



**April 5-8, 2024**

**Totality: 1:54 p.m.  
Monday, April 8**

## Preparing for the Solar Eclipse

A rare circumstance will occur on Monday, April 8, 2024 that could attract thousands of visitors to West Plains! We are in the path of totality for the Great North American Eclipse.

Just imagine if everyone who wants to view the eclipse from Springfield, Joplin, and Kansas City came to West Plains.

We want you to be prepared! The City of West Plains created an Eclipse Task Force to prepare for the 2024 Total Solar Eclipse. Extensive research and planning has gone into preparing for this event over the past three years, including gathering information from cities affected by the 2017 total solar eclipse.



**300,000 people?** One of the most challenging planning aspects is determining how many people may visit West Plains for this event. All sorts of numbers have been thrown out there, but the fact is, we have no way to estimate the number of people who will be here on April 8. The estimated number of visitors to the path of totality within the state of Missouri is from 43,000 on the low side to 173,000 on the high side. With the potential for a large influx of crowds, we encourage businesses and organizations to become familiar with the upcoming eclipse date and prepare accordingly.

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**Back-up Plans:** Prepare for a potential increase in customers, have needed supplies on hand, consider extending hours of operation to meet customer needs, and have back-up plans if staff is delayed due to traffic.

**Employee Preparedness:** Encourage employees to have a full tank of gas, have their own resources at home, daycare needs met, etc., by Thursday, April 4, 2024. Gas stations may be very busy or waiting on resupply. Make sure your staff can get to work, so give them reminders to plan ahead.

**Cash/Financial Transactions:** Be prepared for more cash transactions, consider having extra tills set up to accommodate more cash transactions. You may have larger than normal deposits over the weekend. Check ahead of time if your bank will be open on Monday, April 8, 2024.

**Credit/Debit Transactions:** If you use cell service for your transactions, be prepared with a back-up plan. There could be a high demand for cellular service during the impact period, especially Monday, April 8, 2024. You may find you are not able to make transactions. Have a back-up plan to meet your customers' needs.

**Communications:** Anticipate possible cellular service disruptions due to the increased demand. Visitors may have requests to use your landline business phone if cell service is limited. Decide how you want to handle these requests and make sure employees know what to do.

**Restrooms:** Expect customers who may be primarily interested in using business restrooms. Public restrooms will be in short supply and port-a-potties in limited locations may be at capacity until serviced.

**Weather:** If conditions are foggy or cloudy, visitors with hotel reservations will most likely not change their plans, but the "day trippers" may move to a location with better viewing conditions. There is no way to predict this. Monitoring the weather forecast 10 days prior to April 8, 2024, could be useful for your business.

**Please be patient:** As with any event of this size, there will always be challenges. We are all going to do the best we can. We want to be a welcoming community and we want these visitors to think of West Plains as a place they want to visit again.