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VERITAS Detection of gamma-ray emission from the optically bright quasar OJ 287 AMY FURNISS, California State University East Bay, VERITAS COLLABORATION — We report on the VERITAS detection of very-high-energy (VHE, E>100 GeV) gamma-ray emission from the optically bright quasar OJ 287 which is located at a redshift of z = 0.306. OJ 287 has been observed to display regular optical outbursts with a period of approximately 12 years, with the last outburst having occurred in 2006/2007. In order to explain this periodicity, models involving a binary supermassive black hole system at the core of OJ 287, or a helical jet model, have been developed. Motivated by elevated Swift-XRT count rates, VERITAS observed OJ 287 in February 2017, and detected the object at >5 standard deviations above background. This detection prompted further VERITAS, Swift-XRT and multi-wavelength observations of the source. The results of the VERITAS observational campaign along with a study of the relationship of the VHE emission to other wavebands and corresponding implications will be presented.

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