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EARTH: Undressing Vesta

Alexandria, VA – Since last July, NASA's Dawn spacecraft has been orbiting the asteroid Vesta, and capturing images and other data that are providing surprising results to the delight and amazement of researchers. Dawn's mission is to help reveal the processes and conditions that marked the first few million years — the dawn — of the solar system; and the information the spacecraft has collected about Vesta is changing the way scientists think about the formation of our early universe.

Born soon after the formation of the solar system, Vesta is a transitional body somewhere between a large asteroid and a small planet. So far, Dawn has revealed a number of new discoveries about Vesta, including its relatively colorful exterior, its variable topography, and its unique planet-like core, mantle and crust. What other mysteries can Dawn and Vesta unlock for society? Read more online at <http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/undressing-vesta>.

Find out about this story and more in the March issue of EARTH Magazine, available now at www.earthmagazine.org. See how dunes move across the Martian landscape; learn how artisanal mining techniques are putting many Nigerian children in danger; and discover how ancient temperatures after the Eocene plunged faster than previously thought.

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Keep up to date with the latest happenings in Earth, energy and environment news with EARTH magazine online at <http://www.earthmagazine.org/>. Published by the American Geosciences Institute, EARTH is your source for the science behind the headlines.

The American Geosciences Institute is a nonprofit federation of 50 geoscientific and professional associations that represents more than 250,000 geologists, geophysicists and other earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in the profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of resources, resiliency to natural hazards, and interaction with the environment.