American Association for the Advancement of Science Publishes "Exploring the Inner Solar System" for MESSENGER Mission（图）

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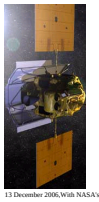
[作者] American Association for the Advancement of Science

[单位] American Association for the Advancement of Science

[摘要] 13 December 2006,With NASA's MESSENGER spacecraft streaking past Venus on its way to Mercury, AAAS has teamed with the space agency to publish Exploring the Inner Solar System: Expecting the Unexpected, a book designed to inspire student interest in space sciences.

[关键词] space sciences;Mercury;Venus;Inner Solar System



13 December 2006,With NASA's MESSENGER spacecraft streaking past Venus on its way to Mercury, AAAS has teamed with the space agency to publish Exploring the Inner Solar System: Expecting the Unexpected, a book designed to inspire student interest in space sciences.

The 72-

page book, aimed at science educators and students, focuses on the moon and the solar system's four terrestrial planets: Mars, Earth, Venus, and Mercury. It features dozens of pictures and detailed discussion of both past missions and future expectations for MESSENGER, which is due to make its first Mercury flyby in January 2008.

"Millions of people, from professional scientists to science-

engaged citizens, first got excited about science by following NASA space missions," said Bob Hirshon, AAAS senior project director. "The MESSENGER mission to Mercury is a chance to excite a new generation of budding scientists."

Mercury is the planet closest to the sun; it is the hottest planet and it has the oldest surface. More than 35 years have passed since NASA's Mariner 10 craft sent the most recent images of Mercury's terrain. NASA hopes that MESSENGER will provide extraordinary images along with new insights into how Earth was formed.

"We're trying to put the MESSENGER mission to Mercury in a broader context by showing how we reached our current understanding of the inner solar system," said the book's author, Justin Warner, who serves as a reporter for AAAS's daily Science Update radio program.

Scientists estimate that the MESSENGER probe will be able to resolve topographic features down to 60 feet across, compared to one mile across obtained by Mariner 10.

NASA's MESSENGER probe, an acronym for Mercury Surface, Space, Environment, Geochemistry and Ranging, was launched in August 2004 and will travel nearly 6 billion miles and perform six planetary flybys during its seven

-year flight before settling into Mercury's orbit.

Exploring the Inner Solar System is being distributed through the MESSENGER Educator Fellows program, an initiative training 30 science educators in 21 states to conduct national outreach workshops on the mission. NASA estimates that over 27,000 educators will be trained by the Fellows over the mission's lifetime.

AAAS also was asked to produce other education materials for the mission, including Web sites with engaging, game-

like interactive modules for students, that compliment the MESSENGER Education Modules developed for the classroom.

"Teachers love the AAAS MESSENGER Make a Mission Interactive. It is a great way to engage their students in the science and engineering concepts related to space exploration" said Stephanie Stockman, MESSENGER education team lead.

The lessons and additional education materials for the program focus on three themes: comparative planetology, the history of the solar system, and the scientific process and method in action. The general themes are then divided into grade

-level appropriate lesson plans and supplementary materials.

Much of the MESSENGER outreach was based upon the success of AAAS's collaboration with the National Institutes of Health in producing the Healthy People Library Project, a series of health

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related online materials seeking to increase the quality and years of healthy life and eliminating health disparities for all Americans, especially underserved minorities.

As part of the project, AAAS authored the The Science Inside, a seven-

book series on topics from diabetes to HIV, including a book on asthma and allergies, which was named a 2005 bronze medal winner by the Health Information Resource Center in the patient education information category.

"The scientific community must teach in a way that doesn't leave some people behind because they lack advanced language skills or conceptual understanding," said Maria Sosa, senior project director in AAAS Education and Human Resources. "AAAS meets the challenges of communicating science to the public by providing engaging science content usin

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