



Press Release

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For Immediate Release:

Stafford Air & Space Museum Receives \$60,000 Sarkeys Foundation Grant

School children and visitors of all ages will soon have the chance to learn about science in a digital planetarium at the Stafford Air & Space Museum, thanks to a \$60,000 grant from Sarkeys Foundation.

The planetarium will seat about 40 school children and plays high quality, educational videos through a computer system that projects the images on the dome's ceiling. Available videos feature lessons on science, mathematics, space travel, astronomy, history, and geology. New videos for the system are available on an ongoing basis. The inflatable and portable planetarium will be installed in early 2009, and will be the centerpiece of the new Rose and Tom Luczo Educational Center which is now under construction on the south side of the museum.

Former astronaut Lt. General Thomas P. Stafford stated, "I am especially grateful for this generous grant from Sarkeys Foundation, which is one of the most prestigious foundations in Oklahoma. This project will aid in the motivation of school children to excel in the important disciplines of mathematics and science. Amazing scientific technology such as this planetarium will influence learning in students of all ages in Weatherford and western Oklahoma."

Sarkeys Foundation was formed by S.J. Sarkeys in 1962, and since that time has granted over \$55 million toward the mission of "improving the quality of life in Oklahoma." With assets of around \$100 million, Sarkeys Foundation grants to a diverse group of non-profit organizations and institutions, almost all of which are located in Oklahoma. Concerning this grant, Ann Way, Interim Executive Director of Sarkeys Foundation said, "We believe the Stafford Air & Space Museum is a true treasure for our state, and we are proud that Sarkeys Foundation is able to be a small part of the program expansion."

According to Stafford Air & Space Museum Co-Director Chuck Dougherty, "We are extremely appreciative for the opportunity to partner with Sarkeys Foundation to expand

the interactive educational offerings of the museum. This planetarium will be a unique asset to the museum that will benefit school children for years to come.” Museum Co-Director Lynne Thurman added, “The planetarium is another step in the right direction in our goal to become a more interactive learning environment. This Sarkeys Foundation grant will allow us to complete a meaningful project we might not have otherwise been able to fund.”

The Stafford Air & Space Museum is named in honor of Lt. General Thomas P. Stafford, who was born and raised in Weatherford, Oklahoma and graduated with honors from the United States Naval Academy. He piloted Gemini VI, and commanded Gemini IX, Apollo 10, and the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project Mission. Stafford was the eighth recipient of the Congressional Space Medal of Honor.

The Stafford Air & Space Museum boasts one of the few Titan II rockets displayed full scale. Also on display from the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum is the flight pressure suit General Stafford wore on Apollo 10, a mission that included the first flight of the lunar module near the moon. There are displays featuring numerous space-flown artifacts as well as several full-size aircraft, including a Russian MiG21R and a USAF F-16 Fighting Falcon. Full-size replicas on display include the Wright Flyer, *Spirit of St. Louis*, Apollo Command Module, and Gemini space craft. Visit www.staffordmuseum.com for more information.

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