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## Watch NASA satellite blow a hole in moon's surface

Wednesday, October 07, 2009

By Shelby G. Spires

Times Aerospace Writer [shelby.spires@htimes.com](mailto:shelby.spires@htimes.com)

Astronomical group will have telescopes set up for viewing blast

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There, the Von Braun Astronomical Society telescopes will be pointed at the moon to watch NASA's Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite, or LCROSS, blow a hole and plow a trench across the lunar surface.

About 6 a.m. Friday, the observatory's Celestron C-16 Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope will be pointed at the lower left section of the moon where a crater named Cabeus A is located. The LCROSS probe is expected to impact the moon at about 6:30, said Annette Labrecque spokeswoman for the observatory.

Other members will set up telescopes and the public is invited, Labrecque said.

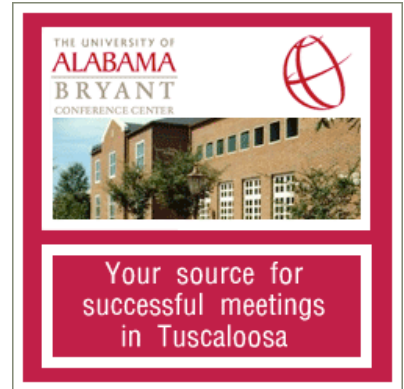
The probe, which is basically the upper stage of a rocket, was launched June 18 as part of a \$570 million Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter mission to map the moon. The orbiter has been snapping pictures and taking detailed scans of the moon for the past three months.

NASA engineers estimate LCROSS will hit the moon at about 1.55 miles per second, or about 5,600 mph.

Scientists say they think there could be water under the moon's surface. Last month, scientists released findings that showed water molecules have collected on the lunar surface in larger areas than was previously thought.

Water on the moon is essential to building a lunar base or sustaining long missions, NASA managers say. It costs about \$90,000 a pound to place any type of cargo on the lunar surface, and a gallon of water weighs eight pounds.

Marshall Space Flight Center was part of the technical management of the project, signing off on the probe's design. Ames Research Center, near San Francisco, is managing the orbiter and the impact probe.



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