



Museum Artifacts & Collections

The 200-acre PARI campus itself can be considered a museum, in that it contains historic scientific instruments that played a vital role in the early days of nation's space exploration. The campus was one of the first sites developed by NASA to track satellites and communicate with the early astronaut pioneers. PARI's 26m (85ft) East radio telescope was the first of its type to be constructed. Today, the massive 400 ton instrument and a similar 26m West radio telescope are used for training and research by PARI astronomers, visiting faculty and students. In addition to the historic site, PARI makes available to the public a number of other artifacts and collections.

Exhibit Gallery- Easily accessible to the public in PARI's Cline Administration Building, the Exhibit Gallery currently contains two sections:

- **Space Artifacts**– PARI is one of the few sites in the country, and only one of two in North Carolina, selected by NASA to receive artifacts from the Space Shuttle Program. Many are currently on display, including several items that have flown in space.
- **Meteorites & Minerals** – North Carolina is the only state where large gem-grade emeralds are found, and the PARI collection contains a 15.3-carat faceted Hiddenite specimen. The collection also includes a 3-carat Hiddenite and hundreds of other museum-grade specimens, most from North Carolina. The meteorite section includes a specimen from 1492 that is a piece of the very first meteorite documented to have fallen to earth. The exhibit features meteorite specimens that have been gathered from around the world and includes pieces of Mars and the Earth's Moon.

Astronomical Photographic Data Archive (APDA) - PARI currently houses a permanent collection of more than 250,000 astronomical photographic glass plates and film from 50 collections. In 2007, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) designated PARI as the primary North American repository for these valuable historical artifacts. Working closely with the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, the U.S. Naval Observatory and numerous universities, PARI is helping digitize and store these priceless records. Visitors to PARI are able to observe this process.

Grassroots Museum Collaborative – PARI is an active member of the NC Grassroots Science Museums Collaborative, which links 39 science museums across North Carolina. In addition to providing a permanent interactive exhibit at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh, PARI is currently seeking funding to provide online streaming scientific data from PARI to other museums within the Collaborative.

Public Tours – Visitors are welcomed at PARI for self-guided tours Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Each Wednesday at 2:00, docent-led tours give visitors a detailed orientation to PARI. PARI's Space Day open house is scheduled the first Saturday in May and brings hundreds of people to the campus for a full day of programs and activities. Visitor admission is \$6 per person, children 10 and under are free.

Group Presentations – Customized presentations are available for all types of groups, including instruction to allow teachers and others to remotely use PARI's "Smiley" radio telescope via the Internet. Astronomy clubs, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, high school reunions, college students, K-12 student groups, homeschoolers and professional associations have come to PARI to experience a place where science comes out of the classroom and into the realm of the imagination.

*PARI is a public not-for-profit organization. See www.pari.edu for more information.
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