The Ad Astra Kansas Initiative is an effort to enhance science education in Kansas. It was founded in 2001 by a grassroots group of citizens and educators. The initiative's first newsletter, The AD ASTRA KANSAS News, was launched in 2002, focusing on high-tech/ space-tech R&D, commercialization and education. In 2003, the Governor of Kansas declared a proclamation naming Ad Astra Kansas Day. The Kansas Cosmosphere was given the task of selecting a school to receive a presentation. In 2004, the second annual AAK Day was held at Washburn University. A statewide student poster contest was conducted, with the winning school receiving a presentation from the Kansas Cosmosphere. In 2005, the third AAK Day was held with Dr. Trevor Sorensen of KU as speaker. The outreach of student poster contest continued, with the winning school receiving a presentation from the Kansas Cosmosphere. In 2006, the fourth annual AAK Day took place with a display recognizing current science work/research in Kansas situated in the rotunda of the state Capitol building. Twenty entities contributed materials. AAK website was introduced. In 2007, the fifth AAK Day was held with speaker Joel Walker of Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center. The outreach of student poster contest continued, with the winning school receiving a presentation from the Kansas Cosmosphere. In 2008, the sixth AAK Day was held at Exploration Place, Wichita. The theme was “Getting off the planet—Kansas Style” and featured Kansans who have space connections. In 2009, the seventh AAK Day was held with speaker Fred Gassert, Jerelyn Ramirez, and Joe Castor of Kansas Astronomical Observers, Wichita. The theme was “Our Place in the Milky Way.”

The Galaxy Forum Kansas is eighth in a series of national/international forums looking to enrich science education by raising awareness of our Milky Way Galaxy and our connection to it. Sponsored by the Ad Astra Kansas Initiative.

- Ad Astra Kansas Intro—Jeanette Steinert
- Joel Walker
  Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center
- Fred Gassert, Jerelyn Ramirez, Joe Castor
  Kansas Astronomical Observers, Wichita
  “Our Place in the Milky Way”
- Mike Ford
  NASA Fermi-GLAST educator
  “The Monster in the Middle—How we study galaxies’ black holes”
- Steve Durst
  International Lunar Observatory Assn
  “ILO Galaxy First Light Imaging”
- PANEL DISCUSSION on advancing / enhancing science education in Kansas

Additional Stellar Event—2 p.m.
Astronaut presentation at the Cosmosphere marking the 25th anniversary of the maiden launch of Space Shuttle Discovery. Free / open to the public. Presented by the Cosmosphere.