

Sky Valley Property Owners Association
Newsletter – July 29, 2017

Dear Friends,

As a lot of incorrect information about the Eclipse is going around I wanted to let you know what exactly what to expect.

The Total Eclipse is Monday August 21. Total Darkness will be at 2:35pm and will last for slightly over 2 minutes, but it will begin getting dark about an hour before and will be about an hour before daylight is fully restored. It will happen rain or shine, and Rabun County is the only place in the state to experience totality. The Eclipse will travel over the country at approximately 1,400 miles per hour. During totality, four other planets will be visible. It is MANDATORY that you wear special glasses to look at the sun, except for the 2 minutes it is completely covered.

The Rabun County Tourism Development Authority (RCTDA) is organizing the largest event in the county ~ OUTASIGHT~ to be held day of on the grounds of Rabun Gap Nacoochee School. We are expecting about 10,000 people for this event and have many fun and educational things planned throughout the day (more information www.explorerabun.com/total-eclipse/) including bands, food trucks, experiential science lessons for kids, 2 large jumbo-trons with live NASA feed to follow the eclipse as it moves throughout the country. Additionally we have partnered with the Georgia State University Astronomy Department, and they will be on hand with special telescopes, and are promoting us heavily on their website. We have also given an exclusive contract to NBC for the day of, and they are already promoting it on their Atlanta affiliate, WXIA. NASA has named this as an 'official' site to watch the eclipse.

There are several events during the weekend, including a golf tournament and party on Sunday in Sky Valley (www.skyvalleyga.com). Others are listed on explorerabun.com. One notable event is Sunday evening at RGNS – 5:00 – 6:30 pm. Dr. Keith Bechtol will be speaking on Light and Shadows – the Eclipse and other Cosmic Wonders. Dr. Bechtol is the son of Rabun resident Nancy Childress, owner of Rabun Manor Inn and Associate Pastor at Clayton UMC, and has discovered more than a dozen small galaxies circling the Milky Way. Admission is free but seating is limited to the first 650 at the Reardon Theatre.

NASA is now saying that this eclipse is much larger than even they had originally thought. Our event has sold tickets to people in Michigan, Mexico, New York, Louisiana, Nebraska and more. NASA predicts that Rabun County will have approximately 55,000 cars ~ not people, cars ~ on our roads the day of the event.

Please know that we are working diligently with Rabun Co. Sherriff's office, GDOT, Ga State Patrol, GEMA, Rabun Emergency Services, Rabun Forest Rangers and more to ensure a fun and safe day for everyone. But, if the weather is nice, traffic will be very bad. Parking is available in several large lots in Clayton and off 441 with 55 passenger buses providing shuttle service. NASA predicts that with good weather I-85 could become a parking lot.

Rabun County schools are closed for the day and all non-essential employees will be dismissed at noon. All hotels and campgrounds have been sold out for months, some even more than a year. Be advised to purchase groceries well ahead of time, as well as have full gas tanks. Many area businesses will be closed on Monday.

Also be advised that your household pets should be in an enclosed, well-lit room during the eclipse. The darkening is very scary to all animals and they react as if it is fully nighttime – cows will go the barn, birds will stop singing, and when it becomes light again, roosters will crow!

It is going to be a fun, albeit hectic time! A full eclipse won't happen like this one for another 376 years so you might want to enjoy this one! Have fun and be safe!

Laura Gurley, Rabun County Tourism Development Authority representative