

Donor pledges \$50G match for planetarium

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TOMS RIVER — There's a new challenge for the group working to reopen the Robert J. Novins Planetarium at Ocean County College.

A donor will match up to \$50,000 if the Save the Planetarium Fund can raise that much in other donations.

"I am very excited and extremely happy," said Richard Gamba, president of the Save the Planetarium Fund.

It is working with the OCC Board of Trustees to raise enough money to replace the equipment in the planetarium, refurbish part of it, and offset its annual operating deficit.

Gamba said a "caring, community-minded individual," committed to reopening the planetarium pledged the \$50,000 matching grant.

The planetarium was closed last year because the state cut funds to the college.

A donor promised to pay to bring it up to date and operate it, but that Berkeley Township man's promise was not backed up by cash.

As a result Gamba's group and the trustees are working in tandem to try to raise funds from private sources to keep it open.

Gamba said the drive to match the \$50,000 potential donation will get underway at the college on Astronomy Day, which is Saturday.

Under the matching program the donor will match gifts from individuals up to \$500 each. Other gifts can be given as well to Save the Planetarium or to the trustees, whose effort is led by local attorney Stephan Leone.

For information about the effort Gamba is leading call (732) 506-7700 or e-mail him at president@savetheplanetarium.org.

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