



Night rocket launch beats the heat

By Mackey Torres
Bee-Picayune staff

BEEVILLE — South Texas Aerospace Club (STAC) Vice President Mei Yates wanted to put on a big rocket show. A show that could perfectly encapsulate rocketry and how Beeville is a growing hub for all things rockets.

Last Saturday's show exceeded her wildest dreams.

"(The) Saturday night rocket launch event was a huge success," Yates said. "We had big turn out with head counts in the hundreds."

The daytime portion was mostly for the kids. The kids had fun and got to learn from the pros, as they showed them the process of launching rockets, even letting them get on the microphone and do their own flight announcement.

"My stepson, Aaron, had a great time," said Virginia Perales. "He was so excited to launch his own rocket."

Wastequip, one of the event's biggest sponsors, had mentors take a trainer's class the day before so that they could effectively assist the children experience the thrill of blast off.

"We are happy to partner with South Texas Aerospace Club to be part of this event and help promote education of science," said Wastequip spokesman Agustine Benavidez. "We are here not to just make a living, we are here to make a difference."

With the moon illuminating the night sky, the pros were able to put on a show, firing a wide array of rockets, including one made by Yates' husband William, which was an Estes Ventris rocket with red, white and blue LED lights.

"We watched it continue to climb in altitude to a point as if it became one of the stars that belonged to the galaxy," Yates said.

Following the event, a survey was distributed, where over 70 percent showed their interest in a rocketry class, discussing the engineering and building of rockets and more. STAC is all ready in the process of creating a rocketry class in the future, using National Association of Rocketry (NAR) or National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

curriculum for different age groups.

The success of the event also spawned ideas for future events, including an RC airplane show, a hot-air balloon show and a local pilot air show.

With drawing a massive crowd, Yates is incredibly grateful to all of STAC's sponsors, including, Wastequip, the city of Beeville, the VFW, Manuel Segovia of Mesquite Sound and Recording and Joy Burkhardt from KRBX 107.1 Classic Rock, amongst others.

"We could not have made this happen without these sponsors," Yates said.

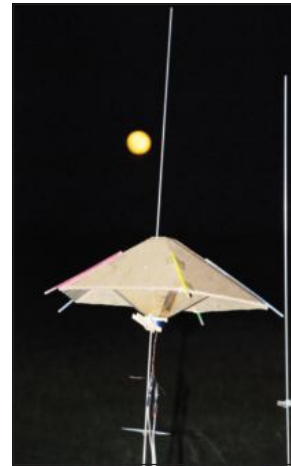
Yates had goals of bringing families together and also introducing rocketry, especially to the youth.

Both were achieved.

"Kids had so much fun learning and flying rockets," Yates said. "It was a great joy to see all these smiling faces."

Contributed photos

With rockets being shot off in the night, the full moon helped with the retrieval of them.



Rockets launch and prepare to launch at the South Texas Aerospace Club's night rocket launch last Saturday. Wastequip, who helped sponsor the event, took a trainers class the day before to be able to hold a prep and fly event. The prep and fly event helped assist kids and teach them how to fire their own rockets. Close to 50 kids, ranging from ages 3-17, were able to command their very own blast off for the first time.



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