



SAINT LOUIS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

ATTN: CALENDAR, NEWSROOM, OR PSA EDITOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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METRO ST. LOUIS AREA LIBRARIES PARTNER WITH ST. LOUIS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY TO EXPAND FREE TELESCOPE LOAN PROGRAM

Public libraries in **Brentwood, Ferguson, Maplewood, Richmond Heights, Rock Hill, Valley Park** and **Webster Groves**, along with **Belleville, Jefferson County, St. Charles City-County** and the **Hayner Public Library** in Alton, are joining the Library Telescope Loan program sponsored by the **Saint Louis Astronomical Society (SLAS)**.

Beginning **May 29, 2015**, the **Library Telescope Program** will enable patrons of these libraries **aged eighteen-years or older** with a valid library card and state ID to **check out a telescope** for seven days.

The Metro St. Louis Library Telescope Program began circulating telescopes on November 10, 2014. Seventeen telescopes had been delivered to several branches of the **St. Louis City** and **St. Louis County** libraries as well as to **Kirkwood** and **University City libraries**. The telescopes have been in constant use since November. More than two hundred library patrons are currently on the waiting list. To reduce the waiting time and expand the area served, SLAS, in partnership with the Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri (ASEM) for support of St. Charles City-County, will assemble and deliver over thirty-four additional instrument packages to participating libraries. Each **Orion StarBlast 4.5" reflecting telescope** is modified by SLAS and ASEM to be more durable and patron-friendly. Each is equipped with accessories to help beginners explore the night sky: user manual, constellation guide, Moon map, night light, and a storage pouch.

SLAS and ASEM will provide the libraries with library staff training, on-going educational support and telescope maintenance. Throughout the year, participating libraries may choose to host "star parties". SLAS members will demonstrate how to use the telescopes and how to locate interesting objects in the night sky.

Telescopes and accessories are funded by SLAS, ASEM, the NASA Missouri Space Grant Consortium at Washington University, Orion Telescopes, private donors, and the participating libraries.

The St. Louis Astronomical Society is an organization for individuals interested in astronomy and telescopes. The public is invited to attend its meetings, telescope observing sessions, and special events. For more information about Astronomical Society events, please visit the website, www.slasonline.org , or call 314- 962-9231.

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