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News Release

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View eclipse at Indiana University Kokomo Observatory

KOKOMO, Ind. — The earth's moon is the focus of two free open houses in April at the Indiana University Kokomo Observatory.



The Observatory, 105 E. Rebecca Lane, will open at midnight Tuesday, April 15, for a special viewing of a lunar eclipse, as the full moon passes through the dark inner part of the earth's shadow, called the umbra. The total phase of the eclipse is expected to start at 3:07 a.m., and last 78 minutes.

Patrick Motl, assistant professor of physics, plans to keep the Observatory open until about 6 a.m.

“Lunar eclipses aren't very fast paced,” he said. “The moon passes into earth's shadow, and will turn a pretty shade of red, as the moon reflects light that has passed through the earth's atmosphere.”

During totality, a number of constellations will become brighter as the moon's light is blocked. The next total lunar eclipse for North America will be Wednesday, October 8.

The Observatory will host its regular monthly open house at 8 p.m. Sunday, April 13. Stargazers will be able to see Jupiter, Mars, and a nearly full moon in the sky.

“The prominent winter constellations are now setting after the sun, making way for the spring constellations of Leo, Virgo, Corona Borealis and Bootes, and the spring galaxies,” Motl said.

He will begin the evening with a talk about the LADEE mission, which is studying the exosphere of the earth’s moon. It is the most recent craft from the United States to study the moon, and also the last scheduled lunar mission at this time.

After the talk, participants may view winter skies through the Observatory’s telescopes, weather permitting, until 10 p.m.

The Observatory’s telescopes include 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.

Both events are free and open to the public. Free parking is available on campus.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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