NASA Invites Public to Choose Hubble's Next Discovery

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Hubble Space Telescope

(PhysOrg.com) -- NASA is giving everyone the opportunity to use the world's most celebrated telescope to explore the heavens and boldly look where the Hubble Space Telescope has never looked before.

NASA is inviting the public to vote for one of six candidate astronomical objects for Hubble to observe in honor of the International Year of Astronomy. The options, which Hubble has not previously photographed, range from far-flung galaxies to dying stars. Votes can be cast until March 1. Hubble's camera will make a high resolution image revealing new details about the object that receives the most votes. The image will be released during the International Year of Astronomy's "100 Hours of Astronomy" from April 2 to 5.

Space enthusiasts can cast their vote at: YouDecide.Hubblesite.org

Everyone who votes also will be entered into a random drawing to receive one of 100 copies of the Hubble photograph made of the winning celestial body.

NASA also invites teachers and students to participate in an accompanying Hubble Space Telescope classroom collage activity that integrates art, science and language arts. Students in participating classes will select their favorite Hubble images and assemble them in a collage. Students in each class also will choose their favorite object from the image voting contest and write essays about why they made their selections.

The Hubble Space Telescope, launched in 1990, was designed so that it can be repaired in space by astronauts. The next servicing mission to the telescope is targeted to launch on space shuttle Atlantis May 12, 2009. Mission objectives include extending Hubble's operational life by five years, repairing its out-of-commission instruments and enhancing its scientific power. To do so, astronauts will replace gyroscopes and batteries on the telescope, repair the Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph and the Advanced Camera for Surveys and install two new instruments -- the Wide Field Camera 3 and the Cosmic Origins Spectrograph.

For more information about the servicing mission, visit: hubble.nasa.gov/missions/sm4.php

For more information about the Hubble Space Telescope, visit: www.nasa.gov/hubble

Provided by NASA