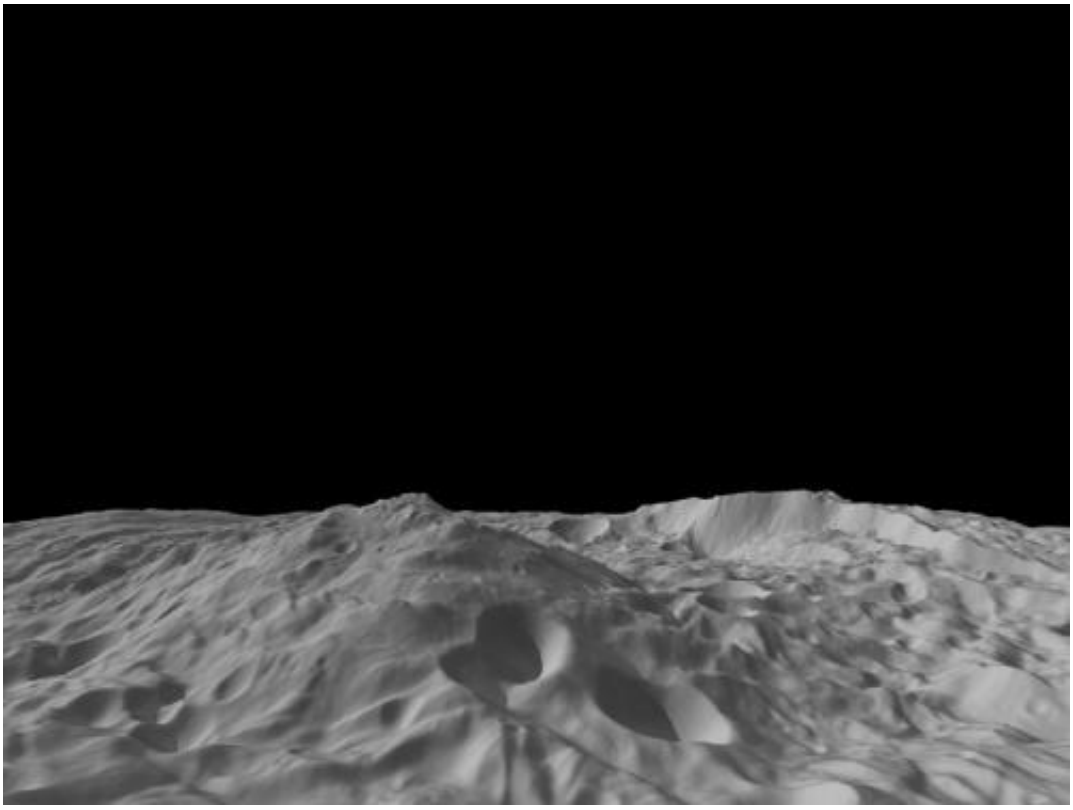
New view of Vesta mountain from Dawn mission

October 11 2011



This image of the asteroid Vesta, calculated from a shape model, shows a tilted view of the topography of the south polar region.

(PhysOrg.com) -- A new image from NASA's Dawn spacecraft shows a mountain three times as high as Mt. Everest, amidst the topography in the south polar region of the giant asteroid Vesta.

The peak of Vesta's south pole mountain, seen in the center of the image, rises about 13 miles (22 kilometers) above the average height of the surrounding terrain. Another impressive structure is a large scarp, a cliff with a steep slope, on the right side of this image. The scarp bounds part of the south polar depression, and the Dawn team's scientists believe features around its base are probably the result of landslides.

The image was created from a shape model of Vesta, and shows an oblique perspective view of the topography of the south polar region. The image resolution is about 300 meters per pixel, and the vertical scale is 1.5 times that of the horizontal scale.

Dawn entered orbit around Vesta in July. Members of the mission team will discuss what the spacecraft has seen so far during a news conference at the Annual Meeting of the Geological Society of America in Minneapolis. Among other things, they'll share their hypotheses on the origins of Vesta's curious craters.

More information: The meeting, at the Minneapolis Convention Center, runs from Oct. 9 to 12, with the Dawn news conference scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 10 a.m. PDT (noon CDT). The event will air live on the Geological Society of America webcast page at: hosted.mediasite.com/mediasite … 5fbe199b29129e3b7c1d

Provided by JPL/NASA