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Saturday festival promotes wonders of science

By JACKSON FRENCH jfrench@bgdailynews.com 14 hrs ago



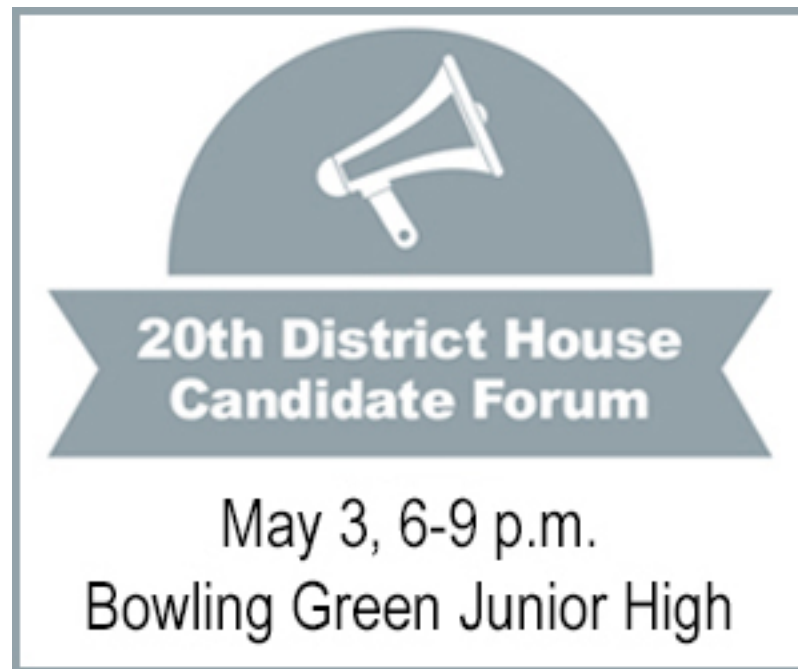
Jonas Britt of Bowling Green looks through a tube to see what solar spots look like during the 2017 SKySci Fest at Circus Square Park.

Photos by Matt Lunsford/For the Daily News

Saturday, Circus Square Park will be filled with volunteers demonstrating the wonders of science.

The fourth annual Sky Science Fest is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the park, and will feature more than 30 groups demonstrating a range of scientific topics from drones and sustainable gardening to vision testing.

Richard Gelderman, director of the Hardin Planetarium at Western Kentucky University, described the free event as a “celebration of science” with a carnival atmosphere.



“It’s a festival on Circus Square Park patterned after the International Festival but with science instead of countries,” he said.

Gelderman has been involved with the SKySci Fest since 2015, the first year it was held. The festival was designed to give people a chance to spontaneously experience hands-on scientific demonstrations, he said.

By placing the festival in the middle of Bowling Green’s downtown, the hope is to make science more accessible to the general public, Gelderman said.

“We took science to where the people were,” he said. “It’s so we can share it with everyone, not just the geek.”

A list of groups that will be conducting scientific experiments and demonstrations is provided at skyscifest.com and includes the Warren County Beekeepers, the Kentucky Science Center, Mammoth Cave National Park and several university science clubs including the WKU Chemistry Club and the WKU Association of Undergraduate Geneticists.



In honor of the 200-year anniversary of Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein,” the WKU Society of Physics Students will demonstrate a number of experiments involving the transfer of electricity, inspired by the “It’s Alive!” segment of the 1931 Frankenstein movie.

“They’re going to have electricity things where your body becomes the battery,” he said.

SKySci Fest has grown over the years, with the number of groups demonstrating scientific experiments having risen from roughly 18 to more than 30 since 2015, Gelderman said.

Gelderman said he’s already thinking about how to make the event’s offerings more diverse next year, adding that he hopes to feature more experiments related to medical and agricultural science at 2019’s SKySci Fest.

“It’s all about doing science, putting your hands on it and doing stuff,” he said. “Science is just as much about creativity as it is about math equations.”

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