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SUFFOLK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS SELECTED BY NASA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY

Selden, NY – The Department of Physical Sciences at the Ammerman Campus of Suffolk County Community College in Selden announced today that the College has been selected by NASA as one of only four community colleges in the nation to participate in the International Year of Astronomy celebrations.

The International Year of Astronomy 2009 celebrates the 400th anniversary of Galileo Galilei first turning a telescope to the heavens. From Galileo's first spyglass, telescopes have grown ever larger and ever better. NASA's Great Observatories represent the achievements of astronomy four centuries later and are honoring this legacy with a national image unveiling. Suffolk County Community College was selected to present these incredible images to the people of Long Island.

Denise Smith, Scientist at the Space Telescope Science Institute and Project Manager for The International Year of Astronomy, commented, "During the International Year of Astronomy, we want to provide opportunities for children, youth, and adults nationwide to discover the universe for themselves. Suffolk County Community College has a tradition of providing programs for the local community that instill a personal sense of wonder and curiosity, making SCCC an ideal partner for the image unveiling. "

The spectacular unveiling event will take place on **February 20, 2009 at 7:00 PM** at SCCC's Smithtown Science Building (Room 109) when two new mural-sized images taken by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, Spitzer Space Telescope, and Chandra X-ray Observatory will be unveiled to the public. The stunning photographs of the well-known spiral galaxy Messier 101 commemorate the International Year of Astronomy and will be unveiled by Dr. Michael Inglis, Astrophysicist and Associate Professor of Astronomy at Suffolk County Community College.

Dr. Inglis noted, "As part of the celebration, we will be featuring a 6-foot-by-3-foot image which shows three striking full-color images that showcase the galaxy's features in the infrared light observed by the Spitzer Space Telescope, the visible light observed by Hubble, and the X-ray light observed by Chandra. The images show not only the details of the grand design spiral structure for which the galaxy is famous, but also the underlying giant clouds where stars are born, as well as the hidden locations of black holes and exploded stars. These multi-wavelength views provide both stunning beauty and a wealth of scientific information not even dreamed of by Galileo."

Another 3-foot-by-3-foot image of Messier 101 combines the views from all three telescopes into an amazing composite. This image can only be compared to seeing with your eyes, night vision goggles, and X-ray vision all at once.

After the unveiling a presentation will be delivered by Dr. Inglis, titled “The Life and Legacy of Galileo”.

Additional information about the Hubble Space Telescope is available at <http://hubblesite.org/>. Additional information about the Spitzer Space Telescope is available at <http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/>. Additional information about the Chandra X-ray Observatory is available at <http://chandra.harvard.edu/>.

The new images will be on permanent display in the Smithtown Science Building at Suffolk County Community College’s Ammerman Campus located at 533 College Road in Selden, NY. For more information on the event or the display, call (631) 451-4120.

About Suffolk County Community College

Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) is the largest community college in the State University of New York (SUNY) system, enrolling more than 23,000 students at its three campuses in Selden, Brentwood and Riverhead. SCCC offers the Associate in Arts (A.A.), Associate in Science (A.S.), and Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree, as well as a variety of certificate programs. Offering the lowest college tuition on Long Island, a highly respected Honors program, extensive extracurricular activities, championship athletic teams, and numerous unified transfer programs, SCCC is a first-choice college for Long Island students. Visit us on the web at www.sunysuffolk.edu.

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