

# **The C. P. Sonett Space Sciences Visitors' Center**

Loretta McKibben  
loretta@pirl.LPL.arizona.edu

A new visitors' center for the public is in the works in the lobby of the Charles P. Sonett Space Sciences Building, one of the three Lunar and Planetary Laboratory facilities. This visitors' center is a friendly, welcoming place for visitors and colleagues of LPL, and has exhibits which reflect the research of the scientists housed there. Sponsors for the project are Michael Drake, Alfred McEwen, and Larry Lebofsky.

Educational exhibits on the High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE), the Cassini Imaging Science Subsystem, AZTEC educational displays, and IMAGE are available in the lobby or under development. Prior missions that scientists in Sonett participated in are also highlighted including hardware that has flown on NASA's space shuttle and the Voyager mission. The lobby features a kiosk with automated informational displays, and a children's version is in development. A self-guided tour being developed features instruments that have flown in space, educational displays, and free handouts, and weekly guided tours feature image processing demonstrations in the Planetary Image Research Laboratory (PIRL), and other educational activities.

HiRISE is the most powerful Mars-orbiting camera ever built and is part of NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, to be launched in August 2005. Professor Alfred McEwen of the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory is the Principal Investigator for HiRISE, and the HiRISE Operations Center (HiROC) is located in the Sonett building. Named "the people's camera," the public is invited to suggest imaging targets for HiRISE through a web-based program being developed by the HiRISE team. An Arizona outreach web site and educational materials are in development which will highlight LPL's role in this important mission to Mars. Examples of this work and the lobby's existing and planned educational displays will be shown and discussed.