



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Low Earth Orbit and Beyond
Free Talk 'Between the Moon and Mars: The Near Earth Object Factor'

Hilo, Hawai'i –Join NASA engineer Rob Landis, Saturday February 6 at 7 p.m. in the 'Imiloa planetarium as he discusses NASA's Constellation Program that may return astronauts to the Moon a decade from now and beyond. The NASA hardware developed for lunar missions could also be used to visit a near-Earth object (NEO) such as an asteroid. His talk, entitled "Between the Moon and Mars: The NEO Factor" is free to the public. Space is limited to a first come first serve basis.

In late 2006, NASA examined the feasibility of sending a piloted Orion spacecraft to a NEO. A NEO is a Solar System object whose orbit brings it into close proximity with the Earth, which makes them interesting targets for exploration. Mr. Landis will share how astronauts might some day explore these high-profile destinations and hopes to inspire the younger generation of the possibilities.

Rob Landis has worked on several NASA programs and projects, including the *Hubble Space Telescope*, *Cassini*, the Mars Exploration Rovers and the International Space Station. The idea of human exploration of near-Earth asteroids is not new; however, the new powerful rockets NASA plans to have within the decade could very well enable such missions of exploration and discovery.

Opened in 2006, 'Imiloa Astronomy Center celebrates both Hawaiian culture and Maunakea astronomy. Through its exhibits and program, 'Imiloa strives to share inspiring examples of science and culture together advancing knowledge, understanding and opportunity. The Center is a part of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo.

‘Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai‘i is located at 600 ‘Imiloa Place in Hilo, off Komohana and Nowelo Streets at the UH-Hilo Science and Technology Park. For more information, go to www.imiloahawaii.org, or call (808) 969-9700.



Figure 1 Rob Landis on Maunakea

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