



## **Gem Over the Prairie planned for 2017 Total Solar Eclipse in Grand Island**

Organizations in and around Grand Island are working out details for Gem Over the Prairie, the local event featuring the August 21, 2017 total eclipse that will pass directly over the city. Partners include the Grand Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, Edgerton Explorit Center of Aurora, and the NASA Space Grant Program out of Omaha.

Gem Over the Prairie refers to both the location of the local event, Stuhr Museum and their recent capital campaign, and the diamond ring effect observed during a total eclipse. Interpreters at Stuhr Museum's Railroad Town will respond to the eclipse in 1890s form. Basic services such as bathrooms and food vendors will be on the grounds the day of the eclipse. The partners will provide eclipse viewing glasses before and during the event.

This is a significant event in Grand Island and in the United States. The last total solar eclipse in Grand Island happened in the year 1194, and the next won't be until the year 2744. In fact, there hasn't been a total solar eclipse witnessed in the continental United States since 1979 and won't be another until 2024. The 2017 total solar eclipse is also unique in that it will cross the entire country, beginning in Oregon and passing out of the nation's borders in South Carolina.

Grand Island is one of the best places in the country to witness the total solar eclipse of 2017. With more than two-and-a-half minutes of totality, Grand Island is within four seconds of the longest eclipse duration anywhere in the country. Central Nebraska also offers very good chances for sunny summer skies; odds of clear viewing from Grand Island are 70-75%.

The convention and visitors bureau continues to receive more inquiries about the eclipse from people in many states and even other countries. Local hotels are booking rooms; lodging in the area is anticipated to fill up well before August 2017. The partnership is working to create viewing opportunities and educational programs before and during the eclipse.

Total solar eclipses are much more significant events than more common partial solar eclipses. The most spectacular eclipse phenomena (corona, surrounding twilight, etc) happen only during a total eclipse.

### **Grand Island, 21 Aug 2017 (CDT)**

11:34:20am, Partial eclipse begins

12:58:34pm, Total eclipse begins

1:01:09pm, Total eclipse ends

2:26:36pm, Partial eclipse ends

Length of totality: 2 minutes, 34 seconds

For more information, follow the group at [Facebook.com/2017Totality](https://www.facebook.com/2017Totality) and [Twitter.com/2017totality](https://twitter.com/2017totality). Questions about the eclipse can be directed to Dan Glomski at [dan@edgerton.org](mailto:dan@edgerton.org). For questions about area lodging and activities, contact the convention and visitors bureau at 308-382-4400.