STELLAR VISTA OBSERVATORY

The sky leads us forward

OUR FUTURE FOLLOWS

PLUS »»

3 2025 By the Numbers

4 Community Programs and Education

5 Service Spotlight: Natalie Brannon

6 Our Stars: Volunteer Spotlight

6 Sharing the Sky

7 Construction Updates

…and much more inside

BONUS:

Friends of the Night Sky Program Launch

Stellar Vista Observatory's mission is to provide observational experiences for people to enjoy, appreciate, and comprehend what we can see in southern Utah's starry night skies.

LETTER FROM OUR BOARD

Dear Friends of Stellar Vista Observatory,

As we reflect on 2025, we are deeply grateful for the community that continues to gather around Stellar Vista Observatory and for the steady progress made possible by your support. This year marked an important step forward as our programs expanded, our partnerships deepened, and the vision for a permanent observatory in Kanab moved closer to reality.

In 2025, more than 3,000 participants joined us for stargazing events, public talks, solar observations, and educational programs. We hosted 33 free public events and more than 200 private experiences, connecting residents and visitors alike with the wonder of the night sky. Our outreach included local school activities, 4H Space Camp, and the second year of Desert Starlight - each reinforcing our mission to help people comprehend and appreciate our beautiful night sky.

This year also saw meaningful progress in preserving and celebrating Kane County's dark skies. We launched the Kane County Friends of the Night Sky program, welcoming 16 local businesses committed to dark sky friendly practices, with more partnerships already underway. With the support of $52,000 in grant funding for observatory construction and STEM programming, we completed architectural and engineering work for Phase I of the observatory and submitted our building permit application for the site at Jackson Flat Reservoir. The Kanab City building permit was approved in February 2026!

None of this progress would be possible without the dedication of an engaged and passionate group of community members, volunteers, partners, and supporters who work tirelessly to move the mission forward. Together, we are building more than an observatory - we are creating a lasting investment in education, stewardship, and access to one of southern Utah's most extraordinary natural resources.

Thank you for being part of Stellar Vista Observatory's journey. With your continued support, we look forward to sharing even greater milestones in 2026 and beyond.

With gratitude,
The Trustees of Stellar Vista Observatory

1,862
Private Night Sky Attendees

What's Inside

Board Letter 2
By the Numbers 3
Programs and Education.....4
Service Spotlight 5
Sharing the Sky.....6
Volunteer Spotlight.....6
Construction 7
Donate and Support.....8



Jupiter is so massive that it contains **more than twice** the mass of all other planets combined. **Most stars are binary systems,** unlike our lonely Sun. **The Sun makes up 99.86%** of the solar system's mass. **The Milky Way is a barred spiral galaxy**, not a simple spiral.



2025 BY THE NUMBERS

$52,000
Grant Funds & In-Kind Donations Received



2,235
Volunteer Hours Contributed



33
Free Star Parties, Solar Parties, Public Talks & Classroom Visits



1,222
Community Members & Visitors Engaged at Public Events



212
Private Night Sky Experiences

$134,548
Donations & Private Event Revenue

Neptune has supersonic winds, reaching 1,500 mph (2,400 km/h). **Neutron stars are so dense**, a spoonful would weigh as much as Mount Everest. **Elliptical galaxies can have trillions of stars**, much larger than spirals like ours. **The universe is 13.8 billion years old.**



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & EDUCATION

4H Space Camp and Community Award





SVO is involved with the local 4H STEM program. This year our major contribution was a hands-on activity about craters during 4H space camp.

SVO was also presented the "Friend of 4H" community award at the organization's annual awards banquet.

Lectures at the Library



Dr. Troy Allan, Utah State University

SVO hosted two lectures at Kanab City Library with visiting experts. Dr. Troy Allan, Utah State University, gave a fascinating talk about the mental health benefits of awe-inspiring experiences like stargazing.

Dr. Francisco Mercado, Astronomical Society of the Pacific, delivered a remote lecture on the structure of the universe from planets orbiting around their host stars all the way out to the cosmic web that unites large groups of galaxies.

Second Grade Moon Night

This was SVO's 4th year setting up telescopes at the elementary school for the annual Second Grade Moon Night, which is always so much fun!



Night Sky Experiences at Amangiri



SVO is delighted to deliver private night sky experiences for guests at the exclusive Amangiri Resort in Big Water, Utah. "Your knowledge of the night sky always leaves such a strong impression on our guests," says Zach Marshall, senior experience advisor at Amangiri.

SVO is pleased to have forged a strong working relationship with the resort, now entering its 5th year, and we look forward to continuing to provide awe-inspiring experiences that evoke wonder and inspiration.

Earth's Moon is drifting away by about 1.5 inches (4 cm) per year. **Mars has the tallest volcano** in the solar system: Olympus Mons, about 3× the height of Everest. **When the Sun dies**, it will become a **white dwarf** about the size of Earth. **Supernovae can outshine entire galaxies** for a brief time.



SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

Natalie Brannon

Natalie Brannon served as Vice President of Stellar Vista Observatory from September 2023 through November 2025, bringing exceptional dedication and care to the organization's preservation, construction, and outreach efforts.

As Chair of the Preservation Committee and alongside committee member Sylvia Sims, the **Friends of the Night Sky** program was launched, which now includes 16 participating local businesses - work that involved extensive outreach, lighting inventories, and ongoing conversations with community partners.

Natalie represented SVO with her ***Preserving the Night Sky*** talk at **Amazing Earthfest,** educating the public on what they can do to help preserve the night sky.

Natalie also devoted countless hours as a member of the Construction Committee, attending meetings and calls, reviewing construction drawings, and tracking details such as outlets and light fixtures to ensure alignment with SVO's goals.

While stepping down from the Vice President role, Natalie continues to serve on the SVO Board and remains actively involved, including leading planning for the Von Del Chamberlain Walk through the Solar System at the Jackson Flat Reservoir in partnership with Solar System Trails.



Fun, Safe Solar Observation

Outside of an eclipse, very few people have the opportunity to safely look at the Sun. In 2025, SVO hosted multiple solar observation events, including school, library, and solstice activities, and reached over 150 people!

The prominent columns of plasma that flare out from the edges of the Sun's disc are always a crowd pleaser, and it's hard to imagine that the "tiny" ripples that can be seen on the Sun's surface are each the size of Earth! We hope to see you at our next solar activity!

Stellar Vista Observatory hosts one or more free public star parties in the community each month, often at Jackson Flat Reservoir, and during special events at locations such as Kanab City Library, Kanab Center, Jacob Hamblin Park, and Coral Pink Sand Dunes. Our star parties and presence at other events brought the wonders of the night sky to residents and visitors during Amazing Earthfest, International Dark Sky Week, Trailfest, and more.



Public Star Parties

Our galaxy is about 100,000 light-years across. **The Andromeda Galaxy is heading toward us** and will merge with the Milky Way in ~4–5 billion years. **The universe contains at least 2 trillion galaxies**, possibly more. **Our galaxy is warped**, not flat, like a slightly bent vinyl record.



SHARING THE SKY

Telescope Donations and Loans



Neptune telescope in action at the Geminid meteor shower public star party on December 13th



A 5-inch Hexeum reflector telescope on an equatorial mount donated by Devin Anderson

The 12" SkyWatcher Flextube 300P (far left) was donated by local resident and business owner Rob Pearman. An animal lover, Rob named the telescope ***Neptune*** after one of his favorite pet cats.

"I hope this telescope sparks curiosity and wonder in everyone who looks through the eyepiece," says Rob.

In 2025, SVO also received a large telescope suitable for permanent installation on a concrete pier inside its future observatory. The 14-inch fork mounted Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope (at right) is on permanent loan from Southern Utah University's Ashcroft Observatory.

The 14-inch fork mounted Schmidt-Cassegrain on loan from SUU



Friends of the Night Sky Program Launched

Kane County Friends of the Night Sky is a free, voluntary community program launched by Stellar Vista Observatory to raise awareness that many local businesses care deeply about protecting the night sky. Created as a grassroots effort, the program helps business owners showcase their commitment to dark sky-friendly lighting through on-site lighting inventories and practical guidance. Businesses that meet the program's criteria receive a window sticker and a listing in SVO's online directory, signaling to residents and visitors alike that they value Kane County's starry skies. In addition to preserving nighttime views, dark sky-friendly lighting improves safety and security, reduces energy costs, and supports wildlife—while encouraging businesses to lead by example and inspire broader community participation. In 2025, SVO gained 16 new members, and we promote these members to everyone who books an event with us.

Volunteer Spotlight



Ella Elman

Ella writes our fantastic newsletter each and every month!

"My favorite object in the night sky is the Pleiades cluster as it seems to always be the first object I see when I look up and it beckons to me. The Pleiades cluster is in the constellation Taurus, about 444 light years from earth and contains more than 1,000 stars."



Rose Molina

Has provided invaluable engineering insight and experience through the construction planning and design phases.

"I'm in love with the Betelgeuse supergiant and went as the star one Halloween. I also have a tattoo of Orion (Betelgeuse is part of this constellation)."

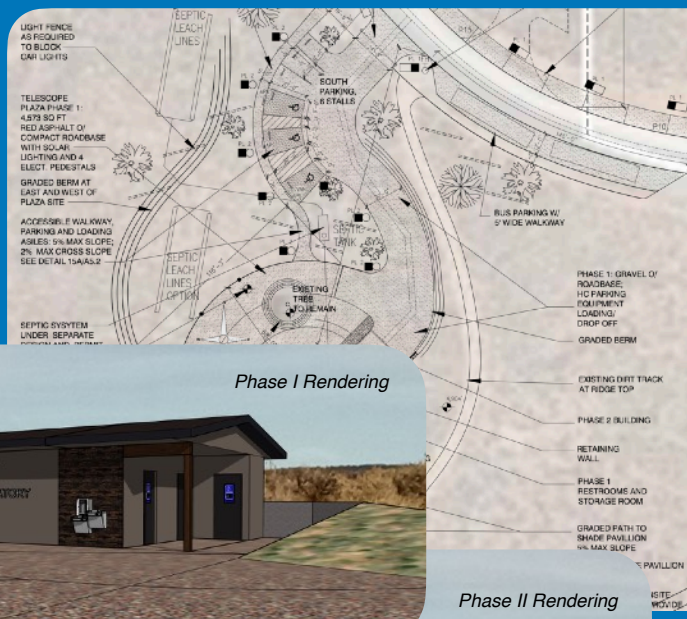
We can only see about 4% of the universe—the rest is dark matter & dark energy. **There are stars that pass through each other's atmospheres** in tight binary systems. **A day on Venus is longer than a year**—it rotates slower than it orbits the Sun. **Uranus spins on its side**, likely due to a massive collision long ago.

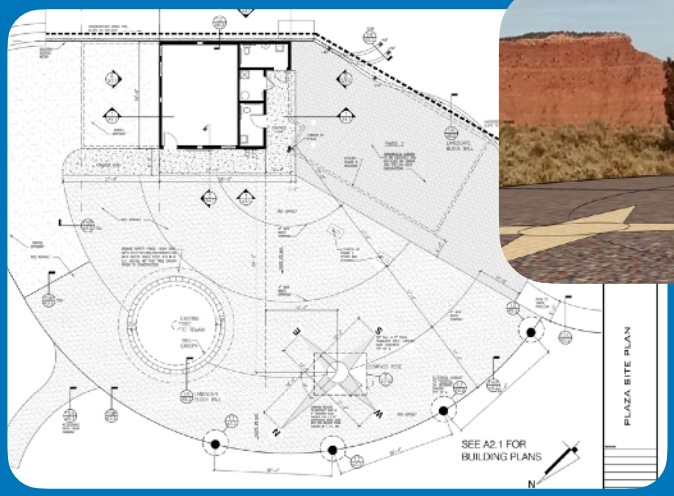
PHASE 1 OBSERVATORY CONSTRUCTION

Grants, Architecture and Permitting Progress

Significant progress was made in 2025 toward construction of the Stellar Vista Observatory at Jackson Flat Reservoir. Marking major steps forward in consultation with the Kane County Water Conservancy District and Mesa Design architects, construction drawings and engineering were completed and our building permit application was submitted to the City of Kanab.

Bringing the long-anticipated community enhancement closer to groundbreaking, SVO secured a total of $50,000 from Kane County and Garkane Energy (equal amounts from each), toward the cost for installing utility electric power to the observatory site. With this financing in place, SVO launched active fundraising efforts for the remaining $19,000 needed.







Phase I Rendering



Phase II Rendering



Michael McKeon

Michael is on our night sky interpretation team, leads public and private stargazing events, and helps with our graphics and social media.

"Hands down my favorite bit in the sky is the constellation Cygnus the Swan. It contains an incredible amount of things to look at in that constellation. From dust lanes and star-forming regions to nebulas and binary stars, it has it all."



Kyle Slaton

Kyle is on our night sky interpretation team and leads public and private stargazing events. He is chock full of fun space facts. Our guests love him!

"There are so many awe inspiring objects for stargazers to observe through a telescope, but none of them create that "WOW!" moment quite like Saturn does. It was the first thing I ever looked at through a telescope, and she instantly sparked my desire to learn about the science of astronomy!"

Pluto has a heart-shaped glacier made mainly of nitrogen ice. **Some stars are hypergiants**—more than 1,000 times the Sun's width. **Earth is about 26,000 light-years from the galactic center.** **The hottest stars** can reach 40,000°C, much hotter than the Sun's 5,500°C surface.

STELLAR VISTA OBSERVATORY

TOGETHER WE CAN REACH THE STARS!



Donate and Support SVO

Want to make an impact? **When fully completed, Stellar Vista Observatory in Kanab, Utah will be the largest nonprofit public astronomical observatory within a 250 mile radius!** We would love your help to reach this goal!

Get involved by donating or by joining our **Working Group** or **Advisory Committee.** We welcome your participation!

Scan the **QR code** to donate or visit **StellarVistaObservatory.org/Donate**

All gifts are processed securely.

One-Time Gift

Your gift provides immediate support for SVO's programs, equipment, and ongoing star parties. Every dollar you give can be multiplied through matching grants. Your gift will help build an educational astronomical observatory in Kanab for all to enjoy now and for generations to come!

Monthly Giving

Monthly giving provides reliable support for SVO's year-round astronomy programs, including dark sky preservation. Your monthly gift can also provide foundational funding, enabling SVO to strengthen its long-term impact.

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Kyle Slaton
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JC Stimson

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Paul Ricketts
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SVO is a member of:

- NASA Night Sky Network
- Dark Sky International
- Utah Nonprofits Association
- Kanab Area Chamber of Commerce

SVO is also an active participant in **Utah State University's Colorado Plateau Dark Sky Cooperative.**

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SVO is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable organization based in Kanab, Utah. Donations made to SVO are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

We orbit the galaxy once every 230 million years—one galactic year. **Betelgeuse is so large** that if it replaced our Sun, it would engulf Jupiter. **Most galaxies have black holes** at their centers. **Cosmic microwave background radiation** is the oldest light we can detect, from 380,000 years after the Big Bang.