

# **PRESS RELEASE**



## **Teeter's Telescopes to Take Time to Reset**

July 15, 2019

**NEWFOUNDLAND, NJ** - Teeter's Telescopes, LLC., (TT) will be suspending production of their popular custom made telescopes following their upcoming September, 2019, production run. All orders currently in process, and those pending start in September, will be seen to completion. The company will also continue to honor all product guarantees, warranties, repairs and other obligations. TT is taking a much needed break by halting the acceptance of new telescope orders after September, 2019, and will reevaluate the resumption or production in 2020.

When owner, Rob Teeter, decided in 2011 to dial back his full-time day job (environmental engineer) and focus more on expanding TT from part-time to being closer to full-time, customers responded by keeping the queue of telescope work full. Every production run containing between 6 and 12 custom made telescopes occurring 3 to 4 times per year, every year since 2011, has been full. In total since the business first began as a very part-time endeavor in 2002, over 300 telescopes have been completed and/or are nearing completion. The last several years have seen a greatly expanded throughput of order fulfillment.

However, due to the cost intensive nature of manufacturing custom made Dobsonian telescopes, the industry does not lend itself well to providing a living wage. Approximately 50% of the cost of any custom made telescope goes toward the optics, manufactured by subcontracted opticians. Further, the TT business model involves utilizing the best components from the best subcontracted designers and manufacturers, thus bringing the best telescopes, made from the best parts, to market. Unfortunately, those components consume another 30%-40% of the telescope cost, leaving little funding to pay TT staff and ownership to do customer service, general design work, wood finishing, final assembly and final systems integration which all take place in-house at the TT workshop.

This was not unexpected but TT had hoped that some manufacturing efficiencies could be realized if production increased. This has not proven to be the case. Even in recent years with completion of 40 telescopes in one 12 month period, near the greatest throughput possible for this type of product, it cannot be a sole source of income. Rob's goal with TT was never to get rich, but just be able to live off a business that was enjoyable to run. While there has routinely been 50-60 hours of TT work per week, the level of pay when extrapolated over those hours and the course of a full year more closely resembles that of part-time work, thus requiring additional sources of income.

To bridge the income gap, Rob added part-time work with his previous environmental engineering employer and for a friend's traveling science education company (Pearl Observatory), conducting portable planetarium programs at libraries, schools, camps and daycare centers. Each of those businesses, along with TT, has seen major growth over the last three years, each requiring more of his availability, to the point where there's simply not enough

time in the day to satisfy all commitments to all of those businesses. Unfortunately, while TT is the most enjoyable and fulfilling of those endeavors for Rob, it pays the least, is the most labor intensive and has the most uncertain long term outlook.

In short, Rob's *work* balance has been completely out of balance leading to an untenable *work-life* balance. Therefore, Rob has decided a suspension of new TT telescope orders was needed. This will allow TT to complete approximately 15 orders currently in the queue of work without taking time to on-board new telescope orders after September 1, 2019. TT will also be able to better service existing customers should they require any technical support.

The decision if/when production will resume beyond September 2019 shall be made once all standing orders have been finished in 2020. The January 2020 Production Run will be skipped while the May and September 2020 Productions Runs may potentially be opened. TT also has several in-stock telescope projects in the works which will be offered through the TT website.

Please note, during this time TT will continue manufacturing the venerable Glatter Cable Sling Kit (available through our exclusive retailer Camera Concepts of Stony Brook, NY), manufacturing and selling the Moonlite Ball & Socket Truss Pole Connectors and 1.25" diameter black anodized Truss Poles. Shrouds by Heather, a TT company, will continue handcrafting light shrouds, truss pole carry cases and dust caps. This suspension of production only affects post-September 2019 TT *custom made telescope orders*.

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