



SARA-KP OBSERVATORY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October 9, 2020

by

Dr. Gary Henson

Director, SARA Observatory

and

Department of Physics & Astronomy

East Tennessee State University

Under the global Covid-19 pandemic conditions and local conditions in Arizona, KPNO was closed to all operations during the April-September 2020 observing period. The observatory had already been down due to the main control card failure, and although initially kept on standby, ACE did shut down the observatory completely to a safe status before the summer monsoon season. Computers and some equipment were taken to Tucson for software upgrades and some minimal testing, but access to the observatory in light of potential re-opening was only allowed in early September and remains very limited under NOAO protocols. The extended shutdown has allowed ACE to finally get Windows 10 installed on all observatory computers but very little else has been done in terms of repairs, replacements, or upgrades. KPNO is currently in a reopening phase allowing highly restricted access to the observatory but no observing of any kind. If pandemic conditions improve to allow the next phase of reopening, remote observing would be allowed. ACE would need several days to bring all systems back up and test them before operations would resume in that case.

Peter Mack is supplying an overall status report for the SARA Observatories for the upcoming Board meeting with more details and plans for reopening SARA KP. Those details will be summarized in the meeting minutes for the October 10, 2020 Board meeting.