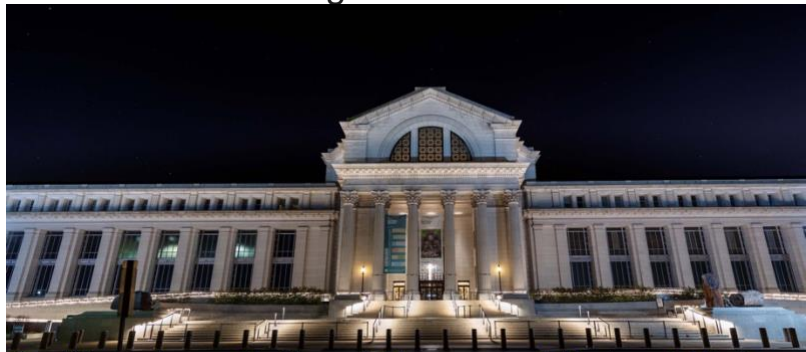




March 15, 2023

Dear Friends of the IDSDC,

How awesome is it to receive some outstanding national attention for our community and our state? We are honored (and a tad ecstatic) about Fountain Hills being included in a new Smithsonian Exhibit that has a mission very similar to that of the Discovery Center. The following is the press release that will be sent today to media outlets throughout Arizona.



Smithsonian - National Museum of Natural History

Begin Press Release

FOUNTAIN HILLS FEATURED IN NEW SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT

WASHINGTON, March 15, 2023 — The [Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History](#) announced March 23 as the date it will open "[Lights Out: Recovering Our Night Sky](#)", a new 4,340-square-foot exhibition about the global loss of the night sky to light pollution. The Arizona town of Fountain Hills and its beautiful view of the night sky is included in the exhibition.

“We are honored to have our community be one of only thirteen of the more than 200 designated International Dark Sky Places around the world included in the exhibit,” said **Fountain Hills Mayor Ginny Dickey**. “We’re also proud of that designation given how rare that achievement is when adjacent to a major metropolitan area.”



Caption: Fountain Hills photo included in Smithsonian. The Milky Way appears over Fountain Lake with the light dome of Greater Phoenix area in the background.

Credit: Rebecca Bloom / bloomphoto.com

The new exhibit will cover the history of lighting, the connection between humanity and the night sky, the unintended consequences of excessive outdoor lighting, and the principles that can be used to reduce light pollution. “‘Lights Out’ will give visitors the opportunity to learn what is at stake as the stars and cosmos fade from our view at night,” explained **Kirk Johnson, Director of the National Museum of Natural History**.

Fountain Hills is included in the exhibition to show visitors that they can find ways to experience the night sky in their own communities, wherever they are. Due to its exemplary dedication to protection of local night skies through public policy, the promotion of quality outdoor lighting, and outreach to residents and visitors, Fountain Hills can still glimpse the Milky Way, even with skyglow from nearby Phoenix. It was accredited by the International Dark-Sky Association for these efforts in 2018.

U.S. Senator Mark Kelly is one Arizonan who has an insightful perspective on light pollution. “As a pilot and commander of the Space Shuttle, I’ve seen just how bright our planet is at night,” Sen. Kelly said. “And I’m thrilled that Fountain Hills is leading the way in showing how we can protect dark night skies while growing the Arizona economy.”

A [recent report](#) found that each year, astronomy and space science in Arizona generate as much economic activity as Super Bowl host cities can expect. Arizona skies are also a boon to its tourism industry, drawing visitors from around the world.

“Dark skies are an increasingly important part of our state’s tourism offerings,” said **Arizona Office of Tourism Director Lisa Urias**. “Fountain Hills admirably represents Arizona at the Smithsonian, and we look forward to welcoming visitors inspired by the exhibit to come experience all our night skies have to offer.”

Development of a nonprofit STEM-based International Dark Sky Discovery Center is underway in Fountain Hills. “We are delighted to have the Smithsonian open an exhibit with the same mission of educating people about the adverse impact of excessive lighting,” said **Joe Bill, President of the Discovery Center**. “Detailed design is nearly complete, and we have already raised one-third of the \$25 million needed for this facility.”



Caption: An architectural rendering of the International Dark Sky Discovery Center to be built in Fountain Hills, Arizona.

The planned Discovery Center has five major components supporting its educational mission. These include a Dark Sky Observatory with the largest telescope in the Greater Phoenix area, a state-of-the art Hyperspace Planetarium, a highly interactive Immersion Zone, a 150 tiered-seat theater with 8K technology, and a hands-on Einstein Exploration Station to teach the physics of light. A narrated 3D flyover of the Discovery Center, support statements from leaders throughout the state, and much more are here: darkskycenter.org

In support of the mission of the Discovery Center, the Fountain Hills Dark Sky Association hosts its sixth annual Fountain Hills Dark Sky Festival on Saturday, March 25, from 4-9 P.M. Events will be held at the Fountain Hills Community Center at 13001 North La Montana Drive. The festival includes nationally known speakers, virtual reality experiences, meteorite and live nocturnal animal exhibits, food trucks and beer and wine garden, laser tours of the night sky, and much more. For more information about the Festival, visit fhdarksky.com/events/festival/.

End Press Release

We believe multiple media outlets will run this story. What a wonderful accomplishment by our community!!!!

SIGNS PLACED ON SITE

Two signs have been installed to point out the location of the facility on the south side of Centennial Circle near the Library. As reconfiguration of the Community Garden continues, the site for Discovery Center is now mostly cleared.

A subcommittee of the Board (Walt Franklin, Jerry Butler, and Scott Adams) arranged for sign installation and are pictured in the photo.



Photo credit: Bob Burns.

Naming Rights Celebration

On Saturday February 25, friends and family of Jackie Miles gathered to celebrate her 85th birthday and to present her with a certificate awarding her the naming rights to the Private Viewing Terrace of the International Dark Sky Discovery Center (Discovery Center). Her friends and family donated over \$25,000 for the naming rights.

Jackie Miles has been a strong supporter of the Discovery Center since she was a founding member of the Fountain Hills Dark Sky Association which led to Fountain Hills being a designated as an International Dark Sky Community. The Private Viewing Terrance will be used for a variety of functions including Discovery Center guests viewing a solar telescope during the day, star parties at night, and various events like small weddings and other celebrations.



Above: Jackie Miles, right, with her daughter, Judy Miles who organized the celebration.

The number of donations and pledges continues to grow. Thank you so much for your interest in and support of the Discovery Center.

Please forward this email to anyone who might be interested in the Discovery Center or might wish to learn more about our [donation and pledge programs](#).

If you receive this email because someone forwarded it to you and you wish to be added to our email distribution list, you can subscribe on our [Contact Page](#).

May all your stars align,

Board of Directors

Joe Bill, President

Ted Blank, Vice President

Nancy Bill, Treasurer

April Sessner, Secretary

Scott Adams, Kevin Beck, Jerry Butler, Vicky Derksen, Jeff Esposito, Walt Franklin, Alan Magazine, Chandra Merica, Tony Pistilli

International Dark Sky Discovery Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

	<p align="center">JOIN OUR LAUNCH CREW International Dark Sky Discovery Center a 501(c)3 nonprofit AZ corporation, EIN: 83-3364739</p> <p>Your donation will support our fundraising efforts and you will be recognized for your early involvement. Those donating \$100 or more will be displayed on a prominent plaque in the facility as follows:</p> <table><tr><td>\$5,000 or more:</td><td>Mission Controller</td></tr><tr><td>\$1,000 - \$4,999:</td><td>Launch Founder</td></tr><tr><td>\$500 - \$999:</td><td>Launch Patron</td></tr><tr><td>\$100 - \$499:</td><td>Launch Sponsor</td></tr></table>	\$5,000 or more:	Mission Controller	\$1,000 - \$4,999:	Launch Founder	\$500 - \$999:	Launch Patron	\$100 - \$499:	Launch Sponsor	
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Please make check payable to: International Dark Sky Discovery Center Mail to: International Dark Sky Discovery Center, PO Box 18198, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269 Donations can also be made via PayPal on our website here: darkskycenter.org/donors All donors will be added to the email list of supporters to receive occasional updates.										