

News Release

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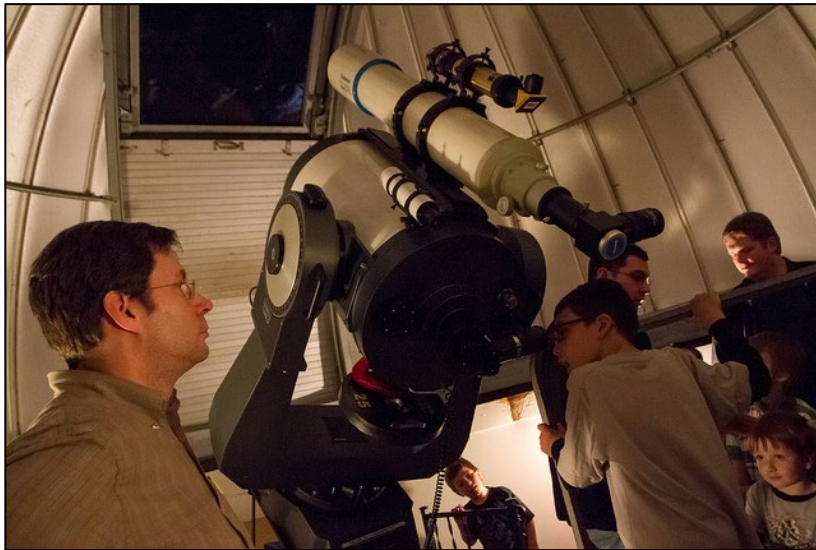
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Mars is on display at monthly Observatory Open House

KOKOMO, Ind. — Learn about a U.S. spacecraft currently orbiting Mars, and see the planet nearest the earth, at a free open house at the Indiana University Kokomo Observatory.



Patrick Motl, associate professor of physics, begins the program at 8 p.m. Sunday, October 12, with a presentation on NASA's Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (MAVEN) mission, which entered orbit around Mars September 21, after a 10 month, 442

million mile journey.

Stargazers will then be able to see Mars and other objects in the sky through the Observatory's telescopes until 10 p.m., weather permitting.

"Without the moon in the evening sky, the skies will be a little darker, allowing better views of extended objects visible in the fall like the Andromeda galaxy, the ring nebula and the great cluster in Hercules," said Motl.

The Observatory's two telescopes are 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.

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