

CHRONOS II has a new blue home

On July 5, 2019, the new Galileum Planetarium in Solingen Germany was officially opened with a series of enthusiastic community celebrations. The road to that opening began in 1921, when local high school science teacher Walter Horn formed the Astronomical Club of Solingen, which built a small observatory. The Walter-Horn Society has continued serving its community for nearly 100 years, and now its members embark on the next 100 years of sharing the wonders of the cosmos.

The fundraising that created that first small observatory was repeated on a much larger scale in the past decade. Hoping to build a planetarium, the club obtained land and an unused, 62 year-old gas storage tank for use as their new home. Various governmental agencies provided roughly 2/3 of the funding, but club members had to do an amazing amount of work to raise the rest. After years of crowdfunding appeals, performances of a famous German science comedian, approaches to local corporations, and even selling various promotional items, finally construction began in 2016.

The 85-seat planetarium features a GOTO CHRONOS II HYBRID system which links a 4K RSA Cosmos Sky Explorer 4.0 full-dome system with the beautiful, ultra-high resolution stars, sun, moon, and planets of the opto-mechanical projector. Programming is a mixture of live performances in which club members utilize the GOTO HYBRID control console to give tours of the night sky, automated HYBRID programs, pre-rendered shows on diverse topics, and even alternate uses such as live concerts and other community presentations.

An 8-story tower building was constructed beside the tank, with a bridge leading into the tank at its equator. Atop the tower are 35.5cm and 25cm telescopes which have a totally unobstructed view of the entire horizon. Inside the tower are meeting rooms, offices, the society's library, a small café, and exhibits. And inside the 26 meter tank is a 12 meter, horizontal Astro-Tec dome housing what is arguably the most exciting planetarium in Europe.

For as long as most people could remember, the big steel ball near the Solingen Hbf train station was just an industrial oddity. But now it has become the icon signaling an exciting new future for the Galileum Solingen!



* Background Photos: Courtesy of Norman Schwarz, Galileum Solingen

GOTO HYBRID PLANETARIUM
CHRONOS II



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