

OCC trustees commit to raising money to reopen planetarium

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TOMS RIVER BUREAU

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TOMS RIVER — Ocean County College trustees publicly committed themselves today to a \$1.5 million fundraising effort to renovate and reopen the Robert J. Novins Planetarium, a landmark where generations of schoolchildren were introduced to astronomy before the facility shut down eight months ago.

The Ocean County College Foundation has pledged the proceeds from its annual summer gala toward re-opening the planetarium, and that event in the past has raised around \$250,000 said Stephen R. Leone, a college trustee who will be heading up the board's fund raising committee.

Planetarium supporters have been building momentum for a new fund-raising effort since late January, when college officials learned a promised \$2.5 million gift would not be forthcoming. Local astronomers have started the Save the Planetarium Fund, with a website at savetheplanetarium.org, and organizer Richard Gamba said the group is eager to work with the trustees' fundraising campaign.

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