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**ATTENTION: News/Science/Education/Section Reporters**

**H.R. MacMillan Space Centre launches new digital system, semi-retires Harold**

**Vancouver, BC, July 29, 2013** – This week the H.R. MacMillan Space is taking a bold step into the future with the official launch of a full-dome digital projection system, offering a visual entertainment experience that will be out of this world.

The digital upgrade heralds an exciting new era for the beloved Vancouver space institution and the expectation that this new state of the art system will astronomically increase its appeal as a BC entertainment destination. On par with digital systems already adopted by other planetariums across Canada, the Space Centre is debuting a Colorspace system with six video projectors to create a 4K image, replacing the 35mm slide-based full-dome system that's been in use for decades.

"This new system is a quantum leap forward in technology. The old technology was based on racks of slide projectors, home-made special effects projectors working with the Zeiss star projector to create a show. Now we can do the entire show with the new digital projection system. It will be visually stunning with full-dome video motion whose quality will be many times greater than our current system and available nowhere else in BC," said Rob Appleton, Space Centre executive director.

The Space Centre is also introducing two brand new programs with the digital system launch – The Searcher and IBEX: The Search of the Edge of the Solar System. A third program, an immersive music show with an autumn 2013 ETA, is currently being designed by students from the Centre for Digital Media. A fourth and fifth show will be released in autumn 2013 and spring 2014 respectively.

"In addition and more importantly, the new digital system allows us to present live shows on astronomy that will blow people's socks off. These shows will be guided by an interpreter but will also have the ability to be audience-driven – literally – with the use of an iPad," added Appleton.

The new digital projection system is just the start of upcoming Space Centre-wide changes that will include securing funding to upgrade the galleries, GroundStation Canada, and the auditorium, making every area digital and more interactive.

The arrival of the new digital projection system also means the beginning of semi-retirement for Harold, the legendary star projector. Harold is now on vacation and returns to work on a part-time basis in early November.

The first digital shows premiere Friday, Aug. 2 at 7:30 and 9 p.m. Visitors who attend the new digital Space Centre shows from Aug. 2 to 16 may enter a draw to win one of 50 Harold "Thanks for the memories" t-shirts. Visit [www.spacecentre.ca](http://www.spacecentre.ca) for more information about the draw and show times.

Media may preview the new digital projection system and shows Thursday, Aug. 1 and Friday, Aug. 2 at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Please book in advance by calling 778.888.2249 or emailing [calicocomm@telus.net](mailto:calicocomm@telus.net).

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is a non-profit community resource that brings the wonders of space to Earth, while providing a personal sense of ongoing discovery. Through innovative programming, exhibits and activities, our goal is to inspire sustained interest in the fields of Earth science, space science and astronomy from a Canadian perspective.

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