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(S.D.)-Scientists To Begin Cooling LUX Detector

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 02/01/2013 07:36 AM

LEAD, S.D. (AP) - Scientists hoping to detect dark matter deep in a former South Dakota gold mine are hoping to flip the switch on their experiment next month.

Sanford Lab at Homestake science liaison director Jaret Heise says that scientists next week will begin cooling the Large Underground Xenon detector's xenon gas into a liquid form using liquid nitrogen.

The LUX detector sits in a 72,000-gallon purified water tank nearly a mile beneath the earth's surface. The detector could help scientists answer age-old questions about the universe and its origins.

Scientists know dark matter exists by its gravitational pull but, unlike regular matter and antimatter, it's so far been undetectable.