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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

RICHLAND COUNTY EMA HOSTS SOLAR ECLIPSE UPDATE MEETING

The Richland County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) convened elected officials, local school districts, law enforcement, EMS, and other community partners Wednesday morning for an update on the countywide planning for the April 8th, 2024 eclipse.

Deloris Mlay, president of the Richland County Astronomy Society, reflected on her experience visiting Tennessee during the 2017 solar eclipse. She stated traffic gridlock caused significant delays in their travels and they booked a camp sight many months ahead of time to ensure they had overnight accommodations. The Astronomy Club operates the Warren Rupp Observatory located at Friendly House Hidden Hollow Camp.

Committees have been meeting in recent months and provided updates on planning for public safety, public health, community outreach, education, viewing, and resource/logistics for the county. The groups are reaching out to the community early in order for residents to make preparations for the weekend of April 5th – April 8th, 2024. Residents are advised to shop early in the week for groceries, medications, avoid scheduling appoints during this time, and fill up their gas tanks. Over 100,000 visitors are expected to come to our area for the eclipse. Hotels and campgrounds are filling up quickly. Many schools are cancelled for the day. A resource page for locals and visitors is being created on

the Richland County website and is expected to go live in the near future. Viewing sites will be included on the Eclipse page.

A public meeting on the eclipse is planned for Tuesday, October 24th at 7pm at Butler Village Hall and Tuesday, January 23rd at 6:30pm at Pioneer Career and Technology Center. An additional meeting is being planned in the Madison area for later this year. Anyone with questions on the eclipse should reach out to the Richland County EMA office at 419-774-5686.

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