

THE CITY OF GRETNA PUBLIC OBSERVATORY

Educational and Fun for ALL Ages!

Excellent for School Groups and Scout Troops!

Open Monday and Wednesday nights - Weather permitting

The City of Gretna Observatory is the largest public observatory in the Greater New Orleans area and one of the largest in the State of Louisiana. It was conceived to promote a greater interest in the science of astronomy. It was especially designed to be an educational benefit to school age children and young adults from local schools and universities by creating an awareness and interest in astronomy, science, and technology. The observatory first opened its doors to the public in late October of 2004.

The Gretna Observatory is located off of Gretna Boulevard between Manhattan Boulevard and Belle Chasse Highway behind the Gretna Middle School at # 1 Copernicus Lane (which is an extension of the southern end of Huey P. Long Avenue) . GPS users can use the address of the Gretna Middle School (910 Gretna Boulevard) to get close. The observatory is located just around the left side corner of the school and adjacent to the Gretna City Park.

The observatory is open to the general public with free admission and parking on Monday and Wednesday night (weather permitting, i.e. mostly clear skies) except on major holidays. The hours of operation are 7 to 10 p.m. during the winter, and changing to 8:30 to 11:00 p.m. during the summer. The transition from summer to winter hours and vice versa, is triggered by the onset and ending of daylight savings time.

The observatory offers viewing through a pier mounted GoTo 16 inch Meade LX-200GPS f/10 catadioptric telescope, better known as a Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope or SCT, and a variety of piggyback mounted refractors. Also available are a white light solar filter and a Coronado 60mm hydrogen-alpha telescope for safe solar viewing when needed. All this is housed under a rotating 5 meter (16 foot) diameter dome which was manufactured by Observa-Dome Laboratories in our neighboring state of Mississippi. Typical objects of interest passing overhead in the sky at various times during the year include gaseous and reflection nebulae, star clusters, planetary nebulae, double stars and galaxies. Also available are the Moon at various times during each month, and the planets (Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune) at different times throughout the year.

For more information or to schedule group visits to the observatory, please contact Ron Marcella at rmarcell@cox.net.