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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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January 13, 2014

## IU Kokomo Observatory reopens with upgrades

**KOKOMO, Ind.** — Area astronomy aficionados view the stars and planets in an upgraded environment, as Indiana University Kokomo completes renovations to its Observatory.

Workers removed the dome on the nearly 30-year-old observatory in late December, and replaced it with a new one. It now turns more quietly and smoothly as it provides a window for the telescopes to point into the skies.

“The Observatory is truly a gem on our campus, and with these upgrades, it will continue to serve the community for a long time,” said John Sarber, director of physical facilities. “We are one of the few IU regional campuses to have an Observatory, and we are proud of it.”

The Observatory building, 105 E. Rebecca Lane, also includes a 60-seat classroom. It hosts free monthly open houses, available to the public, as well as special events.

In addition to the new dome, renovations included installation of a new ecofriendly roof, which is reflective to reduce energy costs. Addition of new downspouts and gutters will control water flow. These measures make the building watertight and more energy efficient.

Sarber said the upgrades also protect the Observatory’s telescopes, installed about five years ago. The 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.

Work is underway to fit a new glass plate in the shutter, to keep heat in when it is open for viewing, rather than just opening the shutter to the outside and letting in cold air during winter.

The next open house is at 7 p.m. Sunday, February 9. Future open houses for the spring semester are at 8 p.m. March 9, April 13, and May 11.

*Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.*

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