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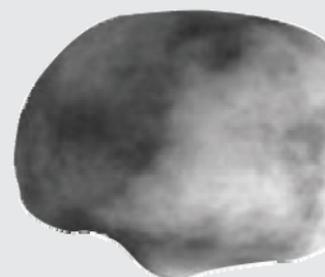


Dawn Mission Outreach E-Bulletin, February 2010

IT'S A BIRD! IT'S A PLANE! NO, IT'S VESTA!

The most prominent asteroid in the sky is currently yours for the perusing with binoculars -- and perhaps even the naked eye.

Tonight, Wednesday, Feb. 17, Vesta, the first target of the Dawn mission, reaches what astronomers like to call "opposition." With Vesta at opposition, the asteroid is at its closest point to Earth in its orbit. Vesta is expected to shine at magnitude 6.1. That brightness should make it visible to interested parties brandishing telescopes or binoculars, and even those blessed with excellent vision and little or no light pollution or clouds in their vicinity. Vesta will be visible in the eastern sky in the constellation Leo.



For more information about Vesta in opposition, go to: <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.cfm?release=2010-051>.

For more information about Dawn, visit: <http://dawn.jpl.nasa.gov/>.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

The Dawn Education and Public Outreach team is continually seeking ways to improve the mission site and is eager to receive your feedback. Please share your thoughts by completing a brief survey at <http://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/13d56g382d7?paction=resume>.

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Dawn Mission Outreach E-News features information about the mission, its outreach Web site, and products, services, and material available from the Dawn Education and Public Outreach (E/PO) team. Dawn is the ninth Discovery mission in NASA's Science Mission Directorate and is a collaborative partnership made up of the University of California, Los Angeles; Jet Propulsion Laboratory; Orbital Sciences Corporation; Los Alamos National Laboratory; German Aerospace Center; Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research; Italian Space Agency; and Italian National Institute of Astrophysics. Dawn outreach materials are developed under contract by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), Denver, CO.

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