

Daily Reporter



ECLIPSE 2024

HANCOCK COUNTY



Law enforcement warn people of traffic hazards surrounding upcoming eclipse

By KRISTY DEER | DAILY REPORTER
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HANCOCK COUNTY — Ahead of the eclipse, local and state law enforcement and road officials are asking people to plan for one of the biggest astronomical events in several years.

Scientists note the 2017 total solar eclipse was the first to touch the “Lower 48” since 1979 and the first to span the United States from coast-to-coast since 1918. The next total solar eclipse is coming to North America, right over Indiana, Monday, April 8, and law enforcement want people to plan ahead.

“We want to make sure people are prepared for what we believe will be very heavy traffic,” Greenfield Police Department Deputy Chief, Chuck McMichael said.

McMichael noted Indiana is expecting to see about a million visitors to the state to view the eclipse and people should prepare for that.

“Eastern Indiana will be one of the best places to see it,” McMichael said. “With Interstate 70 and U.S. 40 running through our city, we expect to see a large increase of people and traffic.”

Officials with the Indiana State Police and The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) say nearly 4 million Hoosiers live within the path of totality, with hundreds of thousands of people expected to visit Indiana for the event.

Increased traffic and congestion are expected as residents and tourists alike make their way to viewing destinations. Areas near the eclipse center-line are anticipated to see the greatest influx of visitors, including Vincennes, Bloomington, Franklin and just north of Richmond. Indianapolis and Evansville are also included in the path.

The City of Greenfield is planning a few events at local parks for people to congregate to watch this once-in-a-lifetime event for our area. People can visit the eclipsein-hancock.org website which contains a lot of information already about local events.

“We do encourage everyone who is planning to have an event to register the event and complete a permit at that website,” McMichael said. “The permitting is free and allows us to make better plans for

traffic control and response should an incident occur during this time.”

While most people will be thrilled, looking up to check out the happening, law enforcement will be focused on the ground with traffic being their major concern.

“Traffic will be very heavy immediately after the event is over,” McMichael said. “We want people, especially those who are traveling, to be prepared and expect to be stuck in traffic.”

Officials are advising people to make sure they have plenty of fuel in their vehicle, or fully charged if driving an electric vehicle.

“Have ways to charge your portable electronics and have water and snacks,” McMichael said.

Officials say I-70 and U.S. 40 will be the main travel routes for all of East Central Indiana, and drivers need to be ready for that.

“If there is an incident on I-70 (crash, etc.) then State Road 9 and U.S. 40 will get bogged down quickly,” McMichael said. “This event will cover the majority of Indiana, not just our area, so traffic all over the state will be impacted.”

Capt. Robert Harris of the Hancock County Sheriff’s Department said administrators have been attending regular planning meetings with other local organizations in Hancock County to prepare for the total solar eclipse.

“At this time, we ask that people plan ahead, avoid travel near the time of the eclipse, and have plenty of patience,” Harris said. “We also remind people to not park in farm fields, private property, or anywhere else unless they have permission.”

The eclipse will be visible over a large portion of the state, with the path of totality spanning from Evansville to the outskirts of Fort Wayne, entering southwest Indiana at 3:01 p.m. EDT/2:01 p.m. CDT and exiting to the northeast at 3:12 p.m. EDT/2:12 p.m. CDT.

People can visit numerous websites from the ISP and INDOT to get the latest safety information before and during the day of the eclipse.

Check out eclipse2024.in.gov; visitindiana.com/eclipse2024; greatamericaneclipse.com/indiana-2024-eclipse-science. nasa.gov for information.



Before the eclipse safety tips:

- Research your viewing site, considering accessibility, parking and crowd size. Check INDOT TrafficWise on the mobile app or at org to plan your route and monitor traffic conditions. Plan to arrive to your destination early.
- Anticipate increased traffic and congestion, especially in areas in or near the path of totality.
- Reach your destination safely. Buckle up and put your phone down while driving.
- Pack plenty of snacks and water, as well as charging cables for electronics and mobile devices, in the event you or your group become stranded.
- Make sure your vehicle has a full tank of gas and top off fluids before you head out in case you're stuck in traffic for a long period of time.
- Don't forget your solar eclipse viewing glasses. You will need specially designed glasses to avoid damage to your eyes.

Source: Indiana State Police

After the eclipse safety tips:

- Plan your post-event transportation method well in advance. If celebrating, ensure everyone has a safe and sober way to return home. Designate a sober driver or arrange for alternate transportation.
- Exercise patience when leaving your viewing location as traffic may be heavy. Follow instructions from law enforcement or emergency personnel and be considerate of fellow drivers.
- Clean up after yourself and dispose of trash in designated receptacles or take it with you.
- Check INDOT TrafficWise on the mobile app or at 511in.org to plan your route and monitor traffic conditions.

GET READY FOR THE SHOW OF A LIFETIME

For the first time since its founding in 1828, a total solar eclipse will pass over Hancock County April 8. Beyond noticing the sun's changing shape during the eclipse, there are other observations to make during this rare event.

A partial eclipse begins in Hancock County at 1:51 p.m. Never look directly at the sun during a partial eclipse without proper eye protection. Proper protection includes ISO 12312-2 certified eclipse glasses.

Record the temperature at 1:50 p.m. A thermometer placed in a location without a shadow is ideal, but a weather app on a device would work too. Record the temperature in 10-minute intervals through totality's end at 3:10 or beyond. During some eclipses, temperatures have dropped as much as 20 degrees. In the time leading up to totality at 3:06, also make note of the wind speed and cloud cover changes.

Observe the shadows as the partial eclipse nears and leaves totality. If trees have leafed out, stand near or



CHARLIE HART
GUEST COLUMNIST

under one and look at the ground. Take special note of the shadows. Between 2:30-3:00 and 3:15-3:45, they'll be mesmerizing. If the trees don't yet have leaves, loosely interlock your fingers, and with your back to the sun, hold them out and look at the shadows created by the gaps between them. Hold a spaghetti colander and look at the shadows created by it.

When the eclipse becomes total at 3:06, you can look directly at the darkened sun without eye protection until 3:10 when totality ends. Look for wispy prominences called the corona emerging from the sun's disk. They can only be seen during the totality portion of a solar eclipse.

During totality, planets and stars can sometimes be seen in the darkened

sky. Look for Venus and Jupiter, the brightest objects. If you have a clear view of the horizon, look for the multi-colored hues. These are from the skies outside the path of totality that still receive direct sunlight.

Listen carefully to birds and insects. During total eclipses, they may become noisy. If you're with others, observe them. As the sky becomes noticeably dimmer, do people get excited or mellow? When totality arrives, do they scream, cheer, or become quiet? Does anyone cry? These emotions and more come out during a total solar eclipse.

I've been asked about the best place locally to watch it. Anyplace where clouds don't obscure the sun is great. If you have an opportunity to observe it from a tall hill with a clear view of the ground below, you could be in for a treat. From above you may be able to see the shadow of totality moving quickly along the ground from the southwest until it reaches your position. Unfortunately there aren't many high hills in Hancock County. Nearby public land is the hill atop Flat Fork Creek

Park just west of Fortville over the Hamilton County line.

I've saved the worst news for last. Historically speaking, it's cloudy in Hancock County about two-thirds of the time on April 8. If clouds persist that Monday, and you can't leave town to try and see it elsewhere, I still encourage you to go outside and observe. It will still get dark from 3:06 to 3:10. The temperature may still drop. The birds and insects may behave abnormally. Clouds would dampen the day, but all would not be lost.

Hancock County won't see another total eclipse until 2505, and the city of Greenfield doesn't enjoy its next until 3290. Make a viewing plan and get ready for the show of a lifetime.

Charlie Hart lives with his wife and two children in central Indiana and works for a digital marketing firm in Fishers. Having grown up in northern Shelby County, he spent many of his teenaged summer nights playing basketball and tennis under the stars at Riley Park in Greenfield. He taught fifth grade at Greenfield Intermediate School from 2014-2021 and helped coordinate his school's partial eclipse party in 2017.

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SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Members of the Hancock County Children's Choir are gearing up for an eclipse-themed show — "From Darkness to Light" — held April 6 at Realife Church in Greenfield.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Pianist ShaoLing Lien, who is working towards a master's in music at Indiana University, will serve as an accompanist at the upcoming Hancock County Children's Choir show, "From Darkness to Light," with two performances April 6.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Oliwia Walczak, who hails from Poland, will perform as a guest violinist at the upcoming Hancock County Children's Choir show, "From Darkness to Light," with two performances April 6.

DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Children's Choir show is out of this world

By **SHELLEY SWIFT** | DAILY REPORTER
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GREENFIELD — Lisa Heady felt as if the planets had aligned when planning this year's spring concert for the Hancock County Children's Choir.

"We were starting to look at dates and noticed the eclipse was April 8, so we thought 'What a great theme,'" said Heady, who has been executive director for the children's choir since its inception in 2011.

This year's concert, "From Darkness to Light," takes place Saturday, April 6 at Realife Church in Greenfield, with performances at 2:30 and 7 p.m.

The event's emcee will share fun facts about the upcoming, ultra-rare eclipse throughout the show.

Heady said the show explores a number of themes focused on not just the eclipse but a variety of concepts based on darkness and light.

"That lent itself to so many fun things because we talk about nature, we talk about things that happen in the dark and the light, and we also talk about it metaphorically," she said.

"It's educational and exciting and fun, and just a great way to commemorate such a significant event, because these kids might not see (a total eclipse) again in their lifetime," said Heady.

The Hancock County Children's Choir has 100 members this year, including multiple ensembles of children ages 5-18.

In mid-March members were given eclipse glasses and encouraged to take snapshots and selfies to promote the concert on social media.

The choir has been busy rehearsing for the spring concert, which will feature a guest violinist, Oliwia Walczak, who hails from Poland, and her accompanist, pianist ShaoLing Lien, a native of Taiwan working toward a master's in music at Indiana University.

Walczak will perform a solo piece as well as accompany the choir.

Heady said the musicians add an exciting element to the spring concert, which is an annual tradition for the choir.

Another highlight of the performance is an interactive event that teaches rhythm through a combination of clapping and black lights, she said.

Promotional posts refer to this year's eclipse-themed concert as a "thoroughly delightful musical exploration of the wonders of nature and the resilience of the human spirit."

The performance "will explore the literal meaning of the eclipse through fun and contemplative pieces about the sun and the moon, darkness and light. Additionally, we'll expand upon the theme to explore the figurative meaning of darkness (sadness or adversity) coming to every life, but light

(joy and healing) eclipsing the darkness. This hopeful theme will educate, encourage, and equip both our students and our audiences," it said.

Heady credits the concert's title sponsor, Wood-Mizer, a global machining manufacturer based in Indianapolis, for making the event possible.

"They have a real passion for investing in the communities in which they serve and bringing light to the communities in which they serve," said the director, which fits in perfectly with this year's concert theme.

Tickets for the April 6 concert cost \$10 for adults and \$6 for students as well as seniors 55 and up. There's also a "pay what you can" option of at least \$1 per person.

For information, visit hancock-countychildrenchoir.org or visit the Hancock County Children's Choir page on Facebook.

VOLUNTEER NASA AMBASSADOR TO SPEAK AT UPCOMING EVENT

Norm Dingle has a passion for space

Editor's note: The Daily Reporter recently checked in with Norm Dingle, a New Palestine resident who is a NASA Solar System Ambassador. The volunteer program through NASA gives talks to local groups on space, science and astronomy. Dingle will speak at 3 p.m. April 6 at Chapel in the Park.



DINGLE

Daily Reporter: Can you tell us about your background in science?

Norm Dingle: I graduated from Purdue with a degree in nuclear engineering. I am a retired software and systems engineer. I retired from the US Navy with 7 years active duty and 34 years in the Naval Reserve.

DR: What are you most looking forward to with the upcoming solar eclipse?

ND: Observing and photographing all the phenomenon of an eclipse.

DR: How will you spend the day April 8?

ND: Photographing the eclipse.

DR: Explain what it was like traveling to Kentucky in 2017 to see the total eclipse back then.

ND: It was an absolutely wonderful experience. This was the first total eclipse that I had seen.

During totality, the birds quit flying and the crickets started to chirp.

Everything was just like late dusk. The sky did not become dark nighttime,

rather just late dusk. The worst part was the traffic leaving the area. It took us 4 and a half hours to get there and 14 hours to get home.

When we stopped for the evening meal, the restaurant stopped taking orders right after us because they had run out of food. Even with the problems, it was worth the trip, I would not have missed it for anything.

DR: What can local residents expect regarding visitors to the area?

ND: If it is a clear day, the interstates and main roads will be jammed with traffic. If you are doing any traveling, use the back roads if possible. The local restaurants will be very crowded.

DR: What do you hope people take

away from your upcoming community talks on the eclipse?

ND: The number one priority is solar safety. Viewing the sun without using proper approved safety glasses will be very, very dangerous. I hope they learn what to look for during the eclipse.

DR: Any pieces of advice on the best ways to experience a solar eclipse?

DR: Get an ISO-approved pair of viewing glasses and sit back and enjoy the experience.

If you plan on photographing the eclipse, don't spend all the time behind the camera; view the eclipse. We won't have another one until Aug. 23, 2044. If you have problems with the camera, shut it off and look at the eclipse.




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TOTALLY HOSPITABLE

Dozens of local sites ready to welcome guests for eclipse viewing

By MARIBETH VAUGHN

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GREENFIELD - Hoosier hospitality will be shining bright April 8 as more than two dozen special events welcome locals and visitors alike to experience the total solar eclipse.

All events can be found at eclipsein-hancock.org, a site created by the Hancock County Tourism and Visitor Center to promote the community. Details and links to tickets are online.

Below is a summary of special events happening April 8. But keep reading - there are even more events in the days leading up to the solar eclipse and even art exhibits that will remain in the weeks that follow.

The following are events happening Monday, organized by region in the community:

Central Hancock County / Greenfield:

- **Total Eclipse of the Parks:** Greenfield Parks and Recreation will celebrate the solar eclipse in four city parks. Depot Street Park, 251 Depot St., Greenfield, is the main hub

of activity, where food trucks, a DJ, cookie decorating and a panel of science experts will be on site from noon to 6 p.m. April 8. Three of the other parks are also sites to see the eclipse: Beckenholdt Park, 2770 N. Franklin Road, featuring a performance by Brandywine Wind; Brandywine Park, 900 E. Davis Road; and Riley Park, 300 Apple St. Free eclipse glasses are available while supplies last at all parks. The James Whitcomb Riley Boyhood Home, which is part of the parks system, will offer pre-eclipse tours April 8 at 250 W. Main St., Greenfield.

- **Live Acoustic Eclipse Day Show:** Live music will be at The Wooden Bear Brewing Co. from 2-5 p.m. April 8. The restaurant is located at 21 W. North St., Greenfield.

- **Eclipse at the Ballpark:** The Greenfield Youth Baseball Association is hosting an event with a concession stand, games for children and adults, and a playground. The event is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 8. Parking is \$20 at 1414 W. McClarnon Drive, Greenfield.

- **Lark Ranch Solar Eclipse Viewing:** Play structures, bounce pillows,

restrooms and even miniature train rides are available at the farm in Greenfield that's usually only open during the fall. Tickets are \$20 per carload at 1611 N. Meridian St., Greenfield.

- **Family Camping Solar-bration:** Tate and See Dinner Theatre and Event Center will host an event with two options - overnight camping, or activity pass only. The camping at \$190 starting April 7 and includes activities like a glow party, karaoke, photo booth, breakfast, popcorn, trivia, and indoor/outdoor games. An activity pass only the day of the event is \$35 per person. The facility is at 404 S. West St., Greenfield.

- **Other viewing sites in Greenfield** include The Depot Restaurant, 240 W. Mill St., Greenfield; St. Michael Catholic Church and School, 515 Jefferson Blvd., Greenfield; and

- **Bethel Baptist Church** 1610 S. State St., Greenfield.

Southern Hancock County:

- **New Palestine Total Solar Eclipse Day:** A family-friendly event with games, music and activities for all

ages will be 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. April 8 at the New Palestine Lions Club, 5242 W. U.S. 52, New Palestine. "I Got Mooned in New Palestine" is the catch phrase for merchandise at the event. Tickets are \$50, with all proceeds going back to community and world projects.

- **Total Solar Eclipse Viewing:** Sugar Creek Baptist church is hosting a remote viewing site at 3928 S. 100W., Greenfield. Registration ranges from \$10 to \$35 per person and includes viewing glasses, two meals, games, a presentation on the solar eclipse, and a concert by gospel artists Bryan and Yvonne Hutson.

- **Solar Eclipse with Dr. Ron Samek:** New Palestine Bible Church will host food trucks and guest speaker Dr. Ron Samek, a doctor of physics and astronomy. The event is noon to 4 p.m. April 8; the church is at 5954 W. 300S, New Palestine.

- **Other viewing sites in the southern part of the county** are Community Christian Church, 3123 S. 500W, New Palestine; Fairview Community Church, 1880 W. 900N., Fountaintown; and Cross of Grace Lutheran Church, 3519 S. 600W, New Palestine.



Western Hancock County:

■ **Total Eclipse at the Brewery:** Live music and more is coming to Scarlet Lane Brewing Company from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. April 8. The business is located at 7724 Depot St., McCordsville.

■ **Moon Drops Distillery** will feature live music, a tasting room and more in a free event for ages 21 and older from noon to 5 p.m. April 8. The business is located at 738 W. Broadway St., Fortville.

■ **Solar Eclipse Party:** Denver's Garage Pizza & Brews will feature live music by Corey Cox from 2-5 p.m. April 8, and the first 200 registrants will receive complimentary eclipse glasses. The business is located at 110 E. Broadway St, Fortville.

■ Other viewing sites in the western part of the county are New Life Christian Fellowship, 1574 Ind. 234, Fortville; McCordsville United Methodist Church, 6247 W. Broadway St., McCordsville; and The Kitchen on Main, 8 S. Main St., Fortville.

Eastern Hancock County:

■ **Hug-a-Highland:** Remark-Able Ranch in Greenfield offers an eclipse viewing site in which participants can also greet Kramer Scottish Highland Cattle. Admission prices vary; bring your own lawn chairs. The ranch is at 671 S. 775 E, Greenfield.

■ Other viewing sites in Eastern Hancock County include Charlottesville Volunteer Fire Department, 10450

E. U.S. 40, Charlottesville (food will be sold as a fundraiser); Jane Ross Reeves Octagon House, 400 S. Railroad St., Shirley (parking is \$10 and food available for purchase); and Shirley Park, 200 Second St., Shirley.

More events:

Here's a look at special events in Hancock County leading up to the solar eclipse—

■ **From Darkness to Light:** The Hancock County Children's Choir spring production is at 2:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. April 6 at Realife Church, 5151 W. U.S. 40, Greenfield. The show will explore the literal meaning of the eclipse through fun and contemplative pieces about the sun and the moon, darkness and light. The choir will expand upon the theme to explore the figurative meaning of darkness (sadness or adversity) and light (joy and healing). For more about the choir, visit hancockcountychildrenschoir.org.

■ **The Darkness: Total Eclipse:** Norm Dingle, a New Palestine resident and a solar system ambassador for NASA, will speak at two upcoming community events prior to the eclipse. He will speak at the Twenty North Gallery at 5 p.m. March 30 at 20 N. State St., Greenfield (event hosted by the Hancock County Arts Council). He will also speak at 3 p.m. April 6 at the Chapel in the Park, 28 Apple St., Greenfield (hosted by the Hancock County Historical Society). Both



events are free and open to the public; each will delve into what an eclipse is, safety procedures, photos and tales of the eclipse from 2017 when Dingle traveled to Kentucky, and a question-and-answer session.

■ "Total Eclipse of the Sun! Light and Dark" art exhibit: The Twenty North Gallery will display pieces in

all mediums highlighting light and dark, sun and shadow, planets and stars. Art works will be coming in the first weekend of April. Regular gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. An artist reception will be 6:30-8:30 p.m. April 12. The gallery is located at 20 N. State St., Greenfield.

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Pictured from left: New Palestine Bible Church will host food trucks and a guest speaker April 8 for the solar eclipse. // The new Moon Drops Distillery in Fortville is one of several local businesses hosting eclipse events and specials April 8. **DAILY REPORTER FILE PHOTOS**



Denver's Garage prepares to host solar eclipse event

By LACEY WATT | DAILY REPORTER
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FORTVILLE - As the solar eclipse approaches, owner of Denver's Garage, Fred Fentz, is underway with preparations for the big day and is expecting hundreds of people to come participate.

Fentz said that while the restaurant is typically closed on Mondays, this day is an exception. Opening at 11 a.m. on April 8, Fentz said that they are going to have business as usual - serving pizza and brews - but also adding live music and activities to do for kids as they spend time together and wait to witness the totality of the solar eclipse, which will not happen again until 2044.

Fentz said the first 300 people to show up will receive free solar eclipse

viewing glasses, which will filter out portions of the solar spectrum so there is not any damage to eyes when looking up.

Fentz said that of the glasses they are giving away, 3 Rivers Bank donated 100 solar eclipse viewing glasses and then Greenfield Bank donated 100 can koozies to give away.

From 2 to 5 p.m., live music will fill the street side by Corey Cox, who Fentz says is a local favorite. While adults and parents are listening, the kids will have sidewalk chalk to decorate the pavement, an activity that Fentz says is also popular with kids during their summer hours.

"What's nice about that is that it keeps the kids busy while parents can enjoy their conversations," Fentz said.

Also, in preparation to host the crowd, Fentz has installed an extra

pop-up tent to offer more outdoor covered seating. Fentz said that while he bought the pop-up tent specifically for the solar eclipse event, there are plans in the works to host more events that will require extra seating space.

"Once the eclipse happens, people are going to be on the sidewalks and they're going to be everywhere," Fentz said. "Sounds like it's going to be a fun day."

Fentz said it'll also be fun to see how busy the streets of Fortville will be for the solar eclipse.

While the town of Fortville is not hosting events, other businesses will be open and have similar events to Denver's Garage, such as Moon Drop Distillery.

Fentz said that Denver's Garage is taking reservations for the event, and those who wish to reserve a seat can

do so by visiting their social media pages. As of March 20, Fentz said they had about 150 reservations, but is expecting seating to fill up as time for the eclipse inches closer.

They will also be taking walk-ins the day of the solar eclipse. Fentz said that they are also getting extra supplies for the kitchen to prepare for the crowd of people.

As for closing time, Fentz said they will stay open until everybody goes home.

"I think it's going to be a great time. And to me, it's a good reason to have a party on a Monday at three o'clock in the afternoon," said Fentz with a smile.

Reservations are recommended for the solar eclipse event and can be placed at socialmedia@denversgpb.com.

NEW PALESTINE OFFICIALS WIDE-EYED AND READY FOR SOLAR ECLIPSE

By **KRISTY DEER** | DAILY REPORTER
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NEW PALESTINE — Since no one really knows exactly what to expect from the upcoming solar eclipse, officials in New Palestine are prepping as if the event is going to be a major happening.

The total solar eclipse will cross North America, passing over Mexico, the United States, and Canada in a few short days. A total solar eclipse happens when the Moon passes between the Sun and Earth, completely blocking the face of the Sun. Officials say for approximately four minutes, cities and towns across the path of totality, which includes Indiana, will experience a total solar eclipse, which has not happened in Indiana since 1869.

The once-in-a-lifetime event is a natural phenomenon projected to take place between 1:45 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. April 8.

New Palestine town officials believe most people interested in seeing the solar eclipse from Indiana will start rolling into the area the weekend before or early the day of the event, with some even trying to find places to set up trailers and campers.

That's why officials with the New Palestine Lions Club and New Palestine Main Street are hosting an all-day event at the Lions Club, 5242 W W U.S. 52, New Palestine. They're even offering "I got Mooned," T-shirts to those who are part of their social gathering.

Officials are charging \$50 per vehicle to enter the Lions Club property and set up shop for the day. They're hosting pre-sale tickets on eventbrite.com and say glasses will be available the day of the solar eclipse as long as they last.

New Palestine Main Street is selling glasses for \$3 each prior to the event, and they encourage people to visit their Facebook page to learn more about how to pickup a pair or two prior to the event.

"We're not really sure what the crowds are going to be like on April 8, but we're trying to set up something kind of like a tailgate atmosphere,"

New Palestine Main Street's Julie Lucas said.

They'll have music and food from Tony D's on hand for people to purchase as well as beverages, but they're asking people to not bring alcohol onto the property.

"We'll have both breakfast and lunch food available," Lucas said. "People can bring games and we want it to be a fun filled day starting at 9 a.m. and lasting until you can get out. We're thinking that might be around 6 p.m."

Lucas noted it's hard to predict exactly what people will want to do the day of the solar eclipse, but they're ready for anything.

"We've gotten some responses from local people saying they are coming as well as from people out of state saying they plan to be here because they're a couple hours away and are out of the path," Lucas said. "We just wanted to have something because this is a historic event."

Local law enforcement feels the same and noted, they believe New Palestine will be much busier than a normal Monday.

"It won't be business as usual because every officer we have is going to be schedule to work that day," New Palestine Police Department Chief Bob Ehle said.

Officers who normally have the time slot off will be on duty to cruise the southern part of Hancock County, take calls and help out in any way they can.

"I imagine there are going to be a bunch of people in our area, and once the eclipse starts people are going to stop what they're doing, and I think there is going to be some gridlock," Ehle said. "Our goal will be to keep the town open and operating as much as possible for emergency purposes."

Ehle noted it will be important to have a strong law enforcement presence in the area because no one is actually sure how things will unfold since this type of solar eclipse is so rare and they've never had to cover one before.

"Our location is not dead-center, so we're kind of wondering if more people will head closer to Indianapolis or maybe Greenfield," Ehle said. "But,

we're going to be as guilty as the rest when it happens — even officers are going to stop and look up."

Officials with New Palestine Community Schools have closed their campuses for the day meaning there will be no in classroom studies and all facilities will be locked down.

"We will be a closed campus that day to protect the assets of our community," Community Relations Director Craig Smith said.

That means there will be "no parking" in any of the school district parking lots or sitting in places like the football stadium to see the solar eclipse unfold.

Officials with the Town of New Palestine say they will allow town workers to get off at noon the day of the solar eclipse so they can have some time to get home and get prepared for the event.

Council Vice President Bill Niemier encouraged the community to be extremely careful during the solar eclipse due to the amount of traffic and the number of people officials feel will descend on the area.

"These people are not normally here," Niemier said. "April the 8th is going to be something we are going to experience that will be like something we haven't seen before so be thoughtful, be safe."

Lucas noted, people need to keep in mind it could be a foul weather day with an overcast sky and maybe even rain, so she suggested people temper expectations some.

"We're just going to have to wait and see how it turns out," Lucas said. "We do know regardless it's still going to get dark, but we may not be able to see the solar eclipse in totality like we would want on a clear day."



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ECLIPSE EXPERIENCE

Communities in path of 2017 event share advice for county

By RYAN TRARES | DAILY JOURNAL
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People had flocked from 40 states and four different countries for a celestial equivalent of winning the lottery — a total solar eclipse.

Hotels were sold out for miles around Paducah, Kentucky. Roads were packed with cars as people arrived for the weekend and made their way around town. Community festivals and viewing events were filled.

After years of preparations, Paducah found itself in the center of a tourism maelstrom.

“For residents, take full advantage of everything the city has to offer,” said

Liz Hammonds, director of marketing and communications for the Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau. “Experience your city like a tourist might. Sometimes, in any city, your residents don’t quite realize what they have in front of them.”

Paducah and other communities that experienced 2017’s total solar eclipse offer a roadmap of what Johnson County can expect on April 8. Certainly, with tens of thousands of visitors scoping out places to stay, restaurants to eat at and things to do, some logistical headaches are sure to happen.

But at the same time, the event offers a unique opportunity to impress visitors, and entice them to come back.

“We feel that we’re as prepared as possible to provide residents and visitors with an enjoyable experience,” said Kenneth Kosky, executive director of Festival County Indiana, the county’s tourism organization.

On Aug. 21, 2017, the path of a total solar eclipse dubbed the “Great American Eclipse” passed across the country from Oregon to South Carolina.

According to a research paper published in 2022 in the journal *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, about 21 million people traveled to another city to view the event.

Among the communities that were in the path of totality was White House,

Tennessee. The city of about 13,000 people is located about 30 minutes north of Nashville, and spent approximately two minutes 39 seconds in totality in 2017.

Mandy Christenson, executive director of the White House Area Chamber of Commerce, spoke to local leaders during a webinar hosted by Aspire Johnson County on Feb. 28. Her recommendation was for local businesses and residents to take advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Businesses should be really creative and capitalize on the amount of visitors who are coming to your community — because they are coming,” she said during the webinar.

Pictured: People flock to the decks of a riverboat in Paducah, Kentucky to observe the total solar eclipse in 2017. Paducah officials are using its experience from being in the path of totality in 2017 to prepare for this year’s eclipse, when they will again experience totality. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Visitors at Camp Ondessonk in southern Illinois observe the progression of the total solar eclipse in 2017. The southern Illinois region, which will again be in the path of totality on April 8, is using its experience from 2017 to prepare for this year's eclipse.

In the two years leading up to the 2017 eclipse, Christenson admitted she didn't understand what the hype was about the event. Looking back, it truly was a monumental experience that local officials need to plan for.

"Once you experience it, you'll understand it. That's what a lot of our community said," she said.

Much of southern Illinois also found itself in the path of totality in 2017. Much of the area is dominated by the Shawnee National Forest, state and local parks, so officials prepared campgrounds and impromptu venues for a mass of visitors. Places such as Camp Ondessonk, a Catholic youth camp located in the path, welcomed thousands of people on the day of the eclipse.

Other places, such as Carbondale, hosted community festivals for the event.

The main issue was congestion as everyone tried to leave after the eclipse, said Carol Hoffman, executive director of Shawnee Forest County, the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau.

The recommendation would be to avoid it if you don't have to be on the roads. Hoffman's office is encouraging people to leave later in the day after the eclipse is done, or consider staying an extra night.

"For many people, a six-hour drive became a 20-hour drive," she said in an email.

Similar advice comes from Paducah's experience. In the lead-up to the 2017 eclipse, community leaders banded together in preparation for the influx of visitors. Officials were confident they had enough hotel rooms to handle the visitors; about 2,200 rooms were available around town.

The city hosts conferences throughout the year, and its QuiltWeek

every April is one of the country's largest quilting festivals.

"That hotel room stock was something we were prepared for," Hammonds said.

Local officials also worked with Kentucky Emergency Management, which was spearheading preparations across the 21 counties encountering the eclipse. They warned about gridlock overwhelming interstates and highways in the area, including along Interstate 24, which runs through the heart of Paducah.

But while community officials wanted to be ready from a safety standpoint, they also aimed to use the exposure to impress new visitors. They planned public festivals and events, such as a hillside viewing party hosted by the Western Kentucky Community and Technical College. More than 3,000 out-of-state attendees took part, Hammonds said.

"The most important thing for us was working closely with our partners. The (conventions and visitors bureau) worked with hotels, restaurants, retail shops. Paducah has a lot of culture and artistic attractions, so we worked closely with them," she said. "If I was to give any other city advice, it would be to rely on your partners, communicate with them and realize this is a partnership."

Coincidentally, both the Carbondale, Illinois, area and Paducah once again find themselves in the path of totality in 2024. Officials in both locations are using the lessons learned seven years ago to prepare for this one.

Kentucky safety officials are predicting about 150,000 visitors just to western Kentucky.

"Spectators are encouraged to come early and stick around after the event to reduce the potential for hours-long



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Crowds gather at Bald Knob Cross, a monument in Alto Pass, Illinois, to observe the total solar eclipse in 2017. The southern Illinois region, which will again be in the path of totality on April 8, is using its experience from 2017 to prepare for this year's eclipse.

gridlock that's possible when a wave of thousands of drivers return home after the event," said Jim Gray, Kentucky Emergency Management secretary. "Similar to a severe snow event, motorists should travel with an emergency car kit stocked with essential items for all passengers. It's also a good idea to bring printed directions to your destination if there are cell service disruptions that impact your navigational apps."

As Johnson County leaders have been preparing, they've leaned on advice of others with eclipse experience to get ready for the 2024 event.

Shortly after the 2017 eclipse, Kosky attended a conference hosted by Destinations International, the international organization for tourism groups. One of the presentations he attended focused on cities in the path of the 2017 eclipse, and what communities can learn for 2024.

He later had conversations with the lead presenter, Brook Kaufman, who led eclipse efforts for Casper, Wyoming, in 2017, while speaking with other communities as well.

The research led to a plan of action, including securing a website domain, eclipsefestival2024.com, as well as purchasing more than 100,000 pairs of eclipse glasses, reaching out to churches, schools, cities, towns and attractions to host eclipse events, and providing grants to fund community events on eclipse weekend, Kosky said.

They also worked with our restaurants and shops to encourage them to be open and have simple, eclipse-themed menus and to sell souvenirs.

"Based on what I learned, Festival Country Indiana was able to get started planning for this historic event six years before it was to happen," Kosky said.

ECLIPSE 101

A solar eclipse happens when, at just the right moment, the moon passes between the sun and earth. Sometimes it only blocks part of the sun's light (partial solar eclipse), but sometimes it blocks all of the light (total solar eclipse). The moon casts a shadow on a narrow part of the earth, and this shadow trail is what is called the path of totality. Within that path, the moon blocks the sun completely for up to a few minutes.

Find a place to watch from and get there early

The total solar eclipse will be highly publicized in the days leading up to April 8. Because of the rarity of total solar eclipses, many thousands of people will be traveling to Indiana or from elsewhere within the state so that they can be in the path of totality. In fact, it is estimated Indiana may see as many as half a million out-of-state visitors for the eclipse, boosting the state's population by nearly 10%.

This will lead to unusually high levels of traffic on roadways. To avoid being on the roads at these times, plan ahead:

Look up a location nearby that is in the path of totality.

- Make sure that you find a spot with a good view of the sky — not obscured by trees or other tall objects.

- Be sure that you have permission to watch from a location; Many places are hosting events where the public can watch.

- Make arrangements to arrive there before peak travel occurs.

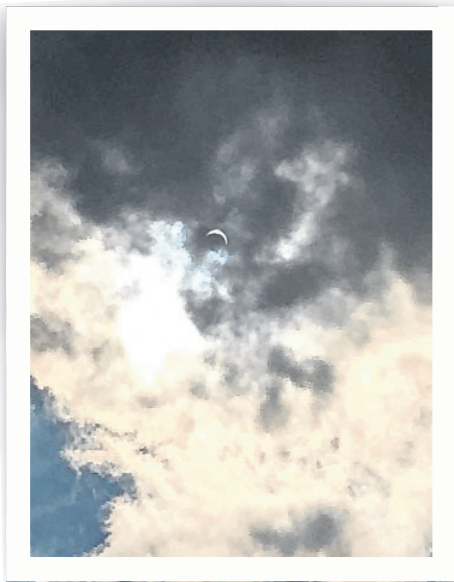
Time it right

The eclipse will begin at approximately 1:45 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on April 8 and end at about 4:30 p.m. Totality is the most special stage of the eclipse and is the only period of time when you can observe the total eclipse without eclipse glasses. This stage will begin shortly after 3:05 p.m. in Johnson County and will last until about 3:10.

Stay around

The time of totality will be over by 3:15 p.m. in Indiana, and the partial eclipse will be completely over by 4:30 p.m. Plan ahead to stay at the location you viewed the eclipse for a while to allow for peak traffic to pass. Consider staying the night there instead of leaving immediately after the eclipse.

— Information from the Indiana Department of Homeland Security



It was an unforgettable moment

A friend recently mentioned that she didn't remember America's last total solar eclipse in 2017 receiving nearly the publicity as the upcoming April 8 event. I reminded her that, in central Indiana, our 2017 eclipse was a partial one. Totality cities in Kentucky and Tennessee experienced a similar buildup then to what we are witnessing now.

While the upcoming total eclipse will long be remembered by Greenfield citizens, the partial eclipse of August 21, 2017, will always hold a special place in my heart. I taught fifth grade at Greenfield Intermediate School and shared it with 357 students during an after-school party.

Greenfield's 2017 partial eclipse covered 93% of the solar surface. Over the summer, our building got a new principal and assistant principal. I half-jokingly reminisced recently that our first conversation went something like, "Nice to meet you. We are having an eclipse party at dismissal time during the first month of the school year. It will be a logistical nightmare. Help!"

In the days preceding the eclipse,



**CHARLIE
HART**
GUEST
COLUMNIST

the mantra "Heads up, glasses on," permeated throughout the building. It meant if one's head was up during the eclipse, it was probably looking at the sun, and eclipse glasses were necessary. Remembering this simple mantra prevented eye injuries.

I woke to a forecast of partly cloudy skies giving way to afternoon showers. At midday recess, blue skies persisted with some high clouds towards Indianapolis. At eclipse time clouds were quickly building to the west.

The eclipse began at 12:58 with peak coverage arriving at 2:25. With student dismissal at 2:10, an after-school party ensured students could see the best part of the eclipse. Those with signed permission slips were given eclipse glasses and sent to the gym at 1:50, and those without were dismissed to leave at the traditional time.

After last-minute reminders about safety, partying students were dismissed to the playground and outdoor basketball court. Faculty stressed that the basketball court be the only place where students could view the eclipse. Adults would help with glasses and indirect viewing activities. Students who wanted to eat ice cream or play left the court - no court, no looking at the sun.

I watched students project the sun's image through spaghetti colanders, paper-punched holes, and fidget-spinner spoke rivets. The sunlight felt eerie as the moon devoured the solar surface.

I blew a whistle at 2:25 and announced that peak eclipse viewing had arrived. Everyone stopped to look, and, in an unforgettable moment, the crescent sun disappeared altogether when viewed through eclipse glasses. Many students cheered thinking the eclipse had become total, when actually clouds had covered the sun. It never reappeared, and soon, showers blanketed the party. Fortunately our administrators planned to have students picked up on both sides of the school to hasten the process. With walkie-talkie

coordination, every student was safely riding or walking home by 4 p.m.

I am forever grateful for the help my teaching teammates, staff, and administrators provided to make the party a reality. All volunteered to stay past contracted times, sent home and collected permissions slips, preached safety, distributed eclipse glasses, stored backpacks, oversaw eclipse viewing, monitored the playground, served ice cream, answered student questions, and supervised two giant car-rider lines.

I rate Aug. 21, 2017, the most satisfying day of my teaching career. The shared experience sparked scientific curiosity that uniquely comes during authentic learning opportunities. In reflecting on my notes from the time, I am struck by something I wrote on the faculty schedule for the 2017 party. It read, "April 8, 2024 - All this times 10." I hope that prediction comes true.

Charlie Hart lives with his wife and two children in central Indiana. He works for a digital marketing firm in Fishers. Visit his company at www.fuelvm.com. He taught fifth grade at Greenfield Intermediate School from 2014-2021.

Pictured from left: This photo, taken by Keri Bridges in 2017, was taken just before the maximum eclipse coverage seven years ago. Shortly after the sun disappeared and it began raining. Bridges was a fourth-grade teacher at Greenfield Intermediate School at the time. // More than 350 students, teachers, staff and administrators gathered at Greenfield Intermediate School in 2017 for an after-school eclipse party. This photo was taken by Melissa Bond, who was a fifth-grade teacher at the time. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**