

Highway to Tuktoyaktuk opens in time for annual Leonid meteor shower

It's official — Canadians can now drive all year round right to the Arctic Ocean via the new Inuvik-Tuk highway set to open Nov. 15.

Tuktoyaktuk, the hamlet at the new end of the all-weather road, which boasts a population of under 1,000, is expected to take off with new oil and gas activities.

Also, it is one of the new best places in Canada accessible by highway for stargazing.

With light pollution killing most skies in developed countries, Tuktoyaktuk is a unique find. With infrastructure expected to grow with other developments, night sky fanatics may want to get in early on the action before they have their own light pollution issues.

The driving distance is just under 4,000 kilometres from Vulcan, so it's like driving to Quebec City on much



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rougher, less travelled thoroughfares, but undoubtedly it would be the trip of a lifetime!

Sky watch

You'll get that extra hour of sleep on Nov. 2, when Daylight's Savings Time ends at 2 a.m. that day.

Northern Taurids meteor shower peaks on Nov. 11 after dark. Seven meteors per hour are predicted, but the waning crescent moon marginally disturbs this shower in the wee morning

hours of Nov. 12.

The Leonid meteor shower peaks Nov. 17 for the weekend after nightfall. There's no moon, so you will be able to see the meteor shower by looking towards the constellation of Leo. This meteor shower should produce meteors at the rate of 10-15 per hour.

On Nov. 28, look southwest before 6:30 p.m. to see Saturn and Mercury with the naked eye.

Public events

Mark down Nov. 25 from 8-11 p.m. on your calendar for the monthly open house at Calgary's Rothney Observatory near Priddis.

There will be an array of scopes operated by University of Calgary astronomers and members of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC).

There will be an indoor presentation, and attendees will have the opportunity to look through the telescopes. Astronomers will be on hand to answer questions.

That night, check out the vain and boastful queen of the northern sky, Cassiopeia, under a sliver of a moon.

There's an entrance fee of \$30 per car.

For further information, contact Jennifer Howse at jhowse@phas.ucalgary.ca or 403-931-2366. Visit the website ucalgary.ca/rao for more information.

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. He welcomes your questions and comments at 403-560-6574 and at Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com.