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Museum offers special activities to help visitors understand the August 21 solar eclipse

On August 21, 2017, people across the United States will see the sun disappear behind the moon during the much-anticipated solar eclipse. The Kalamazoo Valley Museum will offer a number of activities related to the event. The program Eclipse 2017 will be shown free of charge in the Planetarium at 11:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. The NASA Mega Cast of the eclipse in totality will be shown as a live feed in the Stryker Theater from 11:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. In the Commons area south of the Museum (weather permitting), there will be many opportunities to safely view the eclipse, with Museum staff assisting with both direct and indirect methods.

It's not often that people can see a solar eclipse in Michigan. On August 21, the sun's light will be blocked by the moon, allowing most people within the United States the opportunity to see either a partial or total eclipse depending on a viewer's location. In Kalamazoo, about 83 percent of the sun's light will be blocked at mid-eclipse, occurring at 2:23 p.m. People living within a narrow band stretching from Oregon to South Carolina will see the sun totally eclipsed for nearly two and a half minutes, as the sky darkens enough to view bright planets and stars.

On average, two solar eclipses can be observed somewhere in the world in any given year. However, because the moon's shadow is small, the path of totality is only 60-70 miles wide, and the Earth rotates on its axis, not everyone is able to see an eclipse when it occurs. In the past century, about 10 total eclipses have been observed within the continental United States, with the most recent one being in 1979. This year's eclipse is called the "The Great American Eclipse" because the last time the path of totality fell exclusively within the Continental US was in 1918. Despite the fact that total eclipses are rare, many people have been able to see a partial eclipse, when a portion of the sun is blocked out. For people living outside the path of totality like those in Kalamazoo and Lower Michigan, over 80 percent will be blocked out.

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum will have opportunities to safely view the eclipse both inside and outside the Museum:

Mary Jane Stryker Theater (11:45 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.)

NASA's 2017 eclipse coverage will be shown in the Mary Jane Stryker Theater between 11:45 and 4:15 on our large projection screen. Visitors are free to walk in and out during this window to hear NASA commentary and see live images as the eclipse progresses.

KVM Planetarium

11:45 a.m. – Eclipse 2017

12:30 p.m. – Eclipse 2017

Arcadia Commons Area (green space south of Museum) (12:45 – 3:45 p.m.)

Eclipse viewing is available to the public (weather permitting), with Museum staff to help show how the sun can be safely viewed using both direct and indirect methods.

Admission to the Kalamazoo Valley Museum is free. The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.