

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: March 7, 2017

Contact:

Clark Lovelace, Executive Director
Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority
(828) 883-3700
clark@brevardncchamber.org

Stephen Saucier, Executive Director
Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI)
(828) 966-4097
ssaucier@pari.edu

Jaime Laughter, Manager
Transylvania County
(828) 884-3100
Jaime.laughter@transylvaniacounty.org

Community Meeting on Historic Solar Eclipse to Feature National Expert

Brevard, NC — Dr. Laura Peticolas, a senior fellow at the Space Science Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley, will be the featured speaker at a community meeting on the subject of this summer's total solar eclipse. The meeting will be held on Friday, March 24, 2017, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m., in the Rogow Room of the Transylvania County Library. The event is free and the public is invited to attend.

The gathering is hosted by Transylvania County, the Transylvania Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA), and Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI), all of whom have been making preparations to ensure that the community and visitors can take full advantage of the total solar eclipse occurring on August 21, 2017.

Transylvania County is one of a very few locations in North Carolina that will experience the most dramatic effects of the eclipse. While most communities across the U.S. will experience at least a partial eclipse, only those locations in the “path of totality” will experience a 100% eclipse, a phenomenon that will bring complete nightfall in mid afternoon.

- more -

“The 2017 Total Solar Eclipse will be an historic event for Transylvania County, for PARI and for anyone who has gazed up in wonder at the heavens,” said Stephen Saucier, executive director at the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute. “It is essential that we make every effort to communicate with the community to best prepare everyone for this historic event.”

PARI, located in Rosman, lies close to the center of the path of totality, which means it will experience 1 minute, 47 seconds of totality at 2:36:44 pm on August 21. Other sites in Transylvania County will experience varying amounts of time in totality, depending on their location: Brevard will experience 1 minute, 10 seconds; Lake Toxaway, 2 minutes, 8 seconds, entrance to Pisgah Forest, 34 seconds; Cedar Mountain, 1 minute, 25 seconds.

Two teams from NASA will be on hand at PARI to conduct research on the day of the eclipse. PARI will also be conducting research with its two 26-meter radio telescopes. This is the first time in history that a total solar eclipse has ever passed over such sophisticated research equipment, making PARI, and by extension, Transylvania County, a focal point for scientists and serious eclipse watchers.

Dr. Peticolas will kick off the community meeting with a talk on “Eclipse 101,” which will provide insight into the science of the eclipse. Google awarded Dr. Peticolas a grant to help assist communities in the path of totality with eclipse preparations.

Joining Dr. Peticolas for her presentation will be Chris Cable, a consultant to the Space Science Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley. Cable was previously the chief executive officer of the Imaginarium in Anchorage, Alaska and the Durango Powerhouse Center in Durango, Colorado.

Saucier will share details about PARI and NASA’s planned research, as well as PARI’s role as a local expert and educator on the eclipse.

Clark Lovelace, executive director of the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA), will talk about the organization’s efforts to promote the eclipse to visitors.

“We believe the total solar eclipse is a great opportunity to promote Transylvania County to the wider world,” said Lovelace. “Additionally, because of PARI’s significance to the eclipse, we believe that Transylvania County could become a focal point of national media attention.”

Public safety will also be an important topic during the meeting. From traffic control to eye safety, local leaders are working to ensure that the eclipse is a positive experience for everyone.

“Eye safety is a key concern,” said county manager Jaime Laughter. “We are working to make sure that everyone, adults and children, understand how important it is to only look at the eclipse with appropriate protective eyewear.”

###

Resources:

For public health and safety information, contact Jaime Laughter, (828) 884-3100
Jaime.laughter@transylvaniacounty.org

For information on marketing and promotional efforts, go to visitwaterfalls.com or call the Brevard/Transylvania County Visitor Center (828) 884-8900.

To learn more about the eclipse event at PARI or advance eclipse training through PARI, contact Sarah Chappell, (828) 862-5554, schappell@pari.edu

Eye Safety:

NASA has provided this guidance on eye safety in relation to a total solar eclipse:

“The Sun can be viewed safely with the naked eye only during the few brief *seconds or minutes* of a **total solar eclipse**.

Partial eclipses and the partial phases of total eclipses are *never safe to watch without taking special precautions*. Even when 99% of the Sun's surface is obscured during the partial phases of a total eclipse, the remaining photospheric crescent is intensely bright and cannot be viewed safely without eye protection **Do not attempt to observe the partial phases of any eclipse with the naked eye. Failure to use appropriate filtration may result in permanent eye damage or blindness!**”