



ASTRONOMICAL LEAGUE

A FEDERATION OF ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETIES
A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

- ★ *To promote the science of astronomy;*
- ★ *By fostering astronomical education;*
- ★ *By providing incentives for astronomical observation and research;*
- ★ *By assisting communication among amateur astronomical societies.*

ASTRO NOTES

Produced by the Astronomical League

Note 26: Fund Raising

Some steps to take to ensure success in raising funds for your astronomy club, by: Joanne L. Hailey, Secretary and Fund Raising Chairperson, Des Moines Astronomical Society.

- 1. SET A DOLLAR GOAL:** Determine exactly what items you are raising money for and then prioritize those items in order of necessity. Be specific as to what items are really necessary and what items you could possibly wait to purchase.
- 2 ESTABLISH YOUR BUDGET:** Itemize the items you wish to purchase and give the specific dollar amount for each item.
- 3. SOLICITING FUNDS:** Apply for grants (both state and federal), also search for charitable trusts, contact corporations and individuals who you feel might have an interest in your goals. When writing your letter include photos and brochures and any other kind of material that will highlight your endeavor. (See sample letter.) Also sponsor fund raising activities on your own so the people whom you ask for contributions will feel that you are also doing your part. Activities such as bake sales, book sales and car washes are great fund raisers and can be a lot of fun.
- 4. KEEP YOUR PROSPECTIVE DONORS INFORMED:** For example, if I were soliciting funds in the amount of \$50,000 and someone had already contributed \$10,000 when I solicit funds from the second donor I would let them know that I had already received \$10,000 and where it came from. Prospective donors will feel they are not supporting your project alone.
- 5. THANK YOU ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND PHOTOS:** Be sure to send a thank you letter to your donors, a complete financial statement showing budgeted figures and exactly what was spent and photos of the completed project.
- 6. PATIENCE, PERSERVERANCE AND CLUB MEMBERS INVOLVEMENT:** Most of all be patient, persevere and involve as many club members as possible.

---sample letter of request---

Date

John Doe Charitable Trust

Address

Yourtown Astronomical Society, Inc., is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the general public about astronomy and conducting astronomical research. The Society is supported by (count) all-volunteer members from the local area and operates the Skyview Observatory, located in Skyview County Park. The society is seeking funding to replace the dome on the observatory with a newer, safer, more accessible structure.

The current dome on the observatory was adapted from an agricultural silo cap and is operated manually. A number of society members are unable to operate the dome due to physical restrictions and handicaps. The existing dome rotates on exposed wheels, circulating in a track. Potential injury to occupants being caught in the wheels raises significant safety concerns.

Our selection committee has chosen a commercial dome for the replacement. Manufactured by Sky Domes, Inc., the new dome will be electrically operated by controls conveniently placed for all, and it moves on wheels in an enclosed track providing safe operation. Sky Domes provides installation assistance and a one-year warranty. The dome requires little maintenance and will be supported by the Society's annual budget.

(Insert a paragraph describing your mission statement, and public observing nights.)

In addition to the public night season, the Society presents lectures and viewing opportunities to local schools, scouting groups, 4H, churches and the County Conservation Board. Society members use the observatory for individual observations using visual, photographic and CCD imaging techniques. Observations are submitted to the Astronomical League, American Association of Variable Star Observers, International Occultation Timing Association and the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers.

Skyview Observatory houses a 16" telescope and an 8" astrograph, among the finest in the state. Available instrumentation include a research grade planetary CCD imaging camera and a photoelectric photometer. Besides the observing room, there is an attached classroom with a seating capacity of 30 that is used for public outreach meetings.

Cost of Items Required to Complete the Project:

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| 14.5 ft. diameter Sky Dome | \$18,600 |
| Shipping and Installation Advisor | \$ 1,100 |
| Crane rental | \$ 600 |
| Miscellaneous | \$ 1,200 |
| Total Funding Required | \$21,500 |

To date we have received \$6,200 in donations. **We are requesting the remaining balance of \$15,300 from the John Doe Charitable Trust.** Since the society operates solely on membership dues and public donations during public observing nights, this project will be impossible without additional funding sources. Participation by the John Doe Charitable Trust would greatly benefit the Society's ability to complete this project and continue our public outreach programs. Our target completion date is (date).

Thank you for your consideration.

Signature