

## **Students to travel to Iceland**

**By: Abbey Swank**

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Iceland. It is called the land of ice and fire, a place where volcanoes and glaciers co-exist and in places, the land is only a few hundred years old.

This summer, a group organized by Kent State's geography department will travel to Iceland for a 10-day excursion beginning in July.

"(We) chose Iceland because we had both been there before and were awed by the landscape," said associate geography professor Mandy Munro-Stasiuk. "There are waterfalls, glaciers and volcanoes. You can see and study them all in one small island. There is nowhere else in the world where you can do that."

Munro-Stasiuk said Iceland is unique because it sits on a geological hotspot on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. She said this spreading plate boundary is slowly moving the North American Plate away from the Eurasian Plate, causing an intersection of earth science environments they will be examining.

Scott Sheridan, an associate geography professor, said one such interaction is the eruption of volcanoes underneath glacial ice caps.

"I finally get to see the things I've heard about in class," said geography graduate student Debra Mokaren. "And beyond just seeing the incredible features, I get to experience working in the field. I get to see professionals work in such a dynamic area."

Munro-Stasiuk said some highlights of the trip include a boat trip around a glacial lagoon, where they will be able to see icebergs break off from the glacier. She said they will also visit waterfalls, including the largest waterfall in Europe, by volume, as well as geysers.

"We will be driving around the whole island," Sheridan said. "The main highway is called the 'Ring Road,' and makes an oval around the island."

Those going on the trip include three instructors, four middle-school teachers from the Stark County area and 10 graduate fellows who are part of the GK-12 program at Kent State.

The GK-12 program places graduate students in middle and high school classrooms to help teachers develop lesson plans.

"I am look forward to bringing my experience back to the classroom," Mokaren said. "I can tell the students I have been there. And when you can get excited and relate yourself to something, the students become more interested in it."

Munro-Stasiuk said this is the first time a group from the geography department has gone to Iceland, and she said she hopes the trip is successful, so they can make it a recurring option.

"There are things on this trip that will even be new to me," she said. "I've never seen glacial retreat or advance. I'm excited about that. And I'm excited to share my experience with students and teachers."

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