

Despite Weather, Crowds Look To Totality



(MSC News)--Despite clouds and rain obscuring the highly anticipated solar eclipse Monday, throngs of people gathered in communities throughout the local region in anticipation of the historic moment.

In Atchison, key viewing locations included Benedictine College, where a ceremony was held, along with the Amelia Earhart Airport where an “Eclipse Aire Fest” was held.

Despite dense clouds, and occasional pouring rain, the clouds parted just enough at 1:06 in the afternoon for the soggy airport crowd to view glimpses of the several stages of the event.

Shouts of excitement went up from the crowd, as total darkness enveloped the airport.

Once the key portion of totality was complete, those in attendance voiced satisfaction at what they were able to see.

Among them was Atchison City Manager Trey Cocking and Shanae Randolph, representative of Atchison-based MGP Ingredients, which helped to sponsor the airport party. “All of a sudden it's daytime again,” Cocking said, following the total darkness that accompanied the eclipse. “The sun set and the sun rose, and it's just amazing to see how quickly that happened and how quickly it's lightened up already.”

“I'm so glad that the weather has cooperated enough for us to experience this together out here,” Randolph said. “It's just so neat to see the different phases.”

In Hiawatha, eclipse spectators gathered between the Fisher Community Center and Noble Ball Field in an attempt to view the unique occurrence.

NASA Engineer Mike Davis gave a presentation at the Fisher Center prior to totality. “To somebody who works in astronomy, or space, or whatever, this is like the big one for us,” Davis told MSC News. “Totality is rare. The moon shadow's only 70-miles when projected on the earth for totality, so that makes it rare.”

Hiawatha City officials estimate that nearly 5,000 visitors chose the community as their viewing location.

Hiawatha Mayor Steffen Shamburg said it was a “ a heck of day for Hiawatha;” and despite the weather, Shamburg said he thinks the event “ put a good face on Hiawatha.”

Viewing parties across the region saw an influx of out of state guests, with such locations as Troy, and Saint Joseph, Missouri, chosen as destinations for attempted viewings, despite the uncooperative weather.

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