

NET Awards Telescope to Rock County Public Schools in Bassett

LINCOLN, Neb. (May 12, 2010) -- NET recently awarded a top-of-the-line Celestron telescope to teacher Rhonda Ammon and her 41 fifth, sixth and seventh grade students at Rock County Public Schools in Bassett, Neb. Each of the students wrote a short essay describing how their school would use the telescope and why it was important to their education. The collection of essays became the school's submission in a contest for the telescope. NET Television viewers reviewed each of the entries online and voted for the best one. The telescope was made available to NET Television as part of a grant to celebrate four centuries of our fascination with astronomy and the PBS television program "400 Years of the Telescope."

"There is no way we could afford a \$2,000 telescope. With just 15 kids per class, money goes for books first. The kids were very excited and we'll be able to use this in all of our schools," said Ammon. One of the first uses for the telescope might possibly be for students and the public to stargaze at a football game this fall, with what they observe incorporated into an astronomy lesson. The presentation of the telescope to Ammon and her students was videotaped, and that along with a photo slideshow will soon be available for viewing on NET's website at netNebraska.org/telescope.

As per the grant stipulations, only Nebraska schools and non-profit organizations were eligible to win the telescope. The portable, top-of-the-line model is CPC® 800 GPS XLT, and is designed for amateur astronomers. The telescope can provide details about the surface of Jupiter and Saturn's rings, as well as features on the surface of Mars. It can also offer images of far-off Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. The value of the telescope is \$1,999.

The program "400 Years of the Telescope" presents the human quest to understand the structure and nature of the universe. From reenactments of Galileo's telescopic invention and early pen drawings of the moons of Jupiter, to vivid multi-colored nebulas captured by the Hubble Space Telescope, the program takes viewers from their armchairs into the wonders of space exploration.

"400 Years of the Telescope" is narrated by astrophysicist and author Neil deGrasse Tyson, host of the PBS series "NOVA ScienceNow." It is complemented by a website (netNebraska.org/telescope) that offers more information about the production of "400 Years of the Telescope" and the history of astronomy, as well as links to other organizations that focus on the science.

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NET Television:

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