Chicken Little Was Right, the Sky Is Falling!

A General Public Talk
By Dr. Terry Oswalt
Professor of Astronomy
Florida Institute of Technology

Thursday, February 5, 7:30 pm
Union Auditorium
UNL City Campus

Abstract: Asteroids and comets may preserve the only records of the physical and chemical processes which marked the beginning of the solar system 4.6 billion years ago. Most asteroids revolve about the sun between the planets Mars and Jupiter and are believed to be the rocky remnants of the minor bodies from which all planets accrete. Comets are bodies that come from far outside the orbit of Pluto, in a dark realm called the Oort Cloud, a large icy debris zone which surrounds the Sun. Over the last decade, the risk of impacts from comets and asteroids has been recognized as substantial and a number of research programs have been undertaken to find and categorize the most dangerous Near Earth Objects (NEOs). Dr. Oswalt will discuss how NEOs are found, the way impact risks are assessed, what the effects of an impact can be, and how the human species might respond to the threat of a major impact.

Dr. Oswalt’s visit is sponsored by the UNL Center for Science, Mathematics, & Computer Education and the Harlow Shapley Visiting Lectureship Program of the American Astronomical Society.