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**Catch an Eclipse Watch Party**

**During Kansas’ Solar Spectacle**

 Follow the sun to northeast Kansas on Monday, August 21, for the celestial event of a lifetime. When the skies go eerily dark that afternoon, communities across the far corner of the state offer some of the best solar eclipse viewing anywhere.

 It’s been 100 years since the last total solar eclipse was visible from Kansas and the next one won’t come here until 2045. That’s why the towns of Atchison, Troy, Hiawatha, Marysville and others are making big plans to host eclipse watch parties for capacity crowds.

 “This hasn’t happened in Kansas since 1918,” says Adrienne Korson, Doniphan County economic development director. “We’ve had astronomers tell us it’s like winning the lottery to be on the eclipse’s central line of totality!”

The August 21 phenomenon will [darken skies all the way from Oregon to South Carolina](https://www.activejunky.com/articles/solar-eclipse-vacations), along a stretch of land about 70 miles wide. The closer to the center line of that path, the longer the total eclipse lasts. The longest duration anywhere in the U.S. is 2 minutes, 40 seconds: Kansas clocks in with 2 minutes, 38 seconds of near total darkness in Doniphan County.

 “When the maximum viewing time in the nation is 2 minutes, 40 seconds, and we have 2 minutes, 38 seconds here, that’s pretty intense and a great opportunity for Kansans to view this rare event,” Korson adds.

 The path slices from the Marysville area in Marshall County across the corner of the state to Leavenworth County. The Kansas City, Kansas, area gets a glimpse, too, but the best view lies north.

 In the farthest northeast tip, the Doniphan County seat of Troy kicks off its “Eclipse in the Heartland” party on Sunday, August 20, with music, street vendors and a beer garden on the courthouse square and an evening 5K Eclipse Run. On Monday, eclipse day, Troy offers four designated viewing sites: the courthouse square, high school football field, city baseball field and the 4-H fairgrounds. Shuttles run from parking areas to the sites.

 Korson advises visitors to arrive early because of the anticipated crowds. The partial eclipse begins in the Troy area at 11:40 a.m. and the total eclipse at 1:05 p.m. Also in Doniphan County, the towns of Highland and Elwood host viewing areas and activities of their own.

 Just south, Atchison celebrates the epic event with the Eclipse Aire Fest at Amelia Earhart Airport. Earhart’s hometown plans bi-plane rides, live music, food vendors and the display of “Muriel,” a historic 1935 Lockheed Electra L-10E airplane identical to the model flown by Earhart during her attempted world flight.

 Atchison’s 2 minutes, 19 seconds of totality begin at 1:06 p.m. Witness the spectacle at two designated areas: Amelia Earhart Airport and Benedictine College’s Wilcox Stadium. Benedictine College also hosts talks by astronomers from the Vatican and a Celestial Concert by the college’s music department.

 The town of Hiawatha in Brown County observes its impressive 2 minutes, 34 seconds of darkness with Brown County Blackout festivities, including live music, a beer garden, food vendors and children’s activities at the Fisher Community Center viewing site.

 Farthest west, the town of Marysville gets its party started Sunday with the Squirrel Jam music festival, a free movie, ice cream social, glow run and glow yoga. On Monday, crowds gather at the official viewing site, the Lakeview Sports Complex, for the sunless 1 minute, 11 seconds.

 Other communities in the path welcome visitors to simply come view the show. In Sabetha, for instance, watch from the bleachers and wide-open spaces of the 6th Street Ballpark. And near Kansas City, join the Total Eclipse in the Parks gatherings at Antioch Park in Merriam, Heritage Park in Olathe and Theatre in the Park in Shawnee.

 Organizers of the northeast Kansas watch parties recommend bringing chairs, sunscreen and bottled water, and arriving early. Most importantly, make sure to have proper eye protection. Most sites will have special eclipse-viewing glasses for sale while supplies last, or people can purchase them ahead of time to be safe.

During the total eclipse, the moon passes between the sun and earth, blocking all direct sunlight and turning day to night for a few minutes. Observers outside the path see a partial eclipse when the moon covers part of the sun’s disk.

 “Don’t miss this remarkable natural phenomenon,” urges Chris Sorensen, Kansas State University physics professor and amateur astronomer. “Given its rarity and extreme beauty, this total eclipse and its eerie type of twilight will truly be an awe-inspiring event.” ##