*For more information, contact MoDOT Communications, 573-751-2840*

DATE – For immediate release

**Missouri Set for Prime Viewing of August Solar Eclipse**

*Plan ahead to get your best viewing and avoid traffic congestion*

JEFFERSON CITY – This summer, citizens and travelers throughout a large portion of Missouri will have the chance to see a rare celestial event – a total solar eclipse.

On Aug. 21, 2017, the moon will block out the sun’s light, causing a total solar eclipse across 300 miles of Missouri, from St. Joseph to Perryville. An influx of out-of-state visitors is also expected to come to Missouri to witness the event.

Missourians should make plans early to determine where they will view the eclipse, where they will stay and how best to avoid the extra traffic congestion.

“We anticipate large crowds causing heavy congestion on Missouri interstates the day of the solar eclipse and potentially the weekend leading up to the Monday event,” said Missouri Department of Transportation Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger. “If you are interested in seeing the eclipse, we recommend making plans now as many lodging options are filling up. Stay as close to home as possible so you can avoid the anticipated traffic.”

Missouri will be one of 14 states from Oregon to South Carolina to experience the path of the Aug. 21 total solar eclipse. Approximately 200 million people -- a little less than two-thirds of our nation’s population -- will be within a day’s drive of the path of the eclipse.

The green line on the attached map represents the optimal viewing location while everyone inside the yellow lines will see the eclipse. Totality of the solar eclipse enters Missouri as it crosses the Missouri River into St. Joseph at 1:06 p.m. CDT. The eclipse will exit Missouri as it crosses the Mississippi River near Perryville at 1:21 p.m. CDT.

Please follow these tips to drive safely on the day of the solar eclipse:

* Don’t stop along the interstate or park on the shoulder during the event.
* Exit the highway to safe location to view and/or photograph the eclipse.
* Don’t take photographs while driving!
* Don’t try to wear opaque eclipse glasses while operating a vehicle.
* Turn your headlights on -- do not rely on your automatic headlights when the eclipse blocks out the sun.
* Watch out for pedestrians along smaller roads. People may be randomly parking and walking alongside the roadside in the hours around the eclipse to get the best view.
* Prepare for extra congestion especially on the interstates in the path on the day before, day of and day after the eclipse.
* Check traffic conditions on MoDOT’s Traveler Information Map at <http://traveler.modot.org/map/> also available as a free app at MoDOT Traveler Information.

For more information on the solar eclipse, its path and how to view it with proper safety glasses or other techniques, visit the NASA website at [**http://eclipse2017.nasa.gov**](http://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/)**.** For a comprehensive list of state events and festivals celebrating the August 21, 2017, solar eclipse, visit <http://nationaleclipse.com/events.html>.

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