

News Release

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IU Kokomo Observatory open house

KOKOMO, Ind. — Stargazers will be able to see the planets Jupiter and Uranus, and the Orion nebula at the February 10 Indiana University Kokomo Observatory Open House.

Patrick Motl, assistant professor of physics, will begin the open house at 7 p.m. with a talk on NASA's Extrasolar Planet Observations and Characterization Deep Impact Extended Investigation (EPOXI) spacecraft, and its mission to study comets and asteroids.

Visitors may then view the stars and planets until 10 p.m., weather permitting, through the Observatory's telescopes.

"We will be near new moon, and highlights for the night will be Jupiter and winter favorites like the Orion nebula," Motl said. "Uranus will also be up after sunset."

EPOXI's mission is to search for planets around stars other than the sun, and to observe comets. The most recent observations are of comet ISON, during January. The comet was just discovered in September 2012 and is expected to be easily observable in small telescopes by the end of 2013.

The Observatory's 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 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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