

Spotlight on Morehead: Studying space at Morehead State University

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MOREHEAD, Ky. (LEX 18) — This week, LEX 18 is shining a spotlight on the city of Morehead.

Tracing the footsteps of Daniel Boone and helping create a pathway to Mars, the contrast is shocking, but both are elements of what the people of Morehead love about their region.

Morehead State has an enrollment of just over 10,000. That's small in some respects, but the impact of students in the space science program here may someday reach across our solar system.

When Emily Walter left Knott County for Morehead State University, her plan was medical school.

"I do think we are a kind of hidden gem in Appalachia," she said.

A few lectures in the space science center changed her course.

"I fell in love with engineering," said Walter, who is a Mission Operations Engineer at Morehead State. "I fell in love with the challenge of it. All of the, like, brilliant ideas and brilliant science of it being done. I just fell in love with this program and I've been in love with it ever since."

Showing us around the center, Emily's passion is apparent.. and apparently for good reason.

The Ronald G. Eaglin Space Science Center at MSU is ranked #1 in Kentucky, above UK and U of L, in space science programs, according to Southern Business and Development Magazine.

"Everybody knows us when we go to conferences, they know who we are, but people five miles down the road don't know this program exists," said Nathan Fite, Lead Spacecraft Engineer at Morehead State. "We work with people from everywhere in the world Africa, Europe."

MSU's next big project... getting to Mars. The Lunar Ice Cube satellite weighs about 30 pounds. It will go up on Artemus One later this month and orbit the moon hundreds of times. Built in a "clean room" at MSU, the Lunar Ice Cube could provide valuable information to NASA.

"Lunar Ice Cube is pioneering a lot of tech and a lot of science that's really vital in getting us to the moon and getting us colonized there so we can take that next step to Mars and further explore and understand our solar system and our universe," said Walter.

It's exciting for students hoping to someday leave their mark on the universe.

"We've had 50-60 students before they've graduated working on this specific program, so the students who have helped build, test design will literally have their fingertips, their fingerprints on the moon."

Emily says she's grateful this opportunity was right in her own backyard.

"We have so many great thinkers, makers, builders, doers here in Kentucky, and I really want to see their potential met in programs like this," she said.

Right now, Emily and others from the program are attending a conference at Utah State University. It's dealing with small satellites like the Lunar Ice Cube.

They're looking forward to Monday, August 29, when their work is scheduled to go up on Artemis One.