



ANN CONGDON PHOTO

More than 150 local residents listen to John Watkins of Copper Mountain College during an event at Sky's the Limit Saturday.

Astronomers take locals on guided tour of space

TWENTYNINE PALMS — More than 150 residents turned out for an evening under the stars at the Sky's the Limit observatory and nature center on Utah Trail Saturday, Aug. 3.

After a brief introduction to Sky's the Limit by President Ann Congdon, Copper Mountain College Professor of Physics and Astronomy John Watkins held the audience spellbound with a description of the history of the universe.

His talk featured photos of deep-space objects like nebulae, galaxies and star clusters taken with a camera on the large telescope inside the observatory's dome.

Darrell Shade, with his laser pointer, led a tour of the sky overhead, calling out familiar constellations representing signs of the zodiac and less familiar constellations and groups of stars.

The visitors circulated among telescopes, spoke with volunteer astronomers and observed the night's celestial wonders, such as the Whirlpool Galaxy and, at the end of the evening, Saturn rising in the east.

"We had a lot of positive



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The constellation Scorpius is visible above one of the telescopes set up for visitors at Sky's the Limit in Twentynine Palms.

feedback," Congdon said.

"Many people had never been to the observatory; others had not been for a long time. It was wonderful to welcome our local residents for a fun and

educational experience on one of our incredible desert nights."

For information on upcoming events at Sky's the Limit, visit www.skysthelimit29.org.