

Goldstone workers recall moon landing

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Monday, July 20, 2009

Barstow resident Bob Rees started working at the Goldstone Deep Space Communications Complex during an exciting time.

It was 1968 and Rees, 25-years-old at the time, had gotten his first real job as an antenna pneudraulics specialist — essentially a caretaker for a gigantic 210-foot-tall antenna — at Goldstone.

“It was cutting edge technology,” said Rees, 68, who is now a senior antenna subsystem engineer for a contractor at Goldstone. His first job kicked off a career love with all things related to outer space, Rees said. Rees was among the Goldstone workers in the thick of the action when the Apollo 11 lunar module landed on the moon on July 20, 1969.

It was a historic and exciting moment, said Rees.

“It was an extreme adventure we were able to take as a nation,” he said.

Karla Warner, outreach coordinator at Goldstone, was 15-yearsold at the time and remembers baby-sitting a dozen neighborhood kids and sitting everyone in front of the television and watching the moment — where astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped onto the surface of the moon — unfold on a black and white, 19 inch screen.

According to Warner, Goldstone was responsible for bringing in the first video footage from the lunar landing. The complex used three different antennas for video, voice and data, she said.

Goldstone is still active in advancing the space frontier and is involved with current lunar missions, Warner also noted. The two missions — the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) and the Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite (LCROSS) — are working to confirm whether water once existed on the moon. The antennas at Goldstone are gathering data and images from the mission.

“The first pictures coming back are phenomenal,” she said.

Warner said that even after 40 years, there’s still much exploring to do.

“There’s more to learn (about) the moon,” she said. “It’s just the first little step.”

FILE PHOTO, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
FIRST STEPS: In this July 20, 1969 file photo, Apollo 11 Commander Neil Armstrong walks slowly away from the lunar module to explore the surface of the moon.

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