

## **\$2.5 million from Arizona moves International Dark Sky Discovery Center to Phase Two**

*International attraction connects the night sky to life on earth through STEM education and leading-edge experiences and will house largest telescope in Greater Phoenix*

**FOUNTAIN HILLS, ARIZ. (July 1, 2021)** – With \$2.5 million in the state budget allocated to the [International Dark Sky Discovery Center](#) (IDSDC), the project now moves to Phase Two. Joe Bill, IDSDC President said, “Our entire Board is deeply grateful for Representative John Kavanagh’s tireless efforts on our behalf. By working to inform his legislative colleagues how the IDSDC will be a state-wide asset, he secured funding support that will enable us to advance to Phase Two.”

“Phase two is the detailed architectural design of this state-of-the-art, science-based facility,” stated Jerry Butler, the IDSDC Board member leading the architectural firm selection process.

The non-profit IDSDC, with 15,000 sq. ft., will have four distinct educational attractions. One is a Dark Sky Observatory with the largest telescope in the Greater Phoenix area.

Ted Blank, the IDSDC Vice President is particularly excited about the observatory and stated, “We will offer public viewing to present breathtaking views of the moon, planets, nebula, galaxies, and other stellar objects. We will also have astrophotography, research, and broadcast capabilities.”

The observatory’s capabilities for astrophotography and research have already attracted the interest of university leadership.

“Arizona State University looks forward to developing a collaborative relationship with the International Dark Sky Discovery Center,” said ASU president Dr. Michael Crow.

Interactive and mixed reality experiential and educational learning opportunities will be provided by the other three major IDSDC components: a Hyperspace Planetarium, an Inspiration Theater, and an Immersion Zone.

“The International Dark Sky Discovery Center is an exciting opportunity for students and amateur star-gazers alike,” said Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey. “The Center will be another tremendous asset to keep our state at the forefront of STEM education.”

The importance of educating the next generation is shared by Senator Mark Kelly, “As an engineer and former astronaut, I am excited to support the International Dark Sky Discovery Center’s mission to provide STEM education programs that will help inspire the next generation in the pursuit of space sciences and exploration.”

In addition to the support statements in this article, the IDSDC has widespread support from leaders throughout the state and beyond. Senator Kyrsten Sinema’s support statement emphasizes the

importance of protecting Arizona’s unparalleled access to night skies. Congressman David Schweikert’s statement highlights the facility’s benefit to the entire state. All the support statements are on the homepage of the IDSDC: [darkskycenter.org](http://darkskycenter.org)

“Fountain Hills, which was designated in January 2018 by the [International Dark Sky Association](http://InternationalDarkSkyAssociation.org) as the 17th International Dark Sky Community in the world,” said Mayor Ginny Dickey, “is the perfect location for the IDSDC in the Greater Phoenix area.”

“With about 25% of the funds now committed for this \$20 million project,” said Bill, “we are hopeful that those who are capable of major donations will be inspired to help fund Phase Three and bring this exciting endeavor to life.”

The public can experience the IDSDC’s vision by viewing an inspiring three-minute video accessed via the website homepage: [darkskycenter.org](http://darkskycenter.org)

Those interested in more information or donating to make this world-class facility a reality should also visit the website.

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For additional video and photo assets, please click [HERE](#).

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**About International Dark Sky Discovery Center**

The proposed non-profit International Dark Sky Discovery Center is a unique, state-of-the-art, multi-functional facility that will provide science-based education and also serve as a tourism attraction for the state of Arizona and beyond.

Night sky experiences are an important part of astrotourism, a travel experience that is rapidly growing worldwide. Many visitors already travel to Arizona specifically to tour its many astronomy-related facilities. By becoming an additional attraction for Arizona, the IDSDC intends to participate in the astrotourism phenomenon and further Arizona’s reputation as the nation’s leading astronomy state.

In addition to being a regional attraction, the IDSDC will fulfill its mission with science-based education and experiences that will support STEM programs and foster partnerships with Arizona State University and other colleges and schools across the state and nation.

Science-based education and interactive experiences will establish the IDSDC as an international centerpiece for supporting the growing world-wide interest in how dark skies relate to the exploration of the cosmos, archaeoastronomy, and the well-being of humans, plants, and animals. Children and adults alike will be introduced to and awed by the wonders of the universe. These experiences will inspire, educate, and stir imaginations.