

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Media Contact –Danielle Rush

October 8, 2012

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

### See planets at Observatory open house

**KOKOMO, Ind.** — A rite of passage for many new astronomy enthusiasts is a “Messier Marathon,” or staying up all night to view all 110 objects in the Messier Catalog of Deep Sky Objects.

Sunday, October 14, stargazers in north central Indiana will have good views of many of those objects, at the monthly Indiana University Kokomo Observatory open house, from 8 to 11 p.m.

Patrick Motl, assistant professor of physics, expects to see many of the fainter objects in the list compiled by French astronomer Charles Messier, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

“Without a moon in the evening sky, we will have good views of some of the fainter extended objects from Messier’s Catalog, like the great globular cluster in Hercules, the Andromeda galaxy and the wild duck cluster,” Motl said.

Messier compiled the list as he was searching for comets. He started finding cloudy objects, and cataloged them so they would not be confused with comets. He and his colleagues eventually found 110 nebulae, galaxies, and star clusters.

Motl will begin the open house with a brief talk about his recent studies of R Corona Borealis stars. He said most of the planets are up in the daytime. Mars will set shortly after sunset, and Jupiter will rise around 10 p.m.

Those attending may also view the stars and planets through the Observatory’s telescopes, which 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 lets stargazers 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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