

## News from the Roque

Step-by-step the 10-m GTC is coming closer to completion. The telescope mechanical structure is already complete and is being tuned and balanced. Encoders and motors will be fitted soon, after which the telescope control system can be tested in anger. All main optical components are already on site, including the secondary mirror, which has been a demanding item because of its material and complex shape that mimics the shape of the primary. As soon as the telescope structure is operational the first segments of the primary mirror will be mounted, preparing GTC for its technical 'first-light' milestone.

On these pages in the past we have reported the construction of the 17-m MAGIC Cherenkov telescope. That telescope, now having been completed, is about to receive its twin, MAGIC-2. The new telescope will be very similar to the first one and will be erected in the same area, at about 85m distance

from from MAGIC-1. The magic delivered by both together will be bigger than the sum of each. At the time of writing the concrete for the telescope base is already in place.

In the previous newsletter we mentioned the construction of the new IAC centre on La Palma, CALP: "Centro de Astrofísica en La Palma". Since then the building has been inaugurated by the Spanish minister of Education and Science and has been taken in use. The GTC offices are located at CALP.

Not so visible, but nevertheless an important infrastructure improvement is the higher bandwidth from site to the outside world. The observatory now enjoys a 32Mbps internet connectivity. Now this may not seem much if you're working in a research institute in Europe, but the observatory on top of our little island on the ocean it's 15 times better than what we're used to! The improved bandwidth allows ING



MAGIC-1 (right) and MAGIC-2 (left, under construction).



Inauguration event of CALP (credit Luis Cuesta, IAC).

to carry out data archiving to Cambridge over the internet. We are waiting for the ING offices in Santa Cruz de La Palma to be connected to the same bandwidth infrastructure as well. ☐

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## Perseids from Roque de Los Muchachos Observatory

Each year about 12 August Earth intersects orbit of the comet 109P/Swift-Tuttle and debris from this comet which is distributed all along the orbit, enters Earth's atmosphere, burning in a form of meteors. They appear from a radiant in the constellation of Perseus and are therefore called Perseids. Some years they produce very active showers. In 2005 the activity was below average, nevertheless some very bright and beautiful meteors could be seen.

To capture this event, a simple photographic setup was placed in a quiet place next to the JKT telescope. It comprised of the Canon 350D digital camera, the Peleng 8 mm/f3.5 fish eye lens and a photographic tripod. The camera was controlled by a computer to take images every 30 seconds. Many interesting meteors were photographed and from the photos an animation was created, showing dark La Palma sky lit by the Milky Way and occasional bright meteors. The photos and the animation are available from <http://www.ing.iac.es/~jure/perseids2005/>. ☐

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One distinguished event happened about 4:38 local time when a very bright fireball exploded and left a smoke trail which was visible on photos for several minutes before it was dispersed by wind.

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