

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact –Danielle Rush

November 3, 2014

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

Comet mission featured at Observatory open house

KOKOMO, Ind. — Learn more about the first-ever mission to land on a comet, at Sunday's Indiana University Kokomo Observatory open house.

Patrick Motl, associate professor of physics, will begin the free open house at 7 p.m. Sunday, November 9, with a presentation about the Rosetta spacecraft. The European Space Agency craft is set to deploy the Philae lander on Wednesday, November 12, to the surface of comet 67P/Churyumov-Geraomenko.

Rosetta launched in 2004 and arrived at the comet on August 6. It is the first mission in history to rendezvous with a comet, escort it as it orbits the sun, and deploy a lander to its surface. NASA is a contributor to the project.

After the presentation, stargazers may go upstairs to look through the Observatory's two 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.

"For our skies, we will have Mars setting early in the evening, with the moon starting to rise at 8 p.m.," Motl said. "The prominent fall constellations are starting to give way to winter favorites like Taurus, with the Pleiades cluster and crab nebula."

Observation will continue until 9 p.m., weather permitting. The open house is free and open to the public in the Observatory, 105 E. Rebecca Lane. Free parking is available on campus. For more information about the Rosetta spacecraft, go to rosetta.esa.int.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

-END-