

'Hitchhiker' EPOXI: Next Stop, Comet Hartley 2

June 29 2010



NASA's Deep Impact/EPOXI spacecraft flew past Earth on June 27, 2010, to get a boost from Earth's gravity. It is now on its way to comet Hartley 2, depicted in this artist's concept, with a planned flyby this fall. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(PhysOrg.com) -- NASA's Deep Impact/EPOXI spacecraft flew past Earth Sunday (June 27) at approximately 3:03 p.m. Pacific time (6:03 p.m. Eastern time), as planned.

The spacecraft is now on its way to its appointment with comet Hartley 2 this fall. The members of the EPOXI team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., are currently working with data returned from the [flyby](#) to refine the spacecraft trajectory estimates.

EPOXI is an extended mission of the [Deep Impact](#) spacecraft. Its name is derived from its two tasked science investigations -- the Extrasolar Planet Observation and Characterization (EPOCh) and the Deep Impact Extended Investigation (DIXI). On Nov. 4, 2010, the mission will fly by Hartley 2 using all three of the spacecraft's instruments (two telescopes with digital imagers and an [infrared spectrometer](#)).

The University of Maryland, College Park, is the principal investigator institution. JPL manages EPOXI for NASA's Science Mission Directorate, Washington. The spacecraft was built for NASA by Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp., Boulder, Colo.

Provided by JPL/NASA

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