaways, and several social hours for attendees to get to know one another. After sunset everyone's attention is on observing objects in the night sky using telescopes from small to very large, as well as binoculars and even the unaided eye. Many participants engage in astrophotography as well.

In the 34 years we've conducted the annual RMSS event, with the last 14 of those years on our property north of Gardner, we've never experienced a medical emergency, but have been fully prepared for one. We have two professionally certified medical staff on-site, emergency response procedures in place, emergency response training on site during the event, and coordination with emergency dispatchers prior to the event to ensure a rapid and appropriate response to any emergency.

This year we experienced a medical emergency for the first time involving a participant on the ground and in distress. Our medical staff were notified by radio and provided medical assessments and first aid within 2 minutes of being notified. 911 was called immediately. An emergency responder arrived in about 10 minutes and an ambulance from Walsenburg in about 30 minutes. The victim's condition was diagnosed, transported to Gardner, and then airlifted out to receive critical medical care. An incident report prepared by our medical staff is available upon request.

RMSS 2023 was very successful due to the hard work of many CSASTRO members, the support of your Huerfano County staff and emergency responders, the La Plaza Inn, and other service providers we engaged from the local community to help prepare for the event. We look forward to RMSS 2024 and our continuing relationship with our Huerfano County partners.

Respectfully,



Thomas DeClue, President
Colorado Springs Astronomical Society
rmss.org
csastro.org

