

## PROJECT FACT SHEET

# Observatory Telescope Restoration

The original 12 –inch Brashear refracting telescope, used in the University of Illinois Observatory since 1896, will undergo its first significant restoration since 1954. Because larger sections of the telescope are too heavy to be carried from the dome, Facilities & Services will use a crane to lift pieces out of the Observatory and prepare them for shipment. The return of the telescope, using a similar process, is scheduled for August 2013.

### RESTORATION

The restoration of the telescope will be done by Ray Museum Studios of Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, and include:

- Rehabilitation of the telescope tube
- Renovation of the mount and pier
- Mechanical repairs to gears and motors
- Reestablishment of the historical appearance

### BACKGROUND

In 2011, a group of alumni formed the Friends of the University of Illinois Observatory (FUIO) to work with the Department of Astronomy for the preservation and restoration of the Observatory. After initial fund-raising, a contribution from the Chancellor's Fund allowed the renovation of the telescope to proceed and benefit future astronomy classes and public outreach.

### THE OBSERVATORY

The University of Illinois Observatory is one of the oldest buildings on campus. Groundbreaking research on measuring the brightness of stars in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Joel Stebbins, second director of the Observatory, merited the facility recognition as a National Historic Landmark. Each year, thousands of students walk up the stairs to the Observatory dome to look through the historic telescope. The University of Illinois Astronomical Society hosts public open houses at the Observatory on the first Friday of each month during the academic year, showcasing the observatory for members of the community.



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