

# Inside Wallops

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Goddard Space Flight Center  
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## Science on a Sphere Provides a new Perspective to Viewing Earth

### *Wallops Visitor Center Receives Exciting, New Exhibit*

Imagine gazing upon Earth as you are suspended in orbit 22,000 miles above its surface.

You watch as a hurricane forms, slowly gathering strength, it travels westward from Africa, across the Atlantic Ocean, and towards the Gulf of Mexico. The prevailing westerly winds and the easterly trade winds materialize before your eyes.

You can see the dry, brown deserts of Australia, Asia, and Africa in contrast to the adjacent verdant plains and forests.

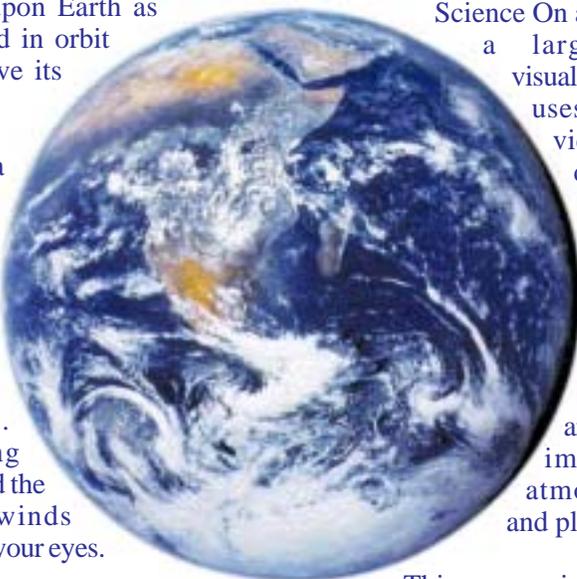
You can trace Earth's continuous plates from ocean depths to mountain chains.

Our dynamic planet transforms before your eyes with the help of environmental data projected onto a movie-screen-like, white sphere.

Until recently, scientific data were presented in two dimensions—on paper, a view graph, or computer screen.

An image of the Earth can fit on a two-dimensional map but not without some distortion. Some improvements to present data in three dimensions have helped students and scholars to better understand the information; however, even these improvements had limitations.

In 2002, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Science (NOAA) unveiled a way to see information the way that nature presents it – on a sphere.



Science On a Sphere (SOS) is a large room-sized visualization system that uses computers and video projectors to display animated data onto the outside of a sphere.

The globe appears as if it is suspended in air and shows dynamic images of the atmosphere, oceans and planets.

This mesmerizing visualization system uses computers and video projectors to display animated data on the outside of a suspended, 6-foot diameter, white sphere.

Four strategically placed projectors work in unison to coat the sphere with data such as a 3-D surface of the Earth and "Nighttime Lights", Moon and Mars and X-ray Sun.

A Science on a Sphere exhibit is now being installed in the NASA Visitor Center. The Wallops Sphere is one of only 28 exhibits world-wide. When complete, visitors will be able to view science in an exciting, new format that is easy to comprehend.

The Visitor Center staff is currently training on the use of the system and being instructed on how to incorporate it as a learning tool for area students. In addition, Wallops personnel are busy completing facility upgrades at the Visitor Center to support the exhibit.

The SOS exhibit is expected to open to the public no later than January 2009. A demonstration day for employees is planned for mid-December.

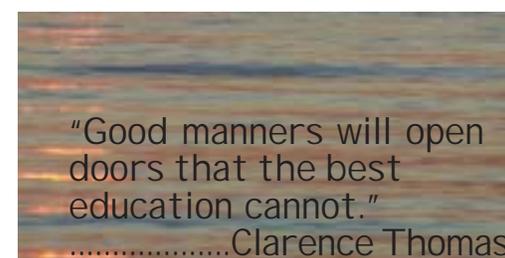
Built as a vehicle for education and public outreach programs, SOS targets three audiences: walk-in visitors and scheduled event participants, students and teachers participating in formal education exercises and science professionals who use SOS as a platform to share their work with the science community.

The shows are either live presentations led by Visitor Center staff or computer-driven presentations.



*Photo by Jacob Owen*

**Wallops senior managers and Visitor Center staff watch a demonstration of the new exhibit.**



"Good manners will open doors that the best education cannot."  
.....Clarence Thomas



Smoking and fuel don't mix!

Employees are reminded to adhere to the non-smoking areas on the Facility, especially those around fuel tanks.



Did you know... Your weekly Wallops Aerobics Club activities include exercises for endurance, strength and flexibility.

### Annual Leave Forfeiture and Voluntary Leave Transfer

NASA civil service employees should review their annual leave balances. Annual leave in excess of the carryover limitation (240 hours) is considered "use or lose" annual leave and must be used before the end of the leave year (Jan. 3, 2009) to avoid forfeiture.

An employee may donate annual leave directly to another federal employee who has a personal or family medical emergency and who has exhausted his or her available paid leave. All Voluntary Leave Transfer Program donations must be requested through WebTADS.

For more information about the leave transfer program, visit the NSSC Customer Service (NSSC) Web site at: <https://www.nssc.nasa.gov/portal/site/customerservice> or the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Leave Administration Web site at: <http://www.opm.gov/oca/leave>

## Wallops Exchange & Morale Association Annual Thanksgiving Dinner Thursday, November 20

The cost is \$7 per meal and consists of the following:

- Roast Turkey and Dumplings
- Mashed Potatoes, Homemade Dressing
- Cranberry Sauce, Dinner Roll and Butter
- Turnip Greens or Green Beans
- Pumpkin or Sweet Potato Pie

We look forward to seeing you there!



### Federal Benefits Open Season

The 2009 Federal Benefits Program Open Season for Federal Employees Health Benefits, the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program and the Flexible Spending Account is November 10 through December 8.

For additional Federal Employees Health Benefits information, visit: <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/index.asp>

To enroll or obtain additional information on Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program go to: <http://www.benefeds.com>

Employees must enroll every year to stay in the Flexible Spending Account program. For more information, visit: <https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/SummaryofBenefits.asp>

For details regarding the open season for these benefits, including frequently asked questions, visit the NASA Shared Services Center web site at: <http://www.nssc.nasa.gov/notices> or contact the NSSC Customer Contact Center at (877) 677-2123.



8th Annual Holiday Craft & Shopping Extravaganza  
Wednesday, November 19, 2008  
Building E-2, Training Room and Williamsburg Room  
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

#### Sampling of Items to be Offered:

- Cross Stitch Pictures
- Christmas Baskets, Trees, Wreaths, and Ornaments
- Candles, Air Fresheners, and Soaps
- Country Gifts, Centerpieces, and Wreaths
- Baked Goods
- Signs to Order
- Jewelry
- Pampered Chef
- Longaberger Baskets

Come and do your Christmas shopping!

*Inside Wallops* is an official publication of Goddard Space Flight Center and is published by the Public Affairs Office, x1584, in the interest of Wallops employees. Recent and past issues of *Inside Wallops* also may be found at: <http://www.nasa.gov/centers/wallops/news/newsletters.html>

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