

Library chosen for NASA program

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Monmouth Public Library hopes to provide experiences that are out of this world — with a little help from NASA.

Monmouth was one of three libraries across the country to be chosen for the NASA @ My Library program.

“We are looking for ways to connect NASA with libraries and the people that use libraries in our country,” said Keliann LaConte, professional development manager from the Space Science Institute.

Monmouth Library Director Krist Obrist said she was just searching for ideas for the library to use the solar eclipse to spur interest in the library.

“I was trying to see what can we do and how we could get involved,” Obrist said. “I came across Starnet, which works with libraries, and it had some resources available. It said sign up and get 50 free glasses. I’m all for saving money, so I was pretty excited.”

LaConte was looking for potential libraries to join the NASA @ My Library program and saw that the Monmouth library was showing interest in the eclipse.

It was a match made in the heavens and Monmouth was one of three libraries chosen for the program.

All three libraries selected are on the path of totality — meaning they will all see a full solar eclipse this August.

“Over the next several years, we’ll be working with three different libraries,” LaConte said. “We want these libraries to have the opportunity to have this moment with their communities in their backyard, and we want to work with all of these libraries for the next several years.”

The program hopes to help groups that aren’t represented in science or relat-



Monmouth Library Director Krist Obrist, left, speaks on Jan. 10.

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Keliann LaConte spoke to community members on Jan. 10.

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ed fields have chances to learn about science, and help groups that don’t often visit the library begin to form a relationship there.

“There are some gaps as far as Latinos, African Americans, American Indians, Alaska natives, Pacific Islanders, the economically disadvantaged, and women and girls,” LaConte said. “We want to make sure those who are in communities without a science center have access to these kinds of opportunities.”

LaConte said the program will offer resources to learn

how best to serve each of the libraries to get kids excited about science.

Much of the NASA @ My Library program is aimed at younger audiences, but Obrist said she plans to offer programs aimed at people both young and old.

“A lot of the materials are geared more toward elementary-aged kids, but we’re looking at more for the whole community,” Obrist said. “It’s really important not only getting the kids excited about science and looking at new ways they can engage, it’s impor-

tant to have their families support them and know what they’re doing and get excited too.”

The meeting also held an open discussion with members from the community, which included parents, educators, and citizens, about science, technology, engineering, and math, how the library can capitalize on the solar eclipse, and how to increase attendance and participation at the library — particularly among groups who don’t often visit.

See NASA, Page 13A

ACADEMIC HONORS

Costa receives athletic award

FRONT ROYAL, VA — Lucas Costa, of Monmouth, received the boys varsity soccer Coaches Award. Costa is a senior at Randolph-Macon Academy.

SCHOOL NOTES

Weather causes changes at CSD

INDEPENDENCE — With weather affecting instructional time in the classroom, Central School District will move the grade day/elementary in-service to Feb. 3 to protect as much instructional time in the first semester as possible. The date was originally scheduled for Jan. 30.

Classes will be on regular schedules Jan. 30-Feb. 2. The district and the associations will also begin talking about recapturing at least two instructional days in the second semester to meet the necessary state requirements.

Once a plan is formulated, it will be shared with families.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sheriff seeks animal control officer

POLK COUNTY — The Polk County Sheriff’s Office is hiring for an animal control officer.

Duties of the position are investigating issues relating to dog or animal control in compliance with state law and county ordinances. Tasks include, but are not limited to: determining if sheep were killed by dogs or coyotes; investigations of dog bites; investigations on reports of animal cruelty; monitoring license requirements; inspection of dog kennels for compliance with permits; and recognizing medical conditions in dogs that may require quarantine or veterinary care.

The pay scale for the full-time position is \$3,289 to \$4,161 per month. The department has a budget of about \$150,000, half of which comes from a general fund transfer, said County Administrator Greg Hansen.

The application period closes Thursday at 1 p.m. For more information: 503-623-1888.

Dallas holds utility rate open house

DALLAS — The city of Dallas’ Utility Rate Advisory Committee is hosting an open house to educate citizens about new water and sewer rates on Monday at 6 p.m.

The open house will be held at LaCreole Middle School, 701 SE LaCreole Drive. At the event, citizen can find out how much their rates will change and what improvements the revenue will pay for.

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