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NanoDays at the Highland Road Park Observatory and the Louisiana Arts & Science Museum!

Saturday, March 26, 2:00-6:00 p.m. at the Highland Road Park Observatory
Saturday, April 2, 10:00-4:00 p.m. at the Louisiana Arts & Science Museum

Learn about nanoscale science and technology during a nationwide festival celebrating the science of ultra small matter. Family friendly events will take place at the Highland Road Park Observatory on Saturday, March 26, and at the Louisiana Art & Science Museum (LASM) on Saturday, April 2, as part of NanoDays, a national event of educational programs about nanoscale science and engineering.

When reduced to the width of a human hair or smaller, ordinary materials often take on extraordinary properties. For example, the iridescent colors in butterfly wings are not created by pigments but, instead, by tiny patterns on the wings. Similarly, tinted glass in old cathedrals was made by mixing different sizes of gold particles to create a wide variety of colors. We are just now beginning to understand the fascinating phenomena of nanoscale materials and their potential uses in every day life. Nanotechnology promises advanced information processing and storage, new medical treatments, and much more.

NanoDays in Baton Rouge will feature several hands-on activities for children of all ages. Participants will be able to see how big they are compared to nanoscale objects, understand how a scanning probe microscope allows scientists to explore the nanoworld, experience the effect of reducing the size of regular objects by trying to pour water out of a nano-cup, and learn about nanomaterials used in the manufacture of stain-free clothes. Children and adults will also have a chance to build models of nanoscale structures, play with liquid crystals, and make some fluids magically part in the middle by applying magnets to them.

In parallel with the demonstrations, public talks will provide overviews of the nanoscale world and the tools that allow us to "see" it. On Saturday, March 26, at 4:00 p.m., at the Highland Road Park Observatory, Associate Professor Jayne Garno, LSU Department of Chemistry, will present "Nano Theater," in which she will show images of nano-objects captured in her lab. On Saturday, April 2, at the LASM, Garno will present "Molecular Nanofabrication" at 12:30 p.m. Professor Phillip Sprunger, LSU Department of Physics & Astronomy, will present "Through the STM Looking-glass: Nanoland" at 1:30 p.m. Associate Professor Jost Goettert, LSU-CAMD, will present "Nanotechnology: How to Make Small Things" at 2:30 p.m. Assistant Professors, Martin Tzanov and Juana Moreno, LSU Department of Physics & Astronomy, will display a Scanning Tunneling Microscope that measures the surface of objects at the atomic level.

Faculty, students and staff from LSU's Center for Computation and Technology, Department of Physics & Astronomy, Department of Chemistry, the Society of Physics Students, the Superfund Research Center, and the National Science Foundation-funded Louisiana Alliance for Simulation–Guided Materials Applications (La-SiGMA) are volunteering their time to make these events a success.

NanoDays, organized by the Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network (NISE Net.), takes place nationally March 26–April 3, 2011, at more than 200 science museums, research centers and universities across the country. For more information please visit the LSU Nanosciene & Nanotechnology website (http://www.pir ealps.org/nano/) or contact Juana Moreno at moreno@lsu.edu.

The event at the observatory is free. Regular museum admission applies at the LASM. Come be part of NanoDays!

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