Alamogordo mayor declares Pluto a planet again
By Cheyenne Cope

ALAMOGORDO, N.M. (KRQE)- Tuesday, New Mexicans pushed once again to make Pluto a real planet again.

The Museum of Space History in Alamogordo threw a “Pluto-Palooza” party in honor of the New Mexican who discovered the tiny planet and the NASA spaceship that flew very close to it on Tuesday.

The question has sparked a lot of debate: Is Pluto a planet? Many New Mexicans say yes.

“There’s no denying it, despite what anyone else in the world thinks,” said Cathy Harper, Marketing Director for the Museum of Space History.

New Mexico has a vested interest in Pluto. It was Clyde B. Tombaugh, a longtime New Mexico State University professor, who discovered the distant little planet back in 1930. What was once the ninth planet from the sun was demoted to dwarf planet status in 2006.

NASA’s New Horizons spacecraft flew by the icy planet and on board were the ashes of Tombaugh who died back in 1997.

Dozens gathered at the New Mexico Museum of Space History to watch the spacecraft and also to see the mayor declare Pluto a planet once again.

“I had the opportunity to declare planet Pluto, a planet in the city of Alamogordo and we added in the universe and we believe the scientific evidence is not yet complete and we’re grateful that new horizons was able to snap a lot of photos,” said Mayor Susie Galea.

Some of the kids participating in the museum’s summer program built a model of the spacecraft and created picket signs supporting the push to restore Pluto to full-planet status.

“I think it’s a planet because it is discovered, and I think it’s a planet too,” said Wesley Hurrelbrank, one of the summer program participants.

“I think that Pluto is a planet and that it’s really pretty,” said Alexis Charpa, another child at the summer program.