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Dear Fellow Planetarians

I'm excited! We are about to begin our IPS 2016 Conference in Warsaw. This is the event that will help us to recharge, reimagine, and redesign our planetariums. We'll be joined by hundreds of planetarians who face the same challenges, and are ready to share their ideas

Our host, the Copernicus Science Centre, has been organizing and preparing for all of us to connect with the international community. On June 19, hundreds of planetarians, many suffering from jetlag, will emerge on the scene. Every individual brings their unique experiences and by sharing we help each other learn and grow.

The days that follow will be filled with the very best of new ideas, new technologies, new teaching methodologies, old friends and new faces. IPS2016 in Warsaw, Poland is the place to be!

A couple of days prior to the Conference, the IPS Council, our governing body, will be meeting to plan the future of IPS. The idea is, if we're not looking beyond today, we won't be here for tomorrow. New ideas will be presented by our Vision 2020 team, which is made up of some of the most innovative, inspiring, and creative leaders in our industry. We'll be tantalized with plans for our IPS 2018 Conference in Toulouse, France. We'll have a glimpse of exciting possibilities for our IPS 2020

Conference. We'll also discover who among us are potential candidates for IPS Offices. WOW! Exciting adventures ahead!

And, if all of this is not thrilling enough for you, there's more! We are honored and thrilled to partner with the City of Brno of the Czech Republic and the Brno Observatory and Planetarium in presenting the IPS Fulldome Festival Brno 2016.

The Festival will be held the week prior to IPS 2016. We will be viewing all the latest fulldome films produced in the past two years as well as meet the very talented men and women who created them. This Festival is our best opportunity to select those new films only you know will be perfect for your planetarium audiences.

By the time you read this, I will have shopped for some new clothes, attempted to lose a couple of pounds, and reviewed *Roberts Rules of Order*. Because I am a vendor IPS president, those of you who are attending the conference will probably see more of me than you care to. Please come and talk to me. I cherish those opportunities. Collaborating with you to spark new ideas, to open doors we never knew existed, to be inspired...well, that's the way I like it.

We're in this together!



In Others' Words: Keep the Redding planetarium open



Dr. Jack Schreder
Redding, California
USA

“. . .but I do know that a simple light switch in a planetarium can ignite and illuminate limitless creative thought.”

In 1975, when I assumed the position of county superintendent of schools, one of my first acts was to become fiscally independent from the county of Shasta, which provided greater efficiency, transparency, and opportunities to provide more education services to constituents.

We were able to purchase surplus property from the Redding Elementary School District (Magnolia Street School) and house our entire operation in one location. The model for our administration was to enhance vocational education, special education, pre-school, and staff development and create a stimulus to improve science and mathematics programs.

We wrote several federal and state grants applications to fund these programs, including federal science grants to build a planetarium. The capital facilities and equipment for the planetarium were federally funded and

the operation and staffing were our responsibility. Through the years, we recruited the best and brightest to create stimulating programs that, over the years, have received national acclaim.

Two of the most recent planetarium directors, Brian Grigsby and David Ewart, have worked diligently to maintain a reputable planetarium to bring science to life. Until recently, the planetarium served between 6,000 and 8,000 students a year for a total of over 260,000 students in the first 30 years of the program offerings. Lately the attendance has dropped significantly. What happened?

When you cut staff to bare bones level, reduce offerings in content and frequency, triple the cost of a ticket, all but eliminate public information regarding the planetarium, what would you expect? It takes commitment, expertise, and financial support to provide a quality educational offering. The current minimal staff is on life support and doesn't know what to expect.

Over the years, I have had many anecdot-

al references offered by planetarium attendees reflecting the positive influence on their scientific interest. I don't know what influenced Elon Musk¹ or two boys in a garage in Palo Alto² that transformed apricot orchards in suburban San Jose to Silicon Valley, but I do know that a simple light switch in a planetarium can ignite and illuminate limitless creative thought.

With considerable attention on the new science, technology, engineering, and math programs (STEM), what better time to showcase a unique educational offering in the North State? To close or not fully support a valuable community asset at a time when there are historically high interest levels in space and related fields does not appear to be an enlightened educational leadership strategy. Once the planetarium is closed, it's closed.

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¹ Elon Musk is the founder and CEO of SpaceX, and co-founder and CEO of Tesla Motors

² Referring to Dave Packard and Bill Hewlett, the founders of Hewlett-Packard