



In just 4 minutes 2,000 eclipse glasses were given away at Edgewater Mall in Biloxi Friday as the frenzy heats up ahead of Monday's solar eclipse.

By Mary Perez

LOCAL

Everything you need to know about watching the eclipse in South Mississippi

BY MARY PEREZ
meperez@sunherald.com



August 17, 2017 04:49 PM

Updated August 21, 2017 06:29 AM

BILOXI — It took just 4 minutes to give away 2,000 pair of eclipse glasses at Edgewater Mall on Friday as thousands of people lined up in hopes of scoring a pair for Monday's solar eclipse.

“They're sold out everywhere,” said Stephanie Lefebvre of Gulfport, who got to the mall early with her daughters to make sure they could get the glasses to protect their eyes and let them see the eclipse. Cindy Thomas of D'Iberville was there at 8 a.m. for the noon giveaway.

To show the public interest in the eclipse across South Mississippi, mall manager Terry Powell estimated more people came to the mall for this promotion than to see the New Orleans Saints in 2008.

Although some Coastians are heading across the country to experience the total eclipse of the sun, South Mississippi will have great opportunities — and parties — to celebrate the partial eclipse.



The local news you need to start your day



It's too late to book a cruise with Bonnie Tyler singing her hit song "Total Eclipse of the Heart" just as the eclipse begins off the Coast of the Bahamas on Monday, or to get in on the "OutASight" Total Solar Eclipse Viewing Party in Georgia or the Howl at the Moon Music Festival outside Nashville, Tennessee.

Coast residents who stay home can join the party at Infinity Science Center in Hancock County, Lynn Meadows Discovery Center in Gulfport or at one of the libraries in Jackson and Harrison counties, which will be handing out eclipse glasses while supplies last.



The peak across South Mississippi comes at 1:30 p.m., when about 80 percent of the sun will be covered as the moon passes between the Earth and sun. It still will be a good show before and after the peak, although protective glasses are required to look at the sun.

Only three U.S. companies make ISO-approved eclipse glasses verified safe by NASA and the American Astronomical Society, according to Eye Associates of the South, which gave away 300 pairs of those glasses to the public Friday. Even with approved glasses, ophthalmologist Rainna Bahaudur warns people not to watch the eclipse with binoculars, telescopes, mirrors, cameras or using zoom focus, which can cause severe retinal damage and serious or permanent vision loss.

It's been 100 years since a solar eclipse crossed the continental United States, so it's understandable why the nation has caught

the day with a first of its kind Total Eclipse of the Sun Forever Stamp that changes from an eclipse image to the moon with the heat from a person's finger. Once it cools it reverts back to the eclipse. The map on the back of the stamp shows the eclipse's path.

Post offices in South Mississippi report being sold out of the stamps that also can be purchased online. The Bay St. Louis Post Office will host a stamp dedication at 9 a.m. Monday at Infinity Science Center. The dedication event is free and open to the public.

For those who will be traveling by plane Monday, the Federal Aviation Administration said the solar eclipse will not affect flights.

“Pilots can expect nighttime landing conditions during totality within the path of totality,” the FAA said. “Just before and after totality or outside the path will experience dusk/dawn like conditions to dark overcast-like conditions.”

Airline Pilots Association International recommends that pilots advise passengers that the only safe time to look at the sun without special glasses is during the brief period of

The National Weather Service is predicting mostly sunny skies Monday across South Mississippi with a chance of showers and a thunderstorm — hopefully not during the peak of the party at 1:30 p.m. The next solar eclipse is in 2024 and “I’m going to be more prepared,” said Margaret Hopper of Ocean Springs, who arrived in time to get one pair of glasses at the mall Friday.

Mary Perez: 228-896-2354, @MaryPerezSH

PLANNING YOUR ECLIPSE PARTY

NASA has tips for those who want to host an eclipse party Monday:

- Choose a location where viewing parties are scheduled or throw a party in your backyard.
- If clouds move in or you’re inside the office, connect to NASA’s live streaming event that begins at 10:45 a.m.
- Join the discussion on social media

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Unlimited access: 99¢ for 1 month

#READLOCAL