

## **Chabot Space & Science Center Marks Fifth Anniversary**

**— Weekend Celebration To be Held on August 20 & 21 —**

04 August 2005 -- (Oakland, CA) Get out the party hats! Five years ago, on August 19, 2000, Chabot Space & Science Center opened its doors at its new location on Skyline Boulevard in the Oakland Hills. To mark the occasion, Chabot is celebrating in a weekend birthday bash where visitors will be treated with free Dreyer's ice cream and a day packed with entertainment and activities, in addition to the Center's regular shows and exhibits. Visitors are invited to wish Chabot a happy birthday and make Solar bracelets, create a Saturn party hat, find their birthday star, play space bingo, go on a space scavenger hunt, launch a water rocket, race a solar car and visit with costumed characters. Festivities are from **11 am – 5 pm on Saturday, August 20 and 11am – 4 pm on Sunday, August 21**. Activities are free with General Admission.

“Chabot has continued to serve the community with its hands-on approach to science learning,” said Alex Barnett, Chabot's Executive Director. “Since the opening in 2000, we have expanded the classroom space, increased the number of exhibits, opened another telescope and re-launched the planetarium with a full-dome digital system. We are proud of our accomplishments and the impact we've made in the lives of students in the Bay Area.”

Since opening the doors of its new building and observatories, Chabot has hosted more than 660,000 visitors, including thousands of students from the Oakland Unified School District. According to Earl Hamlin, Treasurer of Chabot's Board of Directors, the new Science Center has reinvested about 3.6 million dollars into the Oakland economy through payroll, contracts and purchasing goods and services.

Currently, Measure G funded construction is continuing with the addition of two 880 square foot classrooms, a new storage space for educational materials and supplies, a woodworking shop to build and repair exhibits, and a lab where the public will be able to watch real space artifacts being restored. These new spaces will open in time for the new school year this fall. Additionally, construction is slated to begin in September to expand the Observatory Plaza. When completed, the expanded area will be more than triple its current size and will enable many more visitors access to Chabot's nighttime telescope viewing. The goal is to complete the observing deck expansion by the end of October in order to accommodate the public's interest in looking at Mars when the planet is at its second closest approach to Earth in 60,000 years.

Chabot's facilities will be closed to the public from September 6 – 16, in order to perform needed maintenance. The Center will reopen on Saturday, September 17, resuming it's regular hours, which are Wed – Thurs, 10 – 5; Fri and Sat, 10 – 10; and Sun, 11 – 5.

Chabot Space & Science Center is the continuation and expansion of a public observatory that has served Bay Area schools and citizens with astronomy and science education programs for over 122 years. The institution began in 1883 as the Oakland Observatory, through a gift from Anthony Chabot to the City of Oakland. The original Oakland Observatory was located in downtown Oakland, and provided public telescope viewing for the community. For decades, it also served as the official timekeeping station for the entire Bay Area, measuring time with its transit telescope.

The observatory moved to its Mountain Boulevard location in 1915 due to increasing light pollution and urban congestion. In the mid-1960s, the facility was expanded considerably with the addition of a 90-seat planetarium, science labs and classrooms, a library, workshops, and a small exhibit room. Throughout this time, the observatory was renamed as the Chabot Science Center, and was staffed mainly by Oakland Unified School District personnel and volunteers. In 1977, seismic safety concerns terminated public school students' access to the original observatory facility. The observatory building remained open to the general public, but school activities were limited to outlying classroom buildings and the planetarium.

Recognizing the need to restore full access to the facility, either by repair or relocation, in 1989 Chabot Observatory & Science Center (COSC) was formed as a Joint Powers Agency with the City of Oakland, the Oakland Unified School District, and the East Bay Regional Park District, in collaboration with the Eastbay Astronomical Society, and in 1992 was recognized as a nonprofit organization. The project for the new Science Center broke ground in October 1996 and construction began in May 1998.

In January 2000, anticipating the opening of the new facility, the organization changed its name from Chabot Observatory & Science Center to Chabot Space & Science Center. The new name was chosen to better convey the organization's focus on astronomy and the space sciences, while communicating both the broad range and the technologically advanced nature of programs available in the new Science Center. Opened August 19, 2000, the new Chabot Space & Science Center is an 86,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art science and technology education facility on a 13-acre site in the hills of Oakland, California.

**Chabot Space and Science Center** is a 501c3 nonprofit interactive science center focusing on astronomy and the inter-relationships of all the sciences. Its observatory, planetarium, exhibits, and natural park setting are a place where a diverse population of students, teachers, and the public can imagine, understand, and learn to shape their future through science. The Center is located at 10000 Skyline Blvd. in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park. **Summer hours, July 5 – Sept 5:** Tues – Thurs, 10 am–5pm; Friday & Saturday, 10 am–10 pm; Sunday, 11am–5 pm. Closed Mon. General admission, including free parking and a daytime planetarium show, is \$13.00 for adults, \$9.00 youth and seniors. Children under 3 are admitted free. *SonicVision* and *The Sky Tonight* planetarium shows and large format movies in the MegaDome Theater are \$8.00 adult, and \$7.00 Youth & Senior. Telescopes are open for Free Public Viewing Fridays & Saturdays from dusk – 10 pm, weather permitting. Tickets may be purchased at the door, or by calling (510) 336-7373.

**For more information, call (510) 336-7300, or visit [www.chabotspace.org](http://www.chabotspace.org)**

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