

Ball Aerospace Showcases Optical Technologies at 2015 American Astronomical Society Annual Meeting

BOULDER, Colo., Jan. 2, 2015 – Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. will highlight its contributions to astronomy as a sponsor of the annual meeting of the American Astronomical Society (AAS) Jan. 4 – 8.

Billed as the “Super Bowl of Astronomy,” the 225th AAS meeting will draw more than 2,600 astronomers, planetary scientists, educators and journalists to the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle.

Many of the sessions will focus on the characterization of exoplanets, including the distant planet recently identified by K2, the repurposed Kepler mission. Ball Aerospace is the mission prime contractor for K2/ Kepler. After the spacecraft was hobbled by two faulty reaction wheels, Ball Aerospace proposed to NASA that sunlight could be used as the virtual “third wheel” to control the spacecraft. The successful fix resulted in the newly confirmed planet, HIP 116454b, which is 2.5 times the diameter of Earth. K2 promises to not only continue Kepler’s planet hunt, but also to expand the search to bright nearby stars which harbor planets that can be studied in detail to better understand their composition.

On April 24, 2015, Ball Aerospace will join NASA in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Hubble Space Telescope. Ball built seven instruments for NASA’s Hubble, including all the current working instruments. Ball is also eagerly awaiting the approach of the New Horizons spacecraft to the Pluto/Charon system and the Kuiper Belt in 2015, where its Ralph instrument will generate visible/near infrared multi-spectral images to help map the surface geology and composition of objects in the system.

Ball Aerospace has supported scientists in the astrophysics, planetary, earth science and solar communities for nearly 60 years. To learn more about Ball Aerospace during the AAS meeting, please visit us at booth #307. If you are interested in interviewing Ball astronomers or program experts during the show, contact Media Relations Manager Roz Brown at 720-581-3135.

For further information: Roz Brown rbrown@ball.com or call 303-939-6146

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