



INDIANA UNIVERSITY
KOKOMO

What matters. Where it matters.

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact –Danielle Rush

Communications Specialist
2300 S. Washington Street
Kokomo, IN 46904-9003
(765) 455-9414
darush@iuk.edu

February 4, 2014

Observatory hosts open house; provides up close look at Orion Nebula

KOKOMO, Ind. — Just below the three stars that form the belt on the constellation Orion lays a nebula described as a “stellar nursery,” the birthplace of thousands of stars.



You can get an up close look at the Orion nebula, as well as other stars and planets, at the Indiana University Kokomo Observatory open house, from 7 to 10 p.m. Sunday, February 9.

Patrick Motl, assistant professor of physics, will begin the open house by sharing highlights from the 223rd meeting of the

American Astronomical Society, before beginning observations in the newly renovated dome, weather permitting.

“For viewing, we will have Jupiter, the Orion Nebula, and other highlights from the winter hexagon,” he said. “The moon will be bright as well, in a waxing gibbous phase,” meaning it will be about half lighted, but not quite full.

A nebula is a cloud of interstellar gas and dust. The Orion Nebula is unique, as it can be seen without a telescope or binoculars on a dark, moonless night. Most nebulae are difficult to see with just the eye.

Stargazers will be able to view the nebula and other highlights through the Observatory's telescopes, a six-inch Takahashi refracting telescope and a 16-inch Meade reflecting telescope mounted together. The Takahashi provides exceptionally sharp images of planets, while the Meade allows viewers to see fainter objects in the sky, due to its larger light collecting area.

The open house is free and open to the public in the Observatory, 105 E. Rebecca Lane. Free parking is available on campus.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

-END-