

Alliance for Astronomy, Inc.
Annual Report
for year ending
31 December 2010

The mission of the corporation shall be to promote public awareness, appreciation and education in astronomy and related sciences.

Outreach:

The public outreach efforts of the corporation are focused through the Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri (ASEM) which was founded in 2005. ASEM provides benefits to its members that include associating with like-minded individuals in a friendly, non-formal atmosphere; membership in a national organization (the Astronomical League) that offers benefits of its own (especially recognition for various observing activities); the opportunity to participate in group purchases of various astronomical items at substantial discounts; the opportunity to participate in group outreach activities to the general public; and, the ability to use astronomical and scientific equipment owned by Alliance.

Since its inception in February 2005, ASEM membership has grown at double-digit rates. Paid membership (\$50 per year) stands at 67 as of 31 December 2010 which is a 24% increase during 2010. Regularly scheduled meetings now number three per month: the general membership meeting is held on the second Saturday of each month; the beginners meeting is held on the first Tuesday of each month; and, the newly revived Digital Imaging Special Interest Group (SIG) meets on the third Tuesday of each month. All meetings are held at the Weldon Spring Interpretive Center. Attendance at these meetings continues to grow. The most recent meetings saw 44 at the December general meeting, 13 at the beginners meeting and 16 at the Digital SIG meeting. There is talk among members of starting new SIG focused on telescope making/upgrades.

ASEM is the main source of volunteers to conduct the many public outreach activities held throughout the year although there are some people from the general public who help out who haven't chosen to join as formal members. Some members only participate in the outreach programs. During 2010, 20 different "special" events were held including presentations at school and scout camp outs, programs at area schools, a presentation to a senior center and a display and telescope viewing at a public festival (Oktoberfest in St. Charles). An estimated 2,300 people were served at these events. These events are documented on the ASEM web site at www.ASEMonline.org (click on Public Outreach Activities).

As opposed to "special" a new set of "regular" outreach events were begun in 2010. With the permission of the St. Charles County Parks Department a 10-in computerized telescope was installed in the roll-off roof observatory building at the Astronomy Site in Broemmelsiek Park in 2009. We also received permission to install our 16-inch Jones-Bird telescope on one of the paved observing pads there. We then began public open houses scheduled for every Friday night (weather permitting and major holidays excluded). Public acceptance has been enthusiastic. Attendance has varied, chiefly with the weather and weather prospects but as many as 185 people have been counted and we estimate some 2,500 visits throughout 2010.

Other outreach activities in 2010 include two classes on beginning astronomical observing presented at the St. Charles Community College, a class on digital imaging presented at the Interpretive center (to be repeated at SCCC in the Spring of 2011), and sessions on How to use a Telescope presented at City-County library branches at Christmas time (two were held at the end of 2010 with 2 more scheduled for

the first week of 2011).

The ASEM website continues as a valuable member benefit and outreach tool. During the last 30 days of 2010 we saw some 800 visits (averaging almost 30 per day) from some 530 unique visitors (8 times the membership). Many newcomers report learning about us from the web site.

To reach a broader audience we created a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pages/St-Louis-Astronomy/206185917354 in which we post notices of events and activities. The page is shared with all the local astronomy clubs.

Astronomy Site:

We continued efforts to get the 32-in telescope located at the Astronomy site in Broemmelsiek Park. We commissioned architectural plans for a suitable structure and the Parks Department pledged up to \$12,000 to construct the building but cost estimates came in higher than that so, at year's end, we are still seeking a way forward.

In October we purchased a set of astronomical equipment from a retiring individual that included a 14-in telescope, two 8-inch telescopes, numerous accessories including eyepieces, camera equipment etc. Our main interest is the 14-in telescope which was installed at Broemmelsiek Park in place of the 10-in. We plan to sell the two 8-inch telescopes and such of the miscellaneous equipment as we can to defray the basic cost of the 14-in telescope.

Financial:

We had total revenues of \$21,980 which included cash donations from individuals/businesses of \$16,305, membership fees of \$3,250 and \$2,400 in donated use of facilities. Operating expenses totaled \$13,736.24 which left a surplus of \$8,243.76. This surplus was allocated to an increase in cash in the bank of \$3,159.46, an increase in the capital equipment accounts of \$6,384.30 (chiefly the 14-in telescope and related equipment and a new camera for digital imaging) and an increase in accounts payable of \$1,300 still due to the architect.

Respectfully Submitted,

James M. Roe
Executive Director