



**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

## **Mars in Opposition For a Few Days, the Red Planet Will Be the Star of the Sky!**

Montréal, January 25, 2010 – Montréal's Nature Museums are inviting everyone to join the Planetarium team in observing Mars on the evenings of January 29 and 30. The famous Red Planet will be opposite the Sun, meaning that it will be closer to the Earth than at any other time all year long and its surface details will be more visible. It's an opportunity not to be missed, for these favourable conditions last only a few weeks and won't happen again for another 26 months!

Because of its rather elongated orbit, Mars will be almost twice as far from Earth – and twice as small through a telescope – as it was during its record opposition in August 2003. On the other hand, this time the Red Planet will be much higher in the sky, and so the telescopic images will be much less impaired by atmospheric turbulence.

The Red Planet will quickly distance itself from Earth after March is over. It will remain visible in the evening sky until late summer, but will be increasingly faint and will soon be too small for viewers to easily make out its surface details.

### **With the naked eye**

Even if you don't have a telescope, Mars is still fascinating to look at with the naked eye! Grab a hot chocolate, head outside and look to the East at nightfall on January 29. The planet will be rising at the same time as the full Moon, providing a spectacular view!

At present the Red Planet is easy to spot, for it is brighter than any of the stars and a brilliant orange colour.

Whether you observe it with the naked eye, binoculars or a telescope, Mars will definitely be putting on a great show for both amateur and seasoned stargazers.

### **Observation of Mars and the Moon with the Planetarium team**

At the Planetarium  
1000, rue Saint-Jacques, Montréal (Bonaventure metro)  
7 to 10 p.m.  
Free

Information: 514 872-4530 and [museumsnature.ca](http://museumsnature.ca)

*Montréal's Nature Museums – the Biodôme, Insectarium, Botanical Garden and Planetarium –  
helping people enjoy nature to the fullest.*

The Montréal Planetarium keeps the public up to date on astronomical happenings.  
Watch for our press releases on upcoming events and check out our Website, at  
[www.museumsnature.ca](http://www.museumsnature.ca)

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Visual available on request