

As Doniphan County gears up for the Total Solar Eclipse in the Heartland on Aug. 21, 2017, the office of Economic Development will be providing informative articles weekly to the public to be prepared for this rare and spectacular event.

How can I prepare for the solar eclipse? First, know what an eclipse is and when it is happening in Doniphan County. View last week's article about what an eclipse is and remember that the partial eclipse will start at 11:40 a.m. throughout the entire Doniphan County area, but be ready earlier so you don't miss a second. Totality will begin at approximately 1:05 p.m. and last for an entire 2 minutes and 38 seconds. After that, it goes back to being a partial eclipse again and will end by 2:35 p.m.

Second, know what is happening in the surrounding areas that may affect your plans. Both Atchison and Saint Joseph, Missouri are also planning activities for the solar eclipse. Saint Joseph is estimating that more than 100,000 people from around the world are expected to come and visit their city throughout the entire weekend. Their main viewing spots are Rosecrans Memorial Airport and East Hills Shopping Center and several other places. The Trails West annual festival will also be occurring the weekend leading up to the solar eclipse (Aug. 18-21). Please note that traveling to either Atchison or the Saint Joseph area the week and weekend leading up and to the solar eclipse will consist of traffic that is much heavier than normal and could prove difficult. If you do need to go to Saint Joseph, plan in advance to run all your errands and appointments before traffic gets heavy later in week. We expect some of the Saint Joseph traffic and visitors to spill into Doniphan County, especially to the Elwood and Wathena areas. Also, all Doniphan county school districts do not have school the day of the eclipse, Aug. 21.

Next, plan where you are going to view the event. We suggest avoiding driving as much as possible on the day of the eclipse as traffic is most likely to be slow and cumbersome. Therefore, viewing the event outside from the comforts of your yard or workplace is ideal, watch out for trees obstructing your view. Talk with your employer in advance about how and where they intend to go about viewing the eclipse. Some businesses may be closed on the day of the eclipse. Please avoid viewing the eclipse on the side of highway 36 or highway 7. The cities of Highland, Troy and Elwood have planned viewing locations and events throughout the weekend leading up to the solar eclipse for local and rural residents and visitors to attend. Watch for upcoming press releases that will give more details on each city's planned activities. All of this information can be found at www.dpcountyks.com.

Also, remember to have weather specific items with you or easily accessible. Although it is too far out to know the exact weather conditions for Aug. 21, on average in Doniphan County that day is sunny and clear. There are several things we suggest you plan on having available including water, sunscreen, solar glasses or a welding helmet to safely view the eclipse and a lawn chair or blanket if attending a city's organized event. Highland, Troy and Elwood have planned to have water and hydrating stations available in each city for anyone on the day of the eclipse while supplies last. Think about buying solar eclipse glasses in advance for the event as normal sunglasses will not be sufficient protection. Solar eclipse glasses are available for purchase at the Doniphan County Economic Development Office and at Wathena City Hall for \$2 each. Please call or email Adrienne Korson at 785-985-2235 or economic.development@dpcountyks.com to learn more.

Stay tuned in the following weeks as we talk in more detail about the county's safety plans, multiple city's events during the eclipse weekend, best practices to accommodate incoming visitors and more. You can always find more information at www.dpcountyks.com or at

