

US Spacecraft Reaches Pluto

Written by The White House

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http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/pluto_515-s5.jpg



NASA's New Horizons interplanetary probe has been making its way to Pluto since January 19, 2006 and made its closest approach to Pluto yet, about 8,000 miles, Tuesday.

PLUTO - This morning, the United States became the first country to reach Pluto, and the first country to explore the entire classical solar system: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.

NASA's New Horizons interplanetary probe has been making its way to Pluto since January 19, 2006, and has been providing the world with the sharpest photos ever seen of our Solar System's most prominent "dwarf planet." Today, it made its closest approach to Pluto yet -- about 8,000 miles -- at around 07:49:57 EDT.

The NASA photo, which, despite traveling at the speed of light (186,000 miles per second), took four and a half hours to reach us here on Earth as it crossed the 3 billion miles between here and Pluto, is truly historical.

That we were able to get so close to Pluto today is a feat whose probability scientist Neil deGrasse Tyson likened to "a hole-in-one on a two-mile golf shot." He's right.

Every once in a while, a photo comes along that has the ability to shift not just how we see our place in the universe, but how we see ourselves -- not just as Americans, but as citizens of Earth.

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