



Background of the Observatory Association

The Lookout Mountain Observatory Association began efforts in the early 1990s to locate the original telescope and rebuild the large observatory that was located there from 1886 until 1901.

Research by Dr. A.J. Taylor of the Rio Grande County Museum indicates that there is substantial interest from antique telescope associations in locating the 1895 Mt. Lookout Observatory telescope built by famous telescope builder John Brashear.



Abandoned dome (ca. 1938)

When the Presbyterian College of the Southwest, which had built the Observatory in 1885, fell upon hard financial times in the early 1900s they were forced to close their doors. [\[Read More: College\]](#)

The Observatory buildings, which weren't occupied much of the time, had fallen victim to vandals.

And there were no longer funds to support the project. [\[Read More: Telescope\]](#)

In November, 1902, the telescope was boxed up and shipped to Occidental College, another young Presbyterian school in Los Angeles, California.

Over the next decades Del Norters lost track of the historic telescope.

But thanks to the efforts of the Association and its founders, there is still hope that the original equipment can be located and brought home to the San Luis Valley.

You can be a part of this effort by becoming a member of the association and giving of your time and resources to help locate and recover the historic telescope.

Star Parties!



Although the location of the old telescope is an ongoing goal of the Association, it is also committed to providing educational resources for the Valley and holding "star parties" to take advantage of the clear, dark skies of the area.

The parties are scheduled based on dates when the night skies are expected to be optimal for viewing, weather permitting. They are open to members and to the public.

The meetings are announced in the local media and by email.

The Leo Fontenot Memorial Observatory

The *Leo Fontenot Memorial Observatory* is a secondary project of the Association. It is located on the prominent hilltop behind the Rio Grande County Court House.

The 1 acre plus property, a modern "clam shell" type dome, a roll-off roof observatory, and two large professional-grade telescopes were donated to the Association.

This facility was built for educational purposes and use by active amateur astronomers. It serves as "home" for the "star parties" and other events of the Association. [\[Read More: Fontenot\]](#)



Membership Information

The fee to join the association is \$25.00 per person or family. Thereafter, annual dues are \$25.00 per person or family at the beginning of each year.

Students are free and exempted from any dues in order to encourage their membership.

Please write us at:

The Lookout Mountain Observatory Association
PO Box 432
Del Norte, CO 81132

Or Email [Alva Hibbs](#) for more information.

The Official Stated Purposes from the Articles of Incorporation

To establish astronomical observatories in the vicinity of Lookout Mountain, Del Norte, Colorado;

To utilize the increasingly rare dark sky opportunities available in this geographical area, with historical acknowledgment to the one originally occupying the Lookout Mountain top;

To provide educational resource opportunities for San Luis Valley Schools, other educational institutions, and the interested public in the form of astronomical observatories and other facilities in the vicinity of Lookout Mountain;

To solicit and receive contributions and other economic support from all available economic resources in order to promote the purposes of the Corporation;

And for all other purposes and activities of which a Colorado non-profit organization may be organized under the laws of Colorado and which are also consistent with all regulations and restrictions imposed by federal, state, or other governmental agencies concerning charitable nonprofit organizations.

[Museum Trail Site](#)

[Observatory Home](#)

[Lookout Mountain](#)

[The College](#)

[The Telescope](#)

[Old Stories About The Observatory](#)

[The New Observatory](#)

[Clear Sky Chart](#)

Contact Us

The Lookout Mountain Observatory Association

PO Box 432

Del Norte, CO 81132

Or Email [Alva Hibbs](#)

Officers and Directors Of The Association

John Allen Davey, P.E.
President

Bob Grover
Vice President

Alva Hibbs, P.E.
Secretary/Treasurer

Bob Barton
Director

Darlene Danko
Director

Nancy Schrader, RN
Director

Michael Wisdom
Director

Kent Rominger
Former Astronaut
Honorary Member

[Annual Meeting Minutes](#)

**Friday
Sept 7, 2018**

**Del Norte
Observatory
Featured viewing
Planets and Deep
Sky Objects**

Park and sign-in at Rio Grande County Courthouse Annex 6th and Penasco Bring a flashlight For more information call 657-1150

Tell Me More!

Name

Email

Comments