

A Day Away

**Spring/Summer
2026 Guide**

Special events,
festivals, shopping,
attractions and more
for the whole family
to enjoy — **all within
a day's drive from
home in Illinois!**



A Day Away

Spring/Summer 2026

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REST AND RECHARGE

Sam Parr State Fish & Wildlife Area in Newton is one of several places in central and southern Illinois to relax and recharge. Photo courtesy Discover Downstate Illinois



ON THE COVER

Children enjoy the Rainbow Ranch Petting Zoo in Nashville, Illinois. Photo courtesy Discover Downstate Illinois.

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Douglas County Events

April 30, May 1 & 2: Arthur Quilt Show at the Otto Center, 2056 CR 1800E, Arthur, IL, featuring vendor / market area, snacks / lunches, quilt raffle drawing (quilt awarded Saturday afternoon), NEW: quilts for sale. Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. April 30 and May 1; 10 a.m.-3 p.m. May 2. Handicap accessible. Plenty of parking. Buses welcome. For information, call 217-543-2287 or www.arthuril.us

May 2: Sheep to Yarn to Quilts event 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Illinois Amish Heritage Center, just off Rt. 57, nine miles west of Arcola, through Chesterville, on Rt. 133. Sheep shearing, wool washing, wool dyeing, spinning wheels, weaving, quilt piecing and quilting, kids activities, petting zoo, Amish bake sale. 7 a.m. Farmers breakfast. Lunch available. Additional displays and demonstrations including area spinners and weavers guilds. For more info visit illinoisamish.org or facebook.com/Illinois-Amish-Heritage-Center.

May 6: Tuscola Farmers Market at Kleiss Park in Tuscola 5-7 p.m.

May 15: Strawberry Social at the Otto Center, Arthur, IL.

May 16: 3rd Saturday Bazaar at the Otto Center, Arthur, IL.

May 23: Logan Kirby Live at Penn Station 6-8:30 p.m. at 122 E. Progress St., Arthur, IL. Enjoy music of the '50s and '60s played on guitar, banjo and harmonica.

May 28: Sweep, Sip & Stroll into downtown Arcola for local food, crafts and community fun 5-8 p.m. The street will be blocked off for a relaxed downtown atmosphere with local vendors and handmade crafts, yard games and family-friendly activities, evening shopping with downtown businesses, food trucks and local eats.

May 29: Outdoor Movie Night in downtown Tuscola.

June 3: Tuscola Farmers Market at Kleiss Park in Tuscola 5-7 p.m.

June 5: Sundown Stroll in downtown Tuscola 5-9 p.m.

June 5 & 6: Arthur Days / Townwide Garage Sales in Arthur, IL.

June 20: 3rd Saturday Bazaar at the Otto Center, Arthur, IL.

June 20: 16 Miles West Car Show at Ervin Park in Tuscola, IL.

June 26: Outdoor Movie Night in downtown Tuscola.

June 27: Arthur Freedom Celebration. Parade in downtown Arthur at 2 p.m. and downtown festivities. Head to the fairgrounds on the south edge of Arthur in the late afternoon for food stands, a baseball tournament, air show, skydivers and more! The Air Show and skydivers precede the fireworks. One of the biggest fireworks displays in central Illinois begins at approximately 9:30 p.m. with a continuous 24-minute barrage including some of the biggest shells available in the country. There is quite a crowd for the event, often exceeding 25,000



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Saturday 7:30 - 4:00



people, so you might want to arrive early and plan ahead for parking and viewing locations.

July 1: Tuscola Farmers Market at Kleiss Park in Tuscola 5-7 p.m.

July 3 & 4: Horse Progress Days at Lavern Yoder Farm, 252 N. CR 575E, Arcola, IL 61910. Event starts with guided bus tour of local businesses then on to the much-anticipated children's pony express. Homemade breakfast. Plenty of fresh food available all day. Seminars including produce seminars, homemaker and homesteader areas, children's play area, petting zoo, field demonstrations with real horse power at work, haying demonstrations, logging showcase, breed presentation and more!

July 4: Sparks in the Park festival, parade and America 250 in Tuscola, IL.

July 4: Bourbon, BBQ and Blues Festival in downtown Tuscola.

July 18: 3rd Saturday Bazaar at the Otto Center, Arthur, IL.

July 27-Aug. 2: Moultrie-Douglas County Fair at the fairgrounds, 220 Jurgens Parkway, Arthur, IL. Headliner on Aug. 1 at 7 p.m. will be Braxton Keith.

July 31-Aug. 1: Steam Threshing Days at the Illinois Amish Heritage Center, just off Rt. 57, nine miles west of Arcola, through Chesterville, on Rt. 133.

July 31: Outdoor Movie Night in downtown Tuscola.

Aug. 8: Live in concert at Penn Station 6-9 p.m. is country music legend Leona Williams, the real deal Ron Williams and local favorite Midnight Express. Penn Station is at 122 E. Progress St., Arthur, IL.

Aug. 28 & 29: Mennonite Relief Sale at the Otto Center in Arthur, IL. Locally handcrafted Amish furniture such as office desks, bedroom sets, tables and chairs, bookcases, sewing cabinets, small wood items, outdoor furniture and more. Large selection of handmade quilts. Children's auction. Silent auction. Petting zoo. Train rides. For more info visit arthurreliefsale.org or contact Glen Rhodes at 217-273-5026 or Stan Helmuth at 217-246-3712.

Sept. 2: Tuscola Farmers Market at Kleiss Park in Tuscola 5-7 p.m.

Sept. 4 & 5: Amish Country Cheese Festival in Arthur, IL.

Sept 4-6: Tabbapalooza 2026, a free 3-day music festival between Tuscola and Arthur, in beautiful Amish country at 730 N. CR 450E, Tuscola IL 61953. A weekend of peace, love and music. Everyone is invited. All genres of music, from hard-core rock to country to gospel. Follow our Tabbapalooza page for information including lineup, food trucks, camping, parking and more.

Sept. 11 & 12: Town Wide Garage Sales in Arthur, IL.



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Sept. 11-13: 55th Annual Broomcorn Festival featuring live music, food, crafters, the National Broom Sweeping Contest and the festival parade in Arcola, IL.

Sept. 16: The Great Pumpkin Patch opens and will be open until Oct. 31, located at 1749A CR 1900N, Arthur, IL 61911.

Sept. 18: Haven of Care Benefit at the Otto Center in Arthur, IL.

Sept. 18-20: Odd Market in Tuscola. An annual event in Tuscola, IL featuring tattoos, vendors & live entertainment — showcasing both Odd Fellow and local talent. Hosted and curated by the Tuscola Odd Fellows to raise money for charitable causes while celebrating all things ODD. Vendors will be set up street fest style along W. Sale St. in downtown Tuscola, while the tattoo fundraiser will be inside Vintage Karma and the Tuscola Odd Fellows Lodge (in same building). Lots of food options at local food businesses along Sale St.

Sept. 25: Semi-Annual Toy Auction at the Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola, IL.

Oct. 10: Pop the Top Car Show at 114 N. Locust in Arcola, IL. A day filled with amazing cars, delicious food and great company. Be sure to check out our awesome one-of-a-kind trophies that include: Unsafe at Any Speed, Most Likely To Attract Unwanted Police Attention, People's Choice, and Best of Show.



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- Oct. 16:** Sundown Stroll in downtown Tuscola 5-9 p.m.
- Oct. 17:** 3rd Saturday Bazaar at the Otto Center in Arthur, IL.
- Oct. 23 & 24:** Haiti Benefit Auction at the Otto Center in Arthur, IL.
- Oct. 24-31:** Lighted Pumpkin House Display in downtown Arthur, IL.
- Oct. 27:** Halloween activities in Tuscola.
- Nov. 7:** Bi-Annual Fish Fry at the Otto Center in Arthur, IL.
- Nov. 7:** Antique Tool Auction at the Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola, IL.
- Nov. 13 & 14:** Homesteaders Antique Show at the Arthur Sale Barn, 1204 Vine Street, Arthur IL.
- Nov. 13 & 14:** Rural Life Antique Show at Tuscola Community Building in Tuscola.
- Nov. 13 & 14:** Country Spirit Antique Show in 2 locations: Best Western Green Mill Village, 917 Green Mill Road, Arcola, IL 61910 and Tuscola Mall, 700 Tuscola Blvd., Tuscola, IL 61953.
- Nov. 14:** Gathering on the Prairie Antique Show at the Otto Center in Arthur, IL.
- Nov. 21:** 3rd Saturday Market / Bazaar at the Otto Center in Arthur, IL.
- Nov. 27:** Black Friday Shopping Event in downtown Arthur, IL, County Line Rd and Rt. 133 businesses.
- Nov. 27:** Toy, Farm Primitives, Antiques & Collectibles Auction at the Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola, IL 61910.
- Nov. 28:** Advertising Signage, Petroliana & Collectibles Auction at the Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola, IL 61910.
- Dec. 4 & 5:** Christmastown in Tuscola, Tuscola's annual kickoff to Christmas celebration.
- Dec. 5:** Arthur's Candy Cane Wonderland / Lighted Christmas Parade in downtown Arthur, IL.
- Dec. 5:** Great Christmas Sweep in downtown Arcola, IL. Great food, vendors and fun during the holidays.

Moultrie County Events

- May 16:** Pancake Breakfast at Bethany Fire Department 7-10:30 a.m.
- May 30:** 3rd Annual Garden Party at Allie's Gift and Garden in Sullivan, IL. Tons of vendors, food truck, music and more.
- May 30:** Pottie Time at the Pavilion in Gays, IL. Event with food trucks and live music. Quarter Annie will play 1-4 p.m.
- June 13:** Sullivan Dash & Bash at Tabor Park in Sullivan, IL. Features a 5K, 1-mile fun run and virtual options to support pediatric cancer research.

- June 13:** Junefest in Lovington, IL. Pancake and sausage breakfast 7-10 a.m. at the fire house. Events in the park include live bands, fish fry 4-7 p.m., parade at 11 a.m., vendors, free kids events with bounce houses, obstacle courses, foam party, and power wheels. car show featuring cars, trucks, tractors and bikes with registration starting 12:30 p.m. and judging at 2 p.m. at East State St. in Lovington, IL. Fireworks at 9 p.m.
- June 19 & 20:** Bethany Celebration in Bethany, IL at Crowder Park. A summer festival with fun for the whole family.
- June 20:** Rock Fest after the Bethany Celebration at the Bethany American Legion in Bethany, IL.
- Aug. 8:** Two-Story Outhouse Festival in Gays, IL. Car show, food trucks, vendor booths, live music and entertainment, kidz korner and more!
- Aug. 22:** BASO Car Show at Crowder Park in Bethany, IL at 4 p.m.
- Sept. 11 & 12:** Backyard Bluegrass Festival featuring Daryl Mosley at 790 Souther Rd, Sullivan, IL..
- Sept. 12:** Warrior Wheels Jeep Run at Sullivan VFW Post 6410 in Sullivan, IL starting 9 a.m.

Illinois Amish Heritage Center

The Illinois Amish Heritage Center was first created in 1994 as the Illinois Amish Interpretive Center located in Arthur, Illinois. The Center offered an introductory film to Amish life, exhibits on Amish heritage and culture, a gift shop, and Amish Country Tours of Amish homes, farms, businesses and meals in Amish homes.

In 2010, the Center was moved to Rockome Gardens and renamed The Illinois Amish Museum. The museum remained open at Rockome through 2014 when Rockome went up for sale. Rockome was purchased later that year and the new owner began implementation of a wildlife park. The Amish Museum was subsequently put into storage and the search for a new facility began.

In the year 2000, two historic Amish houses were saved from destruction and moved to a location behind Yoder's Kitchen in Arthur, Illinois. In 2014, plans had been made to move the houses to Rockome Gardens, \$102,000 was raised, and a state tourism grant was written. The pending sale of Rockome and state budget problems put a hold on these plans.

In 2016, five acres of land were secured one mile west of Chesterville and three miles east of Arthur, Illinois. In September, the houses were moved to the new site and a plan for the construction of a new museum building and Amish living history farm were developed. Restoration on the Schrock house and planning for a steam threshing event in the summer of 2017 began. A development plan laid out a four year time table for the completion of the site.

The mission of the Illinois Amish Heritage Preservation Center is to enhance the preservation, understanding, and appreciation of all aspects of the culture and heritage of the Amish people in Illinois from 1865 to present.

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A Summer of Broadway Returns to Sullivan

The lights are coming up, the music is starting, and another unforgettable summer of live theatre is ready to take center stage in Sullivan.

The Little Theatre On The Square proudly announces its 2026 Summer Season—packed with beloved musicals, heartfelt stories, and high-energy entertainment for audiences of all ages across Central Illinois.

A special highlight for the Effingham community is the return of Effingham native Colleen Johnson, who will take the stage in



Colleen Johnson

two standout productions: *Guys and Dolls* and *Come From Away*. Audiences will have the unique opportunity to see one of their own bringing her talent home, lighting up the stage in two distinctly different and equally moving productions.

The 2026 Mainstage Season offers something for everyone, beginning with the high-energy charm of *Guys and Dolls*, followed by the delightfully offbeat musical *Little Shop of Horrors*. The laughter continues with the quick-

witted comedy of *Greater Tuna*, before welcoming the beloved classic *Annie* to the stage. The season then takes a heartfelt turn with the powerful and inspiring *Come From Away*, and concludes with the nostalgic, toe-tapping celebration of American music in *Route 66*. Each production brings professional talent from across the country together with the signature warmth and intimacy that audiences have come to love in Sullivan.

Families will find even more to enjoy with the Theatre for Young Audiences series, designed especially for younger theatergoers. This summer's lineup includes *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, *The Very Different Duckling*, and *The Reluctant Pirate* — perfect introductions to the magic of live theatre.

Beyond the stage, The Little Theatre is also investing in the next generation of performers through its popular Broadway Boot Camps. These immersive programs give students hands-on experience in singing, dancing, and acting, all led by industry professionals in a supportive and exciting environment.

Whether you're planning a night out, a family outing, or a summer filled with the arts, The Little Theatre On The Square invites you to experience the joy, laughter, and inspiration of live theatre this season.

Tickets and additional information are available at www.thelittletheatre.org.

Guys and Dolls - June 4-14

**Little Shop of Horrors
June 18-28**

SUMMER SEASON 2026
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Greater Tuna - July 2-12

Annie - July 16-26

THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

June 9, 11, 12, 13

**Come From Away
July 30 to August 9**

Route 66 - August 13-23

July 7, 9, 10, 11

August 4, 6, 7, 8

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Champaign County Events

May 1 & 2: Champaign Urbana Ballet presents *The Little Mermaid* Friday May 1 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, May 2 at 2 and 6 p.m. at the Virginia Theatre in Champaign.

May 2: *Mrs. Doubtfire: The New Musical Comedy* at State Farm Center in Champaign at 7:30 p.m.

May 5: Kenny Wayne Shepherd, a soul-stirring blues and rock fusion guitarist and songwriter, live at the historic Virginia Theatre in Champaign at 7:30 p.m.

May 12: *Hadestown: Broadway's Tony and Grammy-Winning Best Musical* at State Farm Center in Champaign at 7:30 p.m.

May 13: *Touch A Truck* 4–7 p.m. at Centennial Park in Champaign. Explore, climb and discover trucks, emergency vehicles, and construction equipment. Meet the people who operate these machines, ask questions and gain hands-on experience.

May 16 & 17: Spring Smash Classic Pickleball Tournament at John Street Pickleball Courts, 2203 W. John St., Champaign IL. Contact the Champaign Park District for more information.

May 30: CU Market at the Fair, 1302 Coler Ave, Urbana, IL. Shop local vendors for a family friendly day. Wide variety of things to browse and food to eat.

June 9: Hot Rod Power Tour, world's largest traveling car show with more than 5,000 classic cars, hot rods, performance vehicles and enthusiasts from across the country, at Rantoul National Aviation Center.

June 13: Soda Fest at 507 E. Main in Mahomet, IL. Free kids' games, soda, live music, vendors, food trucks and more!

June 18: Matt Maeson, multiplatinum singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, at Virginia Theatre in Champaign at 8 p.m.

June 20: *Journey: Final Frontier Tour 2026* at State Farm Center in Champaign at 7:30 p.m.

June 25-28: Riggs Fest at 1901 S. High Cross Road, Urbana, IL 61802. Live music 4–9 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 1–9 p.m. Saturday and 1–6 p.m. Sunday.

July 19: 2026 C-U Triathlon, a community fitness event designed to bring athletes of all experience levels together for a morning of activity, challenge and community spirit. The 400 Yard Swim, 10 Mile Bike and 5K Run races will begin at 8 a.m. at the Stephens Family YMCA, 2501 Fields South Drive, Champaign. Registration is available at: runsignup.com/Race/IL/Champaign/CUTri

July 21: Graham Nash: Live on Tour 2026 at 7:30 p.m. at the Virginia Theatre, Champaign.

August 20: Happy Together Tour 2026 featuring '60s and '70s favorites including The Association, The Troggs, Chicago lead singer Jason Scheff, Gary Puckett, The Fortunes, Ron Dante from The Archives and The Turtles, The Vogues and The Cowsills at 7 p.m. at the Virginia Theatre in Champaign.

Aug. 28 & 29: Mahomet Music Festival located along Main Street in downtown Mahomet, IL. Vendors, crafters, food court, carnival rides, Lions Club beer garden starting at 5 p.m. August 28 live music on the UICCU Main Stage by Zakk Thompkins at 6:15 p.m., *Ninety's Daughter* at 7 p.m. and *Hairbangers Ball* at 9 p.m. August 29 features a parade at 9 a.m., Christian artist Riley Clemmons on the UICCU Main Stage at 11 a.m., Bags Tournament at 1 p.m. (registration at noon) followed by UICCU Main Stage Performances by Onoleigh at 6 p.m., Shane Profit at 7:30 p.m. and headliner Craig Morgan at 9 p.m.

Sept. 1 & 2: *Bluey's Big Play: The Stage Show* at State Farm Center in Champaign at 6:30 p.m. each evening.

Sept. 13: *Alison Krauss & Union Station* Featuring Jerry Douglas with special guest Theo Lawrence at State Farm Center in Champaign IL at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 1: Leonid & Friends 2026 Tour, performing the music of Chicago, Earth, Wine & Fire, Steely Dan and other beloved '70s favorites at 7:30 p.m. at Virginia Theatre in Champaign.

Oct. 8: Bruce Hornsby & The Noisemakers — Indigo Park Tour — at the Virginia Theatre in Champaign at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 8–10: Folk & Roots Festival includes folk, bluegrass, Americana, and blues music performances, dances, instructional sessions, jams, song-circles, family activities, storytelling, instrument-making and much, much more, all taking place in and around downtown Urbana in several venues including the Rose Bowl Tavern, Gallery, Community Center for the Arts, the Urbana Free Library and the Independent Media Center. The festival has a particular interest in evolving and unique forms of folk music and art, especially forms that break down barriers between audience and performers, while also providing the occasion to preserve local traditions and histories. It is the longest-running folk music festival in central Illinois. Visit www.folkandroots.org and follow the festival on Facebook and Instagram.

Oct. 10: Fall Fusion Festival 3–7 p.m. in downtown Urbana, IL. Immerse yourself in fall fun as Race and Main streets are transformed with pumpkins, gourds and leaves—providing the perfect backdrop for fun photo ops! Enjoy FREE live music on the Fall Fusion stage and get inspired by watching live art demonstrations by local artists across a variety of mediums. Visit booths from community organizations for interactive activities for all ages. Stop in all the downtown businesses and restaurants for Urbana Fall Fusion Festival food specials and retail sales. Don't miss the face painters, balloon artists, make and take crafts, and circus performers that are sure to keep everyone entertained for hours. Stay for the fire performance—a mesmerizing grand finale to this kickoff of the fall season!

Nov 7 & 8: CLCU Art Fair at Savoy Recreation Center, 402 W. Graham Drive, Savoy IL. A long-running local art show featuring baskets, ceramics, fiber arts, glass, jewelry, mixed media, painting, photography, and woodcrafts.



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Gov. Pritzker celebrates Route 66 Centennial kickoff

Gov. J.B. Pritzker, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) joined the Illinois Route 66 Centennial Commission and tourism partners from across the state to celebrate the official kickoff of the Route 66 Centennial, marking 100 years since the creation of the highway.

Also known as the “Mother Road,” Route 66 begins in Chicago and runs through the heart of Illinois — connecting communities and travelers for a century.

“Throughout 2026, we’ll recognize 100 years of Route 66, a road that helped shape Illinois into what it is today,” said Pritzker. “That’s why my administration is proud to provide attraction and site infrastructure along this iconic route and deliver millions in grant funding to local tourism bureaus.

“I invite all Illinoisans to take part in the many celebrations throughout the year — it’s a chance to check out the beauty of a truly American road and soak in all that Route 66 and our state have to offer.”

“Across Illinois, our communities are showing up to celebrate 100 years of connection. From Michigan Avenue through Springfield and the small towns that line the route, Route 66 has shaped our history and identity,” said Lieutenant Gov. Juliana Stratton, an appointed Commissioner on the Route 66 Centennial Commission. “Illinois is home to sweeping prairie landscapes, welcoming Main Streets, rich cultural destinations and world-class cities.

“I’m proud to welcome visitors from near and far to experience the people, places and stories that make Illinois truly special.”

Illinois continues to prioritize its growing tourism industry as millions of visitors from around

the world boost economic development and support jobs in the industry. Illinois reached its highest-ever hotel tax revenue figures in FY25 with \$367 million — a 14% increase over the previous record set in FY24.

Additionally, Illinois welcomed 113 million visitors who spent a record-breaking \$48.5 billion in 2024 — representing 500,000 more travelers and \$1.3 billion more in spending compared to 2023.

In recognition of the centennial, DCEO is awarding nearly \$4 million in grant funding to local tourism bureaus to support development, education, preservation and promotion efforts of Route 66 activities throughout Illinois. These awards will help communities enhance visitor experiences, preserve historic assets, and showcase Illinois’ unique role in Route 66 history.

“Tourism is a powerful economic driver for Illinois, and Route 66 is one of our greatest assets,” said DCEO Director Kristin

Richards. “These grants will help communities tell their stories, preserve their history, and attract visitors from across the country, ensuring the legacy of Route 66 continues to shine statewide.”

The Route 66 Grant Program is funding several standout projects in 2026 to create even more must-see stops along America’s most iconic highway. An Abraham Lincoln penny sculpture will soon be installed in Lincoln, while Granite City will honor President Lincoln with a towering 14-foot statue.

Springfield’s famous Giant Slide at the Illinois State Fairgrounds is getting a fresh look for the Route 66 Centennial, and Joliet is transforming part of the Old Joliet Prison grounds into a baseball field for events, representing the long history of organized baseball played at the prison.



Since 2021, DCEO's Illinois Office of Tourism has invested \$19 million in Route 66 projects to drive tourism forward over the last several years.

For the centennial, the Illinois State Fair's theme for 2026 will be "Miles of Smiles," in honor of Route 66 and its enduring impact on the state's communities, culture and tourism. The theme will be featured at both the Springfield and Du Quoin fairs, highlighting Route 66's legacy through special exhibits, programming and experiences for fairgoers of all ages.

"The Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield sit on the historic path of Route 66, making it a natural stop along the Mother Road," said IDOA Director Jerry Costello II. "This year's Illinois State Fair theme creates an opportunity for partnership with DCEO and the Illinois Office of Tourism, and our teams have exciting plans for that collaboration during the fair and throughout 2026."

The Illinois Route 66 Centennial Commission also has scheduled celebration events across the state throughout 2026, with additional events and announcements forthcoming. These activities will spotlight Illinois' historic Route 66 attractions, local businesses and community traditions, all while inviting visitors to explore the Mother Road from end to end.

"The Centennial of Route 66 reminds us that America's most iconic road was built mile by mile, town by town, and community by community. Its storied past inspires our shared future — a century behind us, a lifetime of journeys ahead — that's the promise Route 66 has in Illinois," said Cory Jobe, President & CEO of Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau.

"For 100 years, Route 66 has connected the Midwest to the West, encouraging tourism, trade, and opportunity. It connects our community from the Metro East all the way to California," said State Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Swansea. "I'm looking forward to celebrating the grandeur and nostalgia of Route 66 this year and seeing the importance this route played in the America experience."

"Route 66 helped shape the Metro East by connecting our river towns and working families to opportunity," said State Senator Christopher Belt, D-Swansea. "Celebrating its legacy honors the generations who built this region."

"Route 66 is a quintessential part of American history, and it started right here in Illinois," said State Rep. Katie Stuart, D-Edwardsville. "I'm excited to celebrate this scenic drive that showcases the best of our state in our cities, small towns, prairies, and everywhere in between. I welcome everyone from around the globe to come see all we have to offer."

"As we approach America's 250th anniversary, celebrating 100 years of Route 66 is especially meaningful for the 56th District," said State Sen. Erica Harriss, R-Glen Carbon. "This stretch of the Mother Road has welcomed travelers from around the world for generations, supporting local tourism and small businesses. For a century, Route 66 has connected communities, told the story of our region, and inspired travelers to explore the people and places that make the 56th District truly unique."

Learn more about the centennial and local events by visiting enjoyillinois.com/things-to-do/route-66-in-illinois.

New map celebrates Route 66 in Illinois

The Illinois Department of Transportation recently announced the release of a new Illinois Route 66 Map in honor of the iconic road's 100th birthday this year. The map takes a nostalgic look at America's most famous highway and sights to see in Illinois, while providing a historical timeline of the route's evolution and its cultural impact.

"The new Route 66 map is a must for enthusiasts and road trippers celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Mother Road," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi. "You can get your kicks with a detailed overview of the highway that's the best as it stretches across Illinois, highlighting towns large and small that are perfect for pit stops and Route 66's legendary roadside attractions."

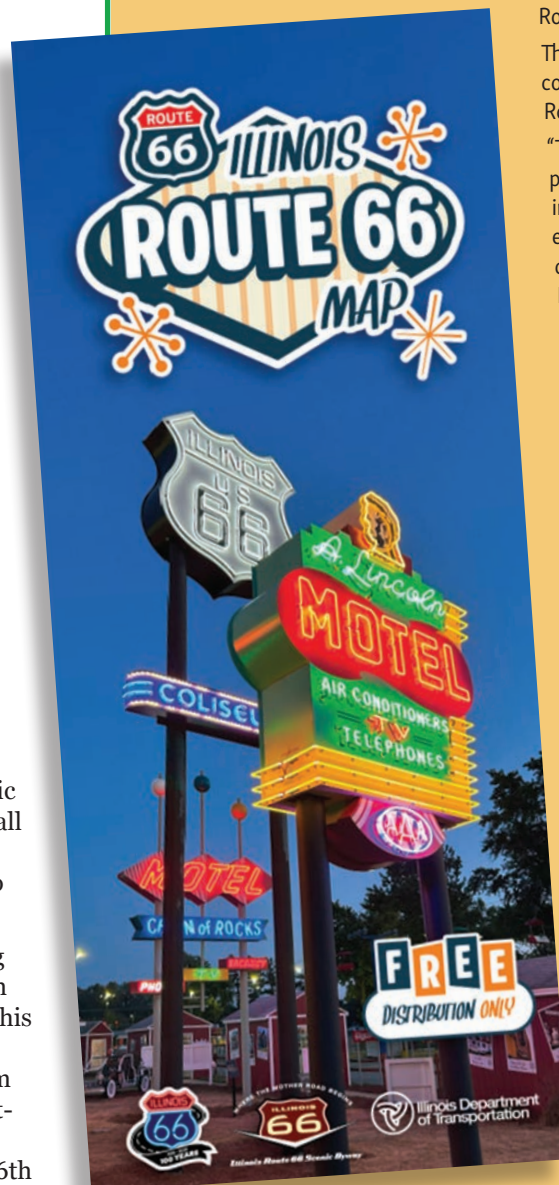
With the centennial expected to unite preservationists, tourism leaders and enthusiasts from around the world, the map will provide a touchpoint in Illinois to help celebrate the past, with a look toward the next century of adventure on Route 66.

The map was developed in collaboration with the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway.

"The last Illinois Route 66 paper map was created in 1998, so it's incredibly exciting to see a new version celebrating the Mother Road," said Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway Executive Director Casey Claypool. "Route 66 has always been about Americana, nostalgia and the joy of the journey, so having something fresh that travelers can hold in their hands will spark curiosity and inspire road trips. We're deeply grateful for the continued support from IDOT."

The Illinois Route 66 Map is paid with funds from the Federal Highway Administration and published by IDOT on recycled paper. The map is printed with vegetable-based inks.

To request a map, complete the form at idot.click/map-request or email DOT.Maps@illinois.gov. Free copies also will be available at interstate rest areas.



'HOT ROD Power Tour' & 'HOT ROD Drag Week'



Photos courtesy "Hot Rod Power Tour" and "Hot Rod Drag Week"

The 22nd annual HOT ROD Drag Week is the world's toughest competition to find the ultimate street-legal drag car puts competitors through a grueling test over five days of action-packed drag racing, requiring racers to drive their vehicles on a specified route from city to city, approximately 1,000 miles, while securing the quickest possible elapsed time across the five days.



HOT ROD Drag Week 2026 schedule

**Tech Inspection,
Registration,
Test 'N' Tune**

September 13
Route 66 Raceway, Joliet, IL

Day 1

September 14
Route 66 Raceway, Joliet, IL

Day 2

September 15
Byron Dragway, Byron, IL

Day 3

September 16
Cordova Dragway,
Cordova, IL

Day 4

September 17
World Wide Technology
Raceway, St. Louis, MO

Finals / Day 5

September 18
Route 66 Raceway, Joliet, IL

For more information on HOT ROD Drag Week, visit hotrod.com/hot-rod-drag-week; or connect on Facebook: facebook.com/hotrodmag; X: x.com/hotrodmagazine; and Instagram: www.instagram.com/hotrodmagazine, and also use #hotroddragweek.



This year the mighty “HOT ROD Power Tour” in June and the highly competitive “HOT ROD Drag Week” in September are celebrating 100 years of America’s favorite highway. The two wildly popular traveling events will hit several stops along Route 66 in 2026.

Chevrolet Performance Parts presents the HOT ROD Power Tour, America’s largest traveling car show, showing off more than 6,000 cars and trucks of all years, makes, and models for tens of thousands of automotive enthusiasts and fans.

HOT ROD Power Tour 2026 schedule

Kickoff / Day 1

June 8
Route 66 Raceway, Joliet, IL

Day 2

June 9
Village of Rantoul,
Rantoul, IL

Day 3

June 10
World Wide Technology
Raceway, St. Louis, MO

Day 4

June 1
Missouri State University,
Springfield, MO

Day 5

June 12
Tulsa Raceway Park,
Tulsa, OK



Registration for the 2026 HOT ROD Power Tour is open! All event details and registration information is available now, visit hotrodpowertour.us

Bagelfest kicks off in Mattoon on July 16

Come celebrate 41 years of Bagelfest in Mattoon. This beloved annual festival is packed with excitement—enjoy the lively parade, thrilling carnival rides, show-stopping concerts, and a true taste of our vibrant community spirit. Experience all the fun and unforgettable memories that only Bagelfest can offer.

Bagelfest has been a cherished Mattoon tradition since 1986, originally created to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Lenders Bagels—a beloved brand proudly produced right here since the 1980s. Lenders Bagels quickly won over America with their delicious flavor and distinctive quality. Today, Bagelfest draws visitors from all over, eager to experience its festive atmosphere and signature events, including the World’s Biggest Bagel Breakfast. For bagel lovers, nowhere compares to Mattoon, the proud home of both Lenders Bagels and Bagelfest.

Bagelfest offers something for everyone, with a vibrant variety of activities to enjoy – delicious food, unique vendors, family-friendly fun, classic carnival games, bingo, and outstanding live music. This year’s concert lineup is set to be one of the most exciting in festival history.

Thursday, July 16 brings Sidewalk Prophets to the main stage – a cornerstone of Christian music with Gold-certified hits like “The Words I Would Say” and “Live Like That.” This Dove Award-winning band boasts over 240 million streams, five No. 1 songs, and more than 82 million YouTube views. Since forming at Indiana’s Anderson University, they’ve performed for 2.5 million fans and are celebrated for their interactive, family-like concerts, affectionately calling their audience “The Great Big Family.” Recent achievements include a record-setting Ryman Auditorium livestream, a landmark free concert in 2022, three Gold singles, and their highly anticipated 2025 album, Looking Up. Admission for this event is free.

Friday, July 17 turns the spotlight to country star Scotty McCreery. A household name for over a decade, Scotty made history in 2011 as the first country artist – and the youngest male artist of any genre – to debut his first studio album, the Platinum-certified “Clear as Day” at No. 1 on the Billboard Top 200.

At 31, he’s sold more than 4 million albums and racked up six No. 1 hits, including the recent “Cab in a Solo” and chart-top-



pers like the Platinum-certified “Damn Strait,” Gold-certified “You Time” and “In Between,” Platinum-certified “This is It,” and Triple Platinum-certified “Five More Minutes.” His newest album, “Rise & Fall,” and his current EP, “Scooter & Friends,” featuring the hit “Bottle Rockets” with Hootie & The Blowfish, continue to showcase his star power.

Saturday, July 18 rocks out with the legendary Jefferson Starship. As one of the most successful arena rock bands of the ‘70s and ‘80s, Jefferson Starship boasts three platinum and eight gold records, plus a long list of Top 40 Billboard singles. Now celebrating their 50th anniversary, the band joins a rare group of artists to reach this incredible milestone. Founded by Paul Kantner as a musical adventure, Jefferson Starship has become a powerhouse on the road, with the current lineup taking shape in 2012. Calling themselves both a “family” and a “gang,” they’ve played every U.S. state, toured five continents, and performed in countless countries.

Recent highlights include a standout New Zealand tour and dynamic live shows that keep fans coming back. The lineup features founding member David Freiberg, drummer Donny Baldwin, keyboardist Chris Smith, guitarist Jude Gold, and singer/guitarist Cathy Richardson. As they mark 50 years, the band honors the legacy of Paul Kantner – whose spirit of exploration still drives Jefferson Starship today.

Advance tickets for the concerts on Friday and Saturday nights are available online. VIP, Reserved Seating, and Lawn tickets will be available for both nights. Tickets and a complete list of festival activities can be found at www.exploremattoon.org





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Coles County Events

May 1-3: Mother's Day Vendor Weekend Friday and Saturday 10 a.m.–8 p.m. and Sunday noon–5 p.m. at Cross County Mall in Mattoon.

May 8 & 9: Spring Market at the Coles County Fairgrounds in the Merchant's Building. Free Admission. Wide variety of antiques, handmade items, and more!

May 15: Made in Central Illinois! Annual Fundraiser featuring locally-sourced food, a silent auction with Central Illinois items, Illinois beer and wines, and live music starting 6 p.m. at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site in Lerna, IL.

May 28: Free Concert in the Park 7:30 p.m. at Daum Amphitheater in Kiwanis Park in Charleston, IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

June 4: Free Concert in the Park 7:30 p.m. at Daum Amphitheater in Kiwanis Park in Charleston IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

June 6: SBLHC Races for All Paces at O'Brien Stadium on the campus of Eastern Illinois University in Charleston.

June 11: Free Concert in the Park 7:30 p.m. at Daum Amphitheater in Kiwanis Park in Charleston IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

June 13: Tour De Charleston featuring 12.5, 25, and 50-mile timed routes through Coles County, starting at 9 a.m. at 520 Jackson Avenue in Charleston IL. Packet pickup is June 12 at the Chamber at 501 Jackson Ave. in Charleston, IL or race morning. Post-race music by the band Absent Ground at Mike & Stan's Beer Garden starting approximately 11:30 a.m.

June 18: Free Concert in the Park 7:30 p.m. at Daum Amphitheater in Kiwanis Park in Charleston IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

June 20 & 21: Civil War Weekend at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site in Lerna, IL.

June 25: Free Concert in the Park 7:30 p.m. at Daum Amphitheater in Kiwanis Park in Charleston IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

June 28: Golf Outing held by Friends & Family of Sarah Bush Lincoln Fayette County Hospital. Proceeds to benefit planned renovations at the hospital. Event at Indian Springs Golf Course in Fillmore. Raffle for a week-long stay in the Orlando area, donated by Mike & Jayne Genta of Effingham. Registration and lunch at 11 a.m. Tee time at 1 p.m. For more information contact

Photo Credit: Greg A. Cooper / EIU Journalism



Jay Jolliff at 618-531-5278, Theresa Knebel at 618-322-1069 or call 618-283-5401.

July 2: Free Concert in the Park 7:30 p.m. at Daum Amphitheater in Kiwanis Park in Charleston IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

July 4: Fireworks and Annual Airshow, Coles County Memorial Airport. 250 Years of Freedom in Motion. twilight airshow, drone show, Cobra and Huey helicopter rides, Warbird Thunder performance & Precision Exotics car rides.

HISTORIC CHARLESTON, IL

Photo Credit: Greg A. Cooper/EIU Journalism

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Old Main at Eastern Illinois University, one of only five medieval buildings known as Altgeld's castles built at universities in Illinois, built circa 1890s.

July 9: Free Concert in the Park 7:30 p.m. at Daum Amphitheater in Kiwanis Park in Charleston IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

July 16-18: Mattoon Bagelfest at Peterson Park in Mattoon, IL featuring live music by Side-walk Prophets July 16, Scotty McCreery July 17 and Jefferson Starship July 18. Parade, vendors, carnival and more.

July 23-25: Theatre in the Park with the production of "Farmer's Market: The Musical" at 7 p.m. at Daum Amphitheater in Kiwanis Park in Charleston IL.

July 26-Aug. 2: Coles County Fair in Charleston, IL, the oldest continuous fair in Illinois since 1854.

Aug. 1: Butterfly Festival featuring nature-focused activities at Lake Charleston, including expert advice, live insect displays, nature walks, food trucks, and kids' activities including a bubble party.

Aug. 7: Here, There and Everywhere, a captivating musical journey through three legendary Beatles albums of 1966 and 1967 — *Revolver*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and *Magical Mystery Tour*. Pianist and vocalist Jay Daniels invites you to sing along to Beatles

timeless favorites, all brought to life with heartfelt piano and vocals at Mattoon Public Library in Mattoon IL 5-6 p.m.

Aug. 9: Jerry Ellis Memorial Bluegrass Jam starting at 4 p.m. at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site in Lerna IL. Bring lawn chairs or a blanket. Musicians encouraged to bring instruments and join in! Concessions available for lunch.

Aug. 14 & 15: Harvest & Hope Market at the McKenna-Yost Convention Center in Mattoon.

Aug. 15: Run for the Fallen at Linder Sports Complex in Charleston.

Sept. 19: Special Olympics Family Festival at Lake Land College in Mattoon, IL.

Sept. 26 & 27: Lincoln Log Cabin Fall Harvest Frolic. Celebrate autumn at the Harvest Frolic! Activities at both the Lincoln and Sargent farms at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site in Lerna IL include children's crafts, food preservation, hearth cooking, and artisan demonstrations: spinning, pottery, blacksmithing, embroidery, and more. Live music, storytelling, food trucks.

Oct. 24: Torchlight Halloween Hike, Storytelling & Wiener Roast 5-8 p.m. at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site in Lerna IL. A fun-for-all-ages stroll as paths between historic farms are lit by torchlight. Music, storytelling, bonfires, and a wiener roast! Cider, hotdogs, and s'mores available. Rain or shine. Kid-friendly spooky stories.

Oct. 30: Celebrate Mattoon Downtown Trunk or Treat.

Nov. 6 & 7: Sparkle & Spruce Shopping Soiree at the McKenna-Yost Convention Center, Mattoon, IL.

Nov. 29: Thanksgiving on Gooseneck Prairie at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site in Lerna IL. Learn about Lincoln's establishment of Thanksgiving at the home of his parents. Visit with the Lincoln family as they prepare for a Thanksgiving feast, mid-19th century style! Gift shop open with holiday items.

Nov. 19: Mattoon Lightworks Walk Through.

Nov. 20-Dec. 27: Mattoon Lightworks open.

Nov. 26: Mattoon YMCA Turkey Trot.

Dec. 4: Celebrate Mattoon Downtown Christmas.

Dec. 6: Old Fashioned Christmas on the Prairie at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site in Lerna, IL. Enjoy an old-fashioned Christmas! Visit the decorated Visitor Center, children's craft stations, hearth-baked gingerbread at the Lincoln Farm, and a horse and carriage ride. Gift shop open with locally sourced and handcrafted items.



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Massac County Events

June 12-14: Superman Celebration in Metropolis, IL. Over 40 food vendors and merchants! Nightly musical acts, Superman-themed trivia and games and pictures with the official Man of Steel. Carnival will open on June 11. Guests appearing at the celebration will be Stuart Sayer, professional comic book illustrator, Don Kramer and Scott Godlewski located in Artist Alley / Writer's Way, where fans can stop by to meet them. Join us for a SUPER time in Metropolis, IL.



Just about an hour's drive away from Carbondale, Metropolis, Illinois, offers a fun and unexpected detour.

Known as the Home of Superman, the town embraces its comic-book legacy with a monumental statue and themed attractions that delight visitors of all ages. While in the area, history lovers can explore Fort Massac State Park. Once occupied by Spanish, French, British, and American forces, the fort played an important role in early western expansion. Today, visitors can tour a reconstructed fort, explore museum exhibits, and take in views of the Ohio River that add scenic depth to the experience.

June 24-28: ASA — Mathews, IL Pro/AM Archery Tournament. Join us at the beautiful Mermet Lake Fish & Wildlife Area in Metropolis, IL, for the highly anticipated 2026 Mathews Pro/AM Tournament. This premier Archery Shooters Association (ASA) event brings together top archers from across the nation to compete in a stunning natural setting. Whether you're a seasoned competitor or a first-time spectator, experience the excitement of one of the most thrilling archery competitions of the year. Save the date and witness elite talent take aim at Mermet Lake! For more tournament information visit: <https://asaarchery.com/events/mathews-archery-pro-am/>

July 3: Hometown Celebration 2026 in Metropolis, IL. Activities begin at 6 p.m. in the Harrah's Casino parking lot, located between Ferry and Metropolis streets, where the Kid's Zone, with numerous obstacle courses, bounce houses and more, will be set up. Food and beverages available to purchase. Event concludes with large display of fireworks at approximately 9:15 p.m., shot near the riverfront.

Aug. 15: Summer Concert in the Park featuring Wildflower Honey and The Hot Biscuits band 6-8 p.m. at Washington Park in Metropolis, IL. Bring your lawn chairs, your friends and your summer spirit.

Sept. 12: Super Fast and Furriest Cruise-In 4-8 p.m. at Market Street, uptown Metropolis, IL at Superman Square. The event benefits Project Hope Humane Society, a local no-kill shelter in Metropolis. For more information, contact Sandra at 618-751-2017.

Sept. 19: Steele Wings Swing Dance, a 1940s-themed fundraiser, a key benefit for the construction of a statue honoring Metropolis native and WWII paratrooper John Marvin Steele, along with a memorial for all Massac County WWII fallen heroes. The evening features a full orchestra playing authentic 1940s standards. Attendees are encouraged to dress in their finest 1940s costumes with awards for Best-Dressed Gal, Best-Dressed Guy and Best-Dressed Duo. Period-appropriate hors d'oeuvres, desserts and vintage photo opportunities.

Sept. 26: Walk for Hope starting 4 p.m. at Washington Park, 308 Park St., Metropolis, IL. Come walk with us as we walk to bring awareness to suicide. Bead ceremony, silent auction, bounce houses, face painting, vendors and food. Contact Gabrielle Moore for more information at glindsey606@gmail.com

Oct. 17 & 18: Fort Massac Encampment at Fort Massac State Park in Metropolis, IL. This beloved event offers a vivid reenactment of 18th-century life, featuring military drills, mock battles, and period demonstrations. Visitors can explore authentic encampments, enjoy traditional music, and savor period-style food from numerous vendors. It's an immersive journey into the past, perfect for families and history enthusiasts alike. Don't miss this unique opportunity to step back in time and celebrate our rich heritage along the Ohio River.

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2026 HAPPENINGS

Superman Celebration	June 12 - 14
ASA - Mathews IL Pro/AM Archery Tournament	June 24 - 28
Hometown Celebration	July 3
The Fort Massac Encampment	October 17 - 18

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Places to REST *and* RECHARGE

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Rut those big city lights in the rearview and head out to the pristine wilderness of Downstate for some much-needed R&R this year. Nothing rejuvenates the soul quite like taking in the great outdoors, and Southern Illinois is the perfect destination for anyone looking to unplug and unwind in 2026. With a variety of state parks, campsites, and RV resorts, the region is sure to have a spot for you to rest and recharge!

SAM DALE LAKE STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA – JOHNSONVILLE

Rolling hills, shaded woodlands, and a sparkling 194-acre lake make this peaceful destination a favorite for outdoor enthusiasts.

Families can enjoy fishing, camping, and picnicking while keeping an eye out for wildlife such as deer, foxes, and even the occasional bald eagle. With miles of scenic shoreline trails and tranquil ponds, it's a perfect escape into nature's calm.

Red Hills State Park in Sumner, Illinois.
Photo courtesy Discover Downstate Illinois



Sam Parr State Fish & Wildlife Area in Newton spans 1,200 acres of woodlands and open space. Photo courtesy Discover Downstate Illinois



CRAWFORD COUNTY STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA – HUTSONVILLE

This natural haven spans 1,100 huntable acres of rolling terrain divided by Hutson Creek. The landscape features mature oak-hickory forests, wetlands, and ponds that support a thriving mix of wildlife.

With farmed open lands providing food for animals and multiple ponds stocked for fishing, it's a peaceful spot for hunters, anglers, and nature lovers alike.

RED HILLS STATE PARK – SUMNER

The park's nearly 100 acres of pristine Southern Illinois woodlands are an unmatched haven for outdoor activities.

Whether you enjoy camping, hiking, biking, or fishing, there is relaxation to be had at Red Hills.

While the area is beautiful year-round, the forest truly comes alive with the changing fall leaves in autumn, making it a premier escape in the shoulder seasons.

SAM PARR STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA – NEWTON

Spanning more than 1,200 acres of woodlands and open space, this scenic destination is a true haven for outdoor recreation. Its 183-acre lake offers excellent fishing and boating opportunities, while surrounding trails invite hiking, wildlife viewing, and peaceful escapes into nature.

Whether you're casting a line or simply soaking in the quiet beauty, it's the perfect place to unwind and reconnect with the outdoors.

I-64 KOA HOLIDAY – GRAYVILLE

Saddle up for a weekend of pure relaxation and bliss at this western-themed roadside pit stop. The I-64 KOA in Grayville has nearly 70 full hookup campsites and 10 cabins will ensure that no matter how you stay, you will be in the lap of luxury.

For those campers who prefer a more active day of rest, the on-site mini-golf course, state-of-the-art playground, and wild west-themed mechanical shooting gallery will keep you busy from sunup to sundown.

When dinner time rolls around, leave the pots in the pantry and mosey on down to The Smokin' Pig for an enticing lineup of BBQ favorites.



The I-64 KOA in Grayville features a western theme. Photo courtesy Discover Downstate Illinois

Spring and Summer Educational Family Adventures in Shawnee Forest Country

Shawnee Forest Country and Southernmost Illinois deliver a mix of outdoor exploration, history, and tucked-away escapes. The variety makes it easy to shape a trip that fits your party's pace, whether that means full days outdoors or a balance of adventure and downtime.

For many, the fun starts on the trail. Hiking is one of the best ways to experience the changing seasons. Trails in Shawnee Forest Country range from short, family-friendly walks to more challenging routes, and every path offers its own reward: beautiful scenery.

Garden of the Gods is one of Southernmost Illinois' most visited stops and is the second-most-photographed site in Illinois. It delivers dramatic sandstone formations and never-ending views of the surrounding forest. A short walk from the parking area leads directly to the observation trail, where stone pathways guide visitors across historical bluffs sculpted over millions of years.

Pounds Hollow Recreation Area offers a full day of family-friendly fun, making it a one-stop shop for those looking to explore. A 25-acre lake sits in the middle of the area, surrounded by trails. Visitors can fish from the pier, enjoy a picnic beneath the trees, or let kids burn off energy at the playground. As temperatures rise, swimming and lakeside activities become a perfect addition to a relaxed outdoor day.

Hikers looking for a challenge often find themselves at the **Little Grand Canyon Trail**. This three-mile route follows the base of enormous bluffs, winding along rocky ledges and shaded creek beds. Plan for at least 3 hours of hiking and sightseeing at this local gem. Benches along the trail offer ideal spots to rest, eat a snack, and enjoy the hum of nature around you.

Destinations like **Rim Rock**, **Millstone Bluff**, and **Sand Cave** add even more variety to the hiking options across Shawnee Forest Country. Visit our Hike page for more hiking inspiration across southernmost Illinois. Looking for in-depth guides to key Shawnee Forest trails? Our friend, Hiking with Shawn, has exactly what you need.

No visit to the Shawnee is complete without a stop at **Giant City State Park**. The park gets its name from the narrow passageways formed by sandstone bluffs, also referred to as its "Giant Streets."



Before you hit the trails, the Giant City Visitor Center has all the information you need to start your adventure. Here, adventurers will find exhibits highlighting the park's landscape, wildlife, and cultural history, along with trail maps and up-to-date conditions. They also have a Discovery Corner that invites children to explore hands-on displays, and has scavenger hunts that make hiking more engaging for younger visitors.

Once you're ready to start your adventure, the park opens into a network of trails weaving through forest ridges and stone corridors. The Giant City Nature Trail guides hikers directly through the park's namesake "Giant Streets". But before you go, you can't skip a visit to Giant City Lodge. Known for its family-style meals and famous fried chicken, the lodge offers the perfect end to your outdoor adventure.

Spring means the beginning of paddling season in Southernmost Illinois. Canoeing and kayaking offer a new perspective on the Shawnee National Forest.

At the **Cache River Wetlands Center**, visitors can learn about one of the most ecologically significant wetland systems in the Midwest. The Cache River is the northernmost bayou in North America, home to ancient cypress trees and thriving wildlife. Interpretive exhibits make the wetlands easy to understand and appreciate, even for first-time visitors.

Canoeing and kayaking along the Cache River allow paddlers to glide through waters teeming with life. Guided trips offer insight into the area's deep natural history while creating a peaceful, educational group experience.

A stop in Carbondale, IL. adds an educational and historical layer to any Southernmost Illinois itinerary.

The **Science Center** is a must-visit for families with young explorers. With more than 50 interactive exhibits, children can dive into topics like weather, paleontology, aviation, and engineering. Seasonal programs, camps, and events keep the experience fresh and engaging, turning learning into play.

The **Old Illinois Passenger Depot Railroad Museum** tells the story of Carbondale's transportation history inside a restored 1903 train depot. Explore artifacts and learn about the role railways played in shaping the region. You even get to ring a train bell!

The **Buckminster Fuller Dome**, often called the "Bucky Dome," stands as a symbol of innovation and sustainability. Tours offer insight into Fuller's vision and the architectural significance of the geodesic dome, a design that continues to influence modern construction.

Add in the **African American Museum**, **Southern Illinois University's Campus Green Tour**, and the **University Museum in Faner Hall**, and Carbondale becomes a true hub for discovery and learning.

The Shawnee Hills Wine Trail offers a slower, more relaxed way to unwind.

After a day of exploring the natural world of Shawnee Forest Country, the wine trail is a perfect, more adult experience to add to your itinerary. Winding through rolling hills and scenic countryside, the trail connects local wineries known for their welcoming atmosphere and handcrafted wines. Whether you're a wine enthusiast or simply looking to enjoy the moment, the trail reflects the laid-back hospitality for which Southern Illinois is known.

At the end of the day, returning to a cozy cabin tucked into the woods feels like the biggest part of the adventure.

Across Shawnee Forest Country, cabins come in a range from rustic retreats to modern lodges with all the comforts of home. Being surrounded by nature allows visitors to fully unwind and melt into the experience. Mornings begin with birdsongs and coffee, while evenings invite reflection under infinite star-filled skies. Explore local cabins, B&Bs, and vacation rentals on our Places to Stay page.

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SPONSORED CONTENT

The Shawnee National Forest offers hiking, horseback riding, rock climbing, and some of the best fishing around. You won't want to miss the Garden of the Gods — rock formations more than 300 million years old — sculpted patiently over time by wind and rain. Follow the popular Observation Trail at Garden of the Gods where breathtaking views can be found.

Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour offers a three-hour adventure through the trees with eight zip lines and two suspension bridges.

Breathtaking natural beauty and great opportunities for outdoor recreation, a trip to Giant City State Park near Makanda is sure to delight. Check out the 82-foot, 100,000-gallon water tower with a 50-foot observation deck that provides memorable

panoramic views. Visit Giant City Stables to arrange a guided horseback trek or a pony ride for the kids.

An old railway converted into the bike path, The Tunnel Hill State Trail is a 48-mile trail winding through farmland, thick woods, lush wetlands, and a tunnel for which it was named.

Enjoy the rolling southern Illinois countryside where you can sip your way along and discover truly surprising and authentic wine culture on the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail.

Bed and breakfasts dot the region and are great launching pads for wine tasting, hiking, or biking enthusiasts. Cabins in the area offer a secluded getaway, some that are pet friendly and some with hot tubs.

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Effingham County Events

May 1: Get the Led Out: A Celebration of "The Mighty Zep." Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

May 2: Mother-Son Dance at Watson Civic Center. Come dance and glow crazy! Free event. Refreshments, pictures, prizes, dancing, face paint and more! Grandparents are welcome to join the fun!

May 2: Pork Burger Drive-Thru Fundraiser 10 a.m.–2 p.m. at 3 Sisters Logistics in Teutopolis. Free-will donation. Menu includes pork burgers, hot dogs, chips and drinks. All money goes to Central Illinois Truck Convoy.

May 2: 5K and 1-Mile Run/Walk For Angel of Hope Statue And Memorial Garden. The race begins at the future location of our Angel of Hope Statue and Memorial Garden, in the open lot across the street from St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Teutopolis. Registration begins at 7 a.m., and the race starts at 8 a.m. All ages welcome!

May 2: Bloom & Remember Event 9–11 a.m. at Pearson Building at Lake Sara, 15170 N. Beach Road, Effingham. Join us for a gentle morning of remembrance, community and creativity. Bouquet making, permanent jewelry available for optional purchase, Seasons Sips Coffee Truck on site, complimentary treats generously donated by T Skol's & Goldie's. Popcorn from Del's Popcorn. Kids welcome. Free floral coloring pages and activities available. All attendees will be entered into a self-care basket giveaway. If any questions, please email to south-central-illinois@starlegacyfoundation.org or visit the website: secure.qgiv.com/event/bloomandremember-il/page/4613166/

May 9: Benefit in memory of Jon Holland at Altamont Fairgrounds Schuetzenfest Building in Altamont starting at 1 p.m. Bake sale, meat bundle raffle, gun raffle, live auction, silent auction, meal provided. For more info, contact Katie Duncan at 217-821-3341 or Tony Althoff at 217-343-9020. Donations can be made directly to the Jonathon K. Holland Benefit Account at Washington Savings Bank.

May 9: Mother's Day Market and CEO Pop Up Downtown Effingham. Build a Bouquet (ticket holders) with each stop downtown providing a different flower, ending with a full bouquet. CEO students booths set up outside businesses.



May 16: Mason's 1st Annual Block Party on Washington Street in Mason, IL 3–9 p.m. Live band 3–5 p.m., DJ 5–9 p.m., Car show, kids games, bounce houses and emergency vehicle tours. Donations benefit Mason Union Cemetery.

May 29: Henry Cho — The Empty Nest Tour. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 8 p.m.

Every Saturday May 30 through Oct. 31: Effingham Farmers Market on the old Courthouse lawn (corner of Jefferson Ave & Fourth Street) in downtown Effingham 8 a.m.–noon. Locally-grown produce, fresh flowers, baked goods, artisan crafts, handmade soaps and more! Live music at the gazebo most Saturdays. Follow the Effingham Farmers Market Facebook page for weekly updates.

May 31: Music in the Park: Avery Bohnhoff opening for Lady Liberty. 2:30–5:30 p.m. Food trucks. Event at Liberty Park in Dieterich, IL. Bring lawn chairs.

June 5: 4-H Camp Cloverbud with Angie Moeller 9 a.m.–3 p.m. at Camp Wassatoga, 15230 N. Blue Point Trail, Effingham. This camp is free and open to all youth ages 5–8! They do not have to be in 4-H to attend! Fun & creative outdoor activities including aerospace, arts & crafts, entomology, fishing, fun games, mad scientist, nature trail. Register today at: go.illinois.edu/26EffClvrCamp

June 6: Village of Dieterich Garage Sales 7 a.m.–noon.

June 13: Brush Pull (Truck/Tractor Pull) at 100 Park St. in Beecher City, IL.

June 18–21: Moccasin Creek Festival at The Stage at Lake Sara, Effingham, IL.

June 19: Teutopolis KC Cruise Night & Car Show starts 5:30 p.m. at Teutopolis Banquet Hall. All vehicles welcome! Free spectator parking. Cruise route 5:30–8:30 p.m. Power Wheels derby 5:30–6:30 p.m. National anthem/honor guard & 1st responders at 7 p.m. Car show 5:30–9 p.m. Food stands. Beer stand. Bigfoot car crushing immediately following opening ceremonies. Fireworks at dusk — America250. Big raffle, 50/50 drawing. Proceeds go to Teutopolis Banquet Hall, Shriners, Shop with a Cop Effingham City, and Dieterich High School Skeet & Trap. Check us out on Facebook at Teutopolis Cruise Car Show. For more info, contact Brett Higgs at 217-663-2433, Dale Ruholl at 217-259-9656, Cody Willenborg at 217-821-3730 or Jeremy Giles at 217-821-3327.

June 19: Downtown Effingham Movie Night. Free event. Concessions available for purchase Location: old courthouse lawn in Downtown Effingham.

June 19 & 20: Just For Dads Theme: Kids make Gifts for Dad. Downtown Effingham. Each store hosts small activity and kids walk downtown completing gift pieces. Free event.

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June 24: Zip Code Day Celebration in Edgewood, IL.

June 27: Edgewood 50th Anniversary Fest. Food, games, Queen contest, fireworks.

June 29–July 3: Stars, Stripes & USA 250 Celebration at Effingham downtown businesses. Theme: patriotic shopping. Promote red, white & blue.

July 3 & 4: Dieterich's July 4th Fest at Liberty Park in Dieterich, IL. Live music Friday and Saturday. Parade Saturday starting at 11 a.m. Beer garden, kids' games, food trucks, and more, culminating with fireworks at dusk on Saturday.

July 10: Relay for Life of Effingham County at Teutopolis Community Park. Join for the survivor lap, survivor ceremony and more!

July 10 & 11: Effingham Artisan Fair at Tuscan Hills Winery in Effingham featuring handmade art, live demos, kids activities, live music, food trucks and more!

July 17 & 18: Summer Sales Event at downtown Effingham businesses.

July 17: Ham Jam in downtown Effingham. A full-on summer celebration of BBQ, sauce, music and community! Hometown Throwdown amateur BBQ competition, live music, family fun, a kids' foam party, vendors, beer tent and plenty of incredible BBQ. All net proceeds go directly

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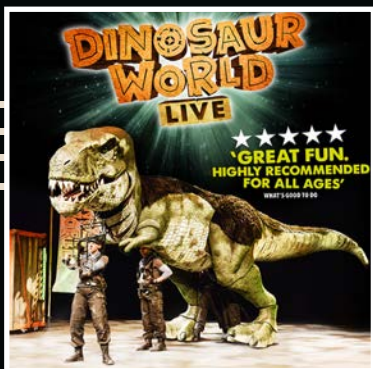
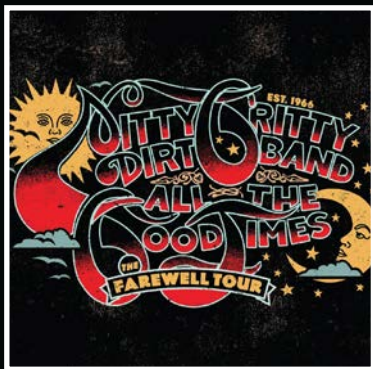
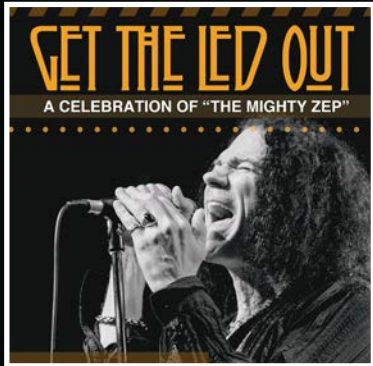
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back into our community through scholarships supporting local students and adult learners pursuing their education. For more info, contact Nicole Morrison at 217-347-6282.

July 17: Ted Nugent. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m.

July 17-19: Corn Fest at 100 Park St. in Beecher City, IL.

Aug. 1-8: Effingham County Fair at the fairgrounds at 722 E. Cumberland Road, Altamont IL, 62411. Voted year after year as Effingham County People's Choice event of the year! Daily horse racing Sunday through Friday starting at noon, tractor pulls (Aug. 1, 3 and 5), car show Aug. 1 at 9 a.m., 5K Race Aug. 1 at 7:30 a.m., talent show Aug. 2 at 6:30 p.m., parade Aug. 2 at 4:30 p.m., rodeo Aug. 6 at 7:30 p.m., demolition derby Aug. 8 at 6:30 p.m., and so much more!

Aug. 7-9: Tropic-Van-A presented by Central Illinois Truckin Association at Spring Creek Campground in Montrose, IL. Live music, vanner shenanigans, shot bar, beer truck and more!

Aug. 22: Family Summer Funday at Watson Civic Center. All you can eat breakfast 7-10 a.m. includes biscuits & gravy, pancakes, link & pattied sausages, sweet roll and drinks. Summer Funday 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free inflatables open at 1 a.m. Truck vendors, concessions, snow cones, music, flea market and more!

Aug. 26: Happy Together Tour 2026. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7:30 p.m. theepc.org

Sept. 4 & 5: Hobnob Vintage Harvest Handmade Market at the Effingham County Fairgrounds, 722 E. Cumberland Road, Altamont, IL 62411.

Sept. 5: The Kramers 6 p.m. at Mullen Baptist Church, 675 150N, Montrose, IL. For more info: 217-254-0905.

Sept. 10-13: Mill Road Threshermans Association Annual Show at the Effingham County Fairgrounds in Altamont, IL. Field demonstrations, playground and corn pit for the kids, farm toy show, tractor games, flea market, parts vendors, molasses making, rope making, broom making, wheat threshing, tractor pulls, live music, bounce house, kids' scavenger hunt, silent auction, petting zoo, bluegrass music and open jam, train show, horse pull. Sunday features church service and car, truck & tractor show. For more info call Jon Schultz at 217-343-7026. millroadthresherman.org

Sept. 11 & 12: Downtown Effingham Cruise Night. Enjoy a nostalgic drive down Jefferson Avenue where — for one night only — traffic will flow in TWO directions! This family-friendly event features a Show & Shine Car Show, open downtown cruising, a wine & beer garden, live music, giveaways, food vendors including the infamous Hi-Boy burgers and so much more! Cars, trucks, motorcycles, your mom's grocery getter or whatever you drive! If it runs, you're welcome to cruise!

Sept. 11 & 12: Fall into Downtown Effingham Fall Open



Dieterich 4th of July Parade



Frog races at Dieterich's July 4th Fest

Houses at downtown stores. New fall merchandise, treats and drinks, and downtown photo spots.

Sept. 12: Last Chance Pull (Tractor / Truck Pull) at 100 Park St. in Beecher City, IL.

Sept. 13: Whose Live Anyway? Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 26: Schuetzenfest in downtown Altamont noon-midnight. No entrance fee. Armbands available for purchase for alcoholic beverages.

Oct. 3: Taylorville: An Unofficial Taylor Swift Live Tribute Band. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

Oct. 3: Ham City Fall Fest. All-day block party Downtown Effingham with a 5K run, live music, beer tent, Bavarian-style food, food trucks, and a "Kids Korner" with corn pit, inflatables, and live animals.

Oct. 16: Boo-tique Night late shopping hours in downtown Effingham. Celebrate Ladies Night Out and Boss' Day!

Oct. 16: The Price is Right Live. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

Oct. 24: Downtown Effingham Trick-or-Treat. Farmers Market 8-noon, costume contest noon-1 p.m., trick-or-treat

1-3 p.m. in downtown Effingham.

Oct. 25: Effingham Sunrise Rotary Halloween Parade. Huge parade that starts at 2 p.m. at HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital parking lot and winds through downtown Effingham Don't miss the costumes, the candy, the floats, the bands, and the magic of the season! Awards on the Courthouse square in downtown Effingham after the parade. Lineup starts at noon along Maple Street between Temple and Evergreen Avenues by the hospital.

Oct. 29: Menopause The Musical. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m.

Nov. 6 & 7: Downtown Effingham Holiday Shop Hop shopping passport. Stamp at each store. Downtown gift basket prize.

Nov. 20: Pink Friday in Downtown Effingham. Small business version of Black Friday.

Nov. 27: Black Friday in downtown Effingham.

Nov. 28: Small Business Saturday in downtown Effingham.

Dec. 19: Stocking Stuffer Saturday in downtown Effingham. Shop local for those last-minute stocking stuffers!

Dec. 21-23: Late Night shopping in downtown Effingham.

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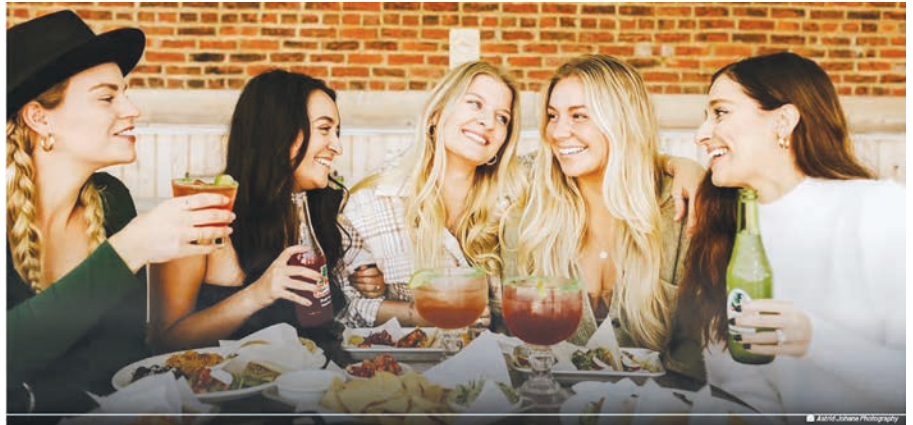
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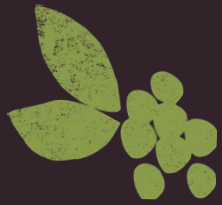
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DESTINATION DOWNTOWN EFFINGHAM

Just beyond a 198-foot cross located at the junction of Interstates 57 and 70 lies one of the most progressive cities in Illinois named Effingham. A short drive into the city brings you to the heart of downtown where you'll find fascinating museums, galleries, a coffee roaster, entrepreneurs and several restaurants and bars. You can spend

a day taking it all in or experience downtown Effingham with an overnight stay in one of the coolest Airbnb spaces in town. Located above XCHNG, these Airbnb's are available for short or long term stays. Another feature is Effingham Public Library located just across the street from Effingham County Museum.



Downtown Effingham hosts a number of fun

events during the year including Farmers Market each Saturday morning during the summer months, Ladies Night Out, seasonal open houses, EffinghamHAM JAM barbeque festival, Ham City Fall Fest Cruise Night, a huge Halloween parade, a downtown Trick or Treat event and a marvelous Christmas

celebration that includes tasty treats, stunning lights and a visit from Santa at Santa's House. Traditional activities during the Christmas celebration include carriage rides, live entertainment, light parade, train rides and live reindeer, to name a few!

There are many monstrous light displays that stay all winter long on the lawn of the Effingham County Museum as an awesome photo op for thousands of visitors.

The City of Effingham was proud to be ranked second in a line-up of Illinois' Best Downtown Areas in 2022! Effingham invites you to come see what draws thousands to visit this thriving downtown area all throughout the year!





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in downtown Effingham

May 30th–Oct. 31st, 2026 Each Saturday 8 a.m.–noon



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Each Saturday 8 a.m.–noon
on the old Courthouse Square,
downtown Effingham

May 30	August 22
June 6	August 29
June 13	September 5
June 20	September 12
June 27	September 19
July 4	September 26
July 11	October 3
July 18	October 10
July 25	October 17
August 1	October 24
August 8	October 31
August 15	

JOIN US ALL YEAR LONG — DESTINATION DOWNTOWN EFFINGHAM!



New gazebo on courthouse square in downtown Effingham

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on the old Courthouse lawn (corner of Jefferson Ave & 4th Street) in downtown

Effingham 8 a.m.–noon. Locally-grown produce, fresh flowers, baked goods, artisan crafts, handmade soaps and more! Live music at the gazebo most Saturdays. Follow the Effingham Farmers Market Facebook page for weekly updates.

June 19: Downtown Effingham Movie Night. Free event. Concessions available for purchase. Location: old courthouse lawn in Downtown Effingham.



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JOIN US ALL YEAR LONG — DESTINATION DOWNTOWN EFFINGHAM!

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Oct. 3: Ham City Fall Fest. All-day block party Downtown Effingham With a 5K run, live music, beer tent, Bavarian-style food, food trucks, and a “Kids Korner” with corn pit, inflatables, and live animals.

Oct. 16: Boo-tique Night. Late shopping hours in downtown Effingham. Celebrate Ladies Night Out and Boss’ Day!

Oct. 24: Downtown Effingham Trick-or-Treat. Farmers Market 8-noon, Costume Contest noon–1 p.m., Trick-or-Treat 1–3 p.m. in Downtown Effingham.

Oct. 25: Effingham Sunrise Rotary Halloween Parade. Huge parade that starts at 2 p.m. at HSHS

JOIN US ALL YEAR LONG — DESTINATION DOWNTOWN EFFINGHAM!



St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital parking lot and winds through downtown Effingham. Don't miss the costumes, the candy, the floats, the bands, and the magic of the season! Awards on the Courthouse square in downtown Effingham after the parade. Lineup starts at noon along Maple Street between Temple and Evergreen Avenues by the hospital.

Nov. 6 & 7: Downtown Effingham Holiday Shop Hop. Shopping passport. Stamp at each store. Downtown gift basket prize.

Nov. 20: Pink Friday in downtown Effingham. Small business version of Black Friday.

Nov. 27: Black Friday in downtown Effingham.

Nov. 28: Small Business Saturday in downtown Effingham.

Dec. 19: Stocking Stuffer Saturday in downtown Effingham. Shop local for those last-minute stocking stuffers!

Dec. 21-23: Late Night Shopping in downtown Effingham.



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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES.

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- Personalized Gifts

COUPON

\$5 OFF

Purchase of \$50 or more.



314 W. Jefferson - Effingham, IL

Since 1992, Baseball Card Connection has been providing high quality trading cards and sports memorabilia to collectors worldwide.

With over 15 million trading cards in inventory and a 6,000-square-foot showroom full of sports collectibles, this is a must-stop destination for sports collectors! You can also shop 24 hours a day in their Beckett and Ebay online stores by visiting baseballcardconnection.com.

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313 W. Jefferson Avenue, Effingham IL | 217-342-2539 | baseballcardconnection.com

LAKE SARA

Lake Sara, located just five miles northwest of Effingham, is a 650-acre lake that provides 27 beautiful miles of shore line and one of the finest family recreation facilities in Central Illinois.

Among the features are:

- » public beach
- » cabins
- » playgrounds
- » bocce ball court
- » disc golf course
- » camping areas
- » picnic areas
- » storywalk
- » pickleball courts

2026 ENTERTAINMENT AT LAKE SARA

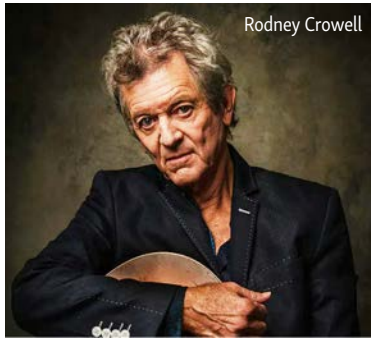
- » May 24: Time to Kill Campout at The Stage at Lake Sara.
- » June 6: Rock for Kids show featuring 11 local young musicians and bands at The Stage at Lake Sara 2-9:30 p.m. Event by Crisis Nursery of Effingham County in partnership with HSHS St. Anthony Memorial Hospital.
- » June 18-21: Moccasin Creek Festival at The Stage at Lake Sara.
- » Sept. 11-13: Summer Sundown Music Festival
- » Sept. 18 & 19: Crossroads Music Festival



MOCCASIN CREEK FESTIVAL PREPARES FOR YEAR 12 AT LAKE SARA IN EFFINGHAM

Poss Music Works NFP has announced the lineup for the 12th annual Moccasin Creek Festival, which will take place June 18-21 at the Reel Marina at Lake Sara. The festival will feature headlining sets by Americana legend Rodney Crowell and acoustic roots upstart Nick Shoulders. Other main stage performances include Trout Fishing in America, Chicago Farmer and the Fieldnotes, The Mighty Pines, Otis Gibbs, Jess Klein Band, Matt Poss Band, J. Plank, plus another 20 performers throughout the four-day festival.

Rodney Crowell has been a part of the Outlaw music and Americana music scenes for several decades, penning hit songs such as "Leaving Louisiana in the Broad Daylight," "Shame on the Moon," and "Earthbound." Johnny Cash



Rodney Crowell

covered several of his songs and in 2025, Willie Nelson released an entire album of Rodney Crowell songs. He's been nominated for 18 Grammy Awards, winning two. His newest album, *Airline Highway* (Deluxe), came out on March 27, 2026.

After his appearance at the Moccasin Creek Festival, he will tour as part of Willie Nelson's Outlaw Country Festival.

The festival grounds feature comforts that few other festivals can boast of: free, close parking, flush toilets and hand-washing sinks, free beach, playground, volleyball and pickleball courts, disc golf course, boat and kayak rentals, great food, campground, beverage and craft vendors. Kids 15 and under are free with a paying adult.

Trout Fishing in America, in their 50th year as a band, is celebrating the release of their new album *One of These Days*. Chicago Farmer and the Fieldnotes are also celebrating the release of their new full-band album, *Homeaid*.

"We love it when these bands come in with new records in hand!" said festival promoter Bill Poss. "They are always on fire with the new releases and their fans are so excited. So this is perfect timing."

Bill "Poss" Passalacqua, who founded the festival in 2014, will have a celebration of his own: his 60th birthday. "This festival kind of started as my birthday party and since I'm turning 60 this year, I asked my son Blue to put together a band and play a set of songs by our favorite rock band, Cake. The band is called Birthday Cake and will perform on the Lake Stage late on Saturday night."

Tickets for MCF are \$130 cash or \$137.60 online (including fees) for the four days of music. Day passes will go on sale on May 1. Tickets and more information available at www.moccasin creek festival.com.

MOCCASIN Creek Festival

June 18-21, 2026

The Stage at Lake Sara | Effingham, Illinois

Rodney Crowell | Nick Shoulders

Chicago Farmer
and the Fieldnotes

Trout Fishing
in America

Otis
Gibbs

The Mighty
Pines

Jess Klein Band | The Burney Sisters | J. Plank | Pat Byrne | Oliver Steck | Alex Thoele

Matt Poss Band | Taylor Steele and the Love Preachers | The Stitchgivers | My Politic | Charlie Roth

Greg Klyma | Birthday Cake | Jacob Kuhns Experience | Grant Peeples | Merry Travelers | Terry Klein

Hope Dunbar | Sheafor and Simes | Walter Parks | Dakota Esker | Shanna in a Dress | Emcee Brit Passalacqua

Weekend Passes and details at MoccasinCreekFestival.com



Honoring 250 years of the AMERICAN STORY

STORY AND PHOTOS COURTESY DISCOVER DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary, it's a time to reflect on the people, places, and industries that helped shape the nation. In Illinois, that story is etched into the land.

From historic roads that carried settlers west to the resources that powered growing communities, Downstate Illinois offers a front-row seat to this legacy, where infrastructure, industry, and innovation helped build not just a state, but a nation.

THE ROAD THAT REROUTED HISTORY

The National Road, often called the Cumberland Road, holds a pivotal place in American history as the first federally funded highway. Its creation was championed by early leaders like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, who saw the need for a trans-Appalachian route to unify the growing nation and promote westward expansion.

In 1806, under Jefferson's presidency, Congress authorized its construction, and by 1811, the first 10 miles were built in Cumberland, Maryland. Over the next two decades, the road extended westward, eventually spanning six states: Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, where it reached its original endpoint in Vandalia in 1839.

The National Road opened vital trade routes, encouraged migration, and helped knit together a young and rapidly expanding country. Today, its path lives on in U.S. Route 40, and many of the towns that grew along its route still showcase remnants of its historic legacy.

National Road Museum, Vandalia



Illinois Oil Field Museum, Oblong



Historic National Road Sign

As it extended westward into Illinois, the road helped establish key towns in Downstate Illinois that remain vibrant today. In Marshall, travelers can marvel at the World's Largest Gavel, take in the National Road mural, and explore the town's collection of regal lion statues. Just down the road, Casey delights visitors with 11 Guinness World Record attractions, over 20 larger-than-life installations, and group dining at Richards Farm Restaurant, home of the World's Largest Pitchfork.

In Vandalia, the western terminus of the original National Road, history buffs can tour the Vandalia Statehouse, explore the National Road Interpretive Center, take a tour at Witness Distillery, and enjoy a meal at Blind Society before settling in for the night at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites.

Farther west, Greenville offers small-town charm with stops like the Rolling Lawns Farm and the Milk House, Marcoat Jersey Creamery, the American Farm Heritage Museum, and the quirky DeMoulin Museum.

Though modern interstates have diverted much of the traffic, the legacy of the National Road lives on in these Illinois communities - each one offering a nostalgic, picture-perfect glimpse into America's past, present, and pioneering spirit.

ILLINOIS' TIES TO THE OIL INDUSTRY

When reflecting on the industries that built Illinois, oil may not be the first to come to mind, but its impact has been profound, especially across the Central and Eastern regions of Downstate Illinois. The state's oil and natural gas sector continues to play a vital role in the economy, generating \$23.7 billion in 2022, which accounts for 5.8% of Illinois' total economy. According to a 2016 economic report, Illinois oilfield production contributes \$3 billion in annual economic impact, supports 14,000 jobs, and generates \$700 million in tax revenue, including \$330 million in state tax dollars.

The roots of this powerful industry run deep. Commercial oil production in Illinois began in 1905, yielding 181,000 barrels that year, though exploratory wells date back even earlier to the 1860s in Clark county. Over time, oil operations spread across the Illinois Basin, a vast geological formation that includes 40 of the state's 102 counties and has seen the drilling of more than 155,000 oil, gas, and injection wells since 1853.

For those curious to see how this chapter of Illinois history comes to life, the Illinois Oil Field Museum in Oblong offers a compelling experience. Located in the heart of oil country, the museum tells the story of the region's oil boom through vintage equipment, engaging exhibits, and personal stories from the

people who lived it. Historical interpreters help bring the past to life in a way that resonates with visitors of all ages, offering a hands-on look at how oil helped power not just machines, but entire communities.

HOW FARMING SHAPED A STATE

For generations, agriculture has been at the heart of Illinois' identity - shaping its landscapes, communities, and economy. Thanks to its fertile soil and diverse climate, Illinois remains a national leader in the production of corn, soybeans, and swine, along with a wide array of other commodities including cattle, poultry, fruits, vegetables, and even specialty crops like horse-radish and Christmas trees.

Today, the industry generates over \$51 billion annually, with billions more flowing in from ag-related sectors like equipment manufacturing and food processing. While farms have become larger and more technologically advanced, the story of Illinois agriculture is still deeply rooted in family farming and rural tradition.

Travelers can explore this rich legacy at destinations like the Illinois Rural Heritage Museum in Pinckneyville, which showcases how rural life has evolved, and the American Farm Heritage Museum in Greenville, where vintage equipment and working displays celebrate the innovations that shaped American farming.

As we reflect on 250 years of American growth, Illinois stands as a powerful example of how agriculture has both sustained and transformed a nation.



American Farm Heritage Museum, Greenville

Fayette County Events

May 9: Vandalia Farmers Market in downtown Vandalia 8 a.m.–noon. Local produce, fresh baked goods, handpicked flower bouquets, and more.

June 5: Vandalia Swimming Pool's Kickoff to Summer Jamboree 1–5 p.m. and 6–10 p.m. with food trucks 5:30–8 p.m. and live music by the band Reverie 6–9 p.m. on the north lawn. Bring a lawn chair. Raffles and giveaways. Whether you're bringing the kids for an afternoon swim or meeting up for music and food in the evening, this is a can't-miss way to celebrate the start of summer — and America 250 — Vandalia style.

June 13: Vandalia Farmers Market in downtown Vandalia 8 a.m.–noon. Local produce, fresh baked goods, handpicked flower bouquets, and more.

June 19 & 20: Vandalia Statehouse Grand Levee, June 19 5–7 p.m. & June 20 10 a.m.–4 p.m. June 20 events include Vandalia Historical Society community ham & beans dinner, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Featuring the Vandalia, Illinois Tourism Commission Farmers' Market along with 1800's period arts and crafts demonstrations, live music, Abraham Lincoln presenter, a presentation by Times in History, A Traveling Museum, wood carving and painting demos by the Fayette County Art Connection, performances by Professor Farquar & Polecat Annie, petting zoo, vendor fair on Gallatin Street, Wild Foam noon–3 p.m., food trucks, kettle corn and so much more.

July 2–4: Vandalia Summerfest at Vandalia Lake featuring live music, food trucks, carnival rides and games all 3 nights, co-ed volleyball tournament and cardboard boat regatta on Saturday, inflatables and bounce house Friday and Saturday near the Jaycees Park playground area, Wild Foam and bubble party Thursday and Saturday, beer garden all 3 days and so much more, all in celebration of America's 250! Bring your lawn chair, bring your family and bring your patriotic spirit! Live music every night featuring Lady Liberty 6–9 p.m. Thursday night followed by a fireworks display at dusk. Friday's music lineup includes ScotteeeRock Solo Show and Hairbanger's Ball, the ultimate '80s arena rock tribute band. Saturday's live music features the band Tribute 4–7 p.m., comprised of hard-rocking musicians from the St. Louis music scene, the



Vandalia Grand Levee celebration

ultimate tribute to the greatest rock bands of the '80s followed by the band Neon Rodeo, a '90s Country Tribute Band 8–11 p.m.

July 9–14: Fayette County Fair at Fayette County Fairgrounds in Brownstown, IL. Truck and tractor pulls, demolition derby, rides, queen pageant, food and much more. The carnival returns to the fair this year.

July 11: Vandalia Farmers Market in downtown Vandalia 8 a.m.–noon. Local produce, fresh baked goods, handpicked flower bouquets, and more.

Aug. 8: Vandalia Farmers Market in downtown Vandalia 8 a.m.–noon. Local produce, fresh baked goods, handpicked flower bouquets, and more.

Aug. 14 & 15: Vandalia Car Show & Cruise in downtown Vandalia. Friday is Gallatin Street Car Cruise 6 p.m.–? and Saturday is downtown car show noon–7 p.m. Free admission. Food trucks. Live music by Billy Joe Neil & Mike Delisle 6–9 p.m. Friday evening. Saturday's live music features Dakota Danielle noon–2:30 p.m., Billy Joe Neil 2:30–5 p.m. and Grand Theft Audio 7–10 p.m. Door prizes every half hour–50/50. Awards for Ford, GM and Mopar, rat rod, foreign & motorcycle.

Aug. 28–30: Boat races at Vandalia Lake returning to the lake for the first time in over 20 years. Sanctioned racing event with the U.S. title series and the National Boat Racing Association. Friday is testing and practice runs. Saturday is a full day of competitive racing heats. Sunday is championship finals and awards. Food trucks on site all weekend. Bring your lawn chairs and invite your friends.

Sept. 12: Vandalia Farmers Market in downtown Vandalia 8 a.m.–noon. Local produce, fresh baked goods, handpicked flower bouquets, and more.

Oct. 10: Vandalia Farmers Market in downtown Vandalia 8 a.m.–noon. Local produce, fresh baked goods, handpicked flower bouquets, and more.

Oct. 10: Pumpkin Festival at The Patch, 2117 North 2150 St., St. Elmo, IL 62458. Car, truck and tractor show, harvest handmade market, petting zoo, food trucks. 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

Oct. 29: Vandalia Lion's Club Halloween Parade. Features floats and marching bands.

Nov. 13 & 14: Olde Tyme Christmas. A free, community holiday celebration that attracts surrounding communities, encourages the shop local movement and showcases Vandalia and local Vandalia businesses. A kickoff to the holiday season! 5 p.m.–9 p.m. Nov. 13 & 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Nov. 14.

Nov. 14–Jan. 1: Rogier Park in Vandalia. Come witness central Illinois' greatest lighted spectacle this holiday season with thousands of lights illuminating the sky each night 5–11 p.m. You will not want to miss it!

Visit Historic

VANDALIA

Illinois

UPCOMING EVENTS



Farmers Market
2nd Saturdays
May–October
8am–12pm
Downtown Vandalia
f Vandalia, Illinois
Farmers' Market



Charters Patio
Live Music
Every Weekend
June–September
Charters Patio
f Charters Patio



Grand Levee
June 19–20
f Vandalia
Statehouse
State Historic Site



Summerfest
July 2–4
f Vandalia Lake
Vandalia, Illinois



**3rd Annual
Vandalia Car
Show & Cruise**
August 14–15
f Vandalia IL
Annual Car
Show & Cruise



Boat Races
August 28–30
f Vandalia Tourism

WELCOME TO HISTORIC
Vandalia
ILLINOIS
TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER




Stay up-to-date with events at vandaliaillinois.com/calendar-of-events

discover **DOWNSTATE** ILLINOIS enjoy **illinis**

Crawford County Events

May 23: Palestine Lions Club Fish Fry, Car Club Cruise-In & Flea Market. Leaverton Park 8 a.m. till the fish runs out. Fish/sides/hotdogs/desserts served to help the Lions with their many projects. Crawford County Collectibles Car Club will provide the opportunity to enjoy automobiles from the past and present. Browse the selection of treasures from various vendors Contact: Lion Otis Tuttle 618-562-3881.

June-August (Every Saturday): Cross Street Market. Local vendors come to South Cross Street in Robinson to sell their goods. Food stands are also available.

July 13 & 27, July 11 & 25: Summer Concerts at Cross Street Station. Bring your lawn chair and listen to local musicians entertain you for the evening! Several food trucks will also be there each weekend. Visit www.cityofrobinson.com for a list of entertainment.

July 4: Robinson 4th of July Celebration. Food, live entertainment, baseball and softball tournaments, and a spectacular firework show in the Robinson City Park. Call City Hall at 618-544-7616 or visit www.cityofrobinson.com for more information.

July 18-25: Crawford County Fair. Located at the Oblong Fair Grounds. 4-H exhibits, Crawford County Queen pageant, carnival rides, food booths, truck and tractor pull, and a demolition derby highlight the week-long event ending with a large 4-H auction. Contact: crawfordfair.com for more info.

July 31-Aug. 1: Robinson & Oblong City-Wide Garage Sales. Contact the Robinson Chamber of Commerce at 618-546-1557 for a list of those participating in these town wide annual events.

July 31-Aug. 1: Hutsonville River Fest. Car show, entertainment, vendors, parade and food, in downtown Hutsonville. Visit facebook.com/groups/Hutsonville.River.Fest/

Aug. 7-8: Oblong Antique Tractor and Engine Show. This annual event draws visitors from all over to view actual working antique tractors and engines. Located at the fairgrounds in Oblong.

Aug. 8: Flat Rock Homecoming. Visit the Village of Flat Rock for a weekend full of activities including food, vendors and a parade.

Sept. 3-7: Annual Pioneer City Labor Day Festival and Rodeo. Pioneer City Arena, Leaverton Park & Main Street Palestine play hosts to a Street Fair, Carnival, and the PRCA rodeo. Chuckwagon breakfast, parade, camping, junior-sized tractor pull, lunch with clowns, flea market, mechanical bull rides, free entertainment at the band shell, town-wide garage sales and more! Contact: Palestine Chamber of Commerce 618-586-2222.

pioneerocity.com or Email: PalestineCofC@verizon.net

Oct. 2-3: Annual Heath Toffee Festival and Parade. Located on the square in Robinson. Celebrating the delicious Heath Candy Bar, created in 1928 by Heath Brothers Confectionary in Robinson. Features Friday night entertainment, street dance, and car show, and Saturday craft show, live entertainment, toffee bake-off, and parade, capped off by a free chili supper. Call 618-546-1557 for more information.

Oct. 3 & 4: Annual Wabash Valley Wine & Arts Festival. Several wineries provide various wines for tasting as you stroll Main Street and enjoy artworks from numerous artists from the Wabash Valley area. Some may be purchased. Food booths and live entertainment. Saturday 11 a.m.-7 p.m. & Sunday noon-5 p.m. Contact: Susan Goodwine 618-586-2035.

Oct. 24: Annual Oblong Fall Follies and "Spooktacular" Band Fest and Parade. Features nighttime parade, band field competition, food, crafts and entertainment on the square in Oblong. Call 618-592-4355 for more information.

Nov. 21: Christmas on the River. Visit the Village of Hutsonville for beautifully decorated Christmas trees, food and entertainment.

Nov. 27: Leaverton Park Holiday Lighting Festival, 5 p.m. Leaverton Park comes alive with over 40,000 lights and displays. Enjoy hot chocolate and cookies with Santa, listen to area church choirs and singing groups caroling. Watch the fireworks and enjoy cornbread and beans, hotdogs & desserts served by the Lions Club. Contact: Palestine Chamber of Commerce 618-586-2222.

Dec. 4-5: Home for the Holidays. Join us for the Robinson holiday market and lighting of the beautiful Christmas displays in Robinson. Santa arrives, food booths available, games for kids, train rides, skating rink and bounce houses. Located at the Robinson Civic Center. Call the City of Robinson for more information 618-544-7616 or visit our Facebook page The City of Robinson.



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2026 Crawford County Calendar of Events

(Dates are subject to change. Please call ahead or visit www.cityofrobinson.com for more information)

May 23 – Memorial Day Weekend

Palestine Lions Club Fish Fry, Car Club Cruise-In & Flea Market

Leaverton Park – 8:00 a.m. till the fish runs out Fish/sides/hotdogs/desserts served to help the Lions with their many projects. Crawford County Collectibles Car Club will provide the opportunity to enjoy automobiles from the past and present. Browse the selection of treasures from various vendors.

Contact: Lion Otis Tuttle 618-562-3881

June – August (Every Saturday)

Cross Street Market

Local vendors come to South Cross Street in Robinson to sell their goods. Food stands are also available.

June 13 & 27, July 11 & 25

Summer Concerts at Cross Street Station

Bring your lawn chair and listen to local musicians entertain you for the evening! Several food trucks will also be there each weekend.

Visit www.cityofrobinson.com for a list of entertainment.

July 4

Robinson 4th of July Celebration

Food, live entertainment, baseball and softball tournaments, and a spectacular firework show in the Robinson City Park.

Call City Hall at 618-544-7616 or visit www.cityofrobinson.com for more information.

July 18-25

Crawford County Fair

Located at the Oblong Fair Grounds. 4-H exhibits, Crawford County Queen pageant, carnival rides, food booths, truck and tractor pull, and a demolition derby highlight the week-long event ending with a large 4-H auction.

Contact: www.crawfordfair.com for more info.

July 31- August 1

Robinson & Oblong City-Wide Garage Sales

Contact the Robinson Chamber of Commerce at 618-546-1557 for a list of those participating in these town wide annual events.

July 31- August 1

Hutsonville River Fest

Car Show, entertainment, vendors, parade and food, in Downtown Hutsonville.

Visit [www.facebook.com/groups/Hutsonville.River.Fest/](https://facebook.com/groups/Hutsonville.River.Fest/)

August 7-8

Oblong Antique Tractor and Engine Show

This annual event draws visitors from all over to view actual working antique tractors and engines. Located at the fairgrounds in Oblong.

August 8

Flat Rock Homecoming

Visit the Village of Flat Rock for a weekend full of activities including food, vendors, and a parade.

Clark County Events: Casey

May 9: Founders Day in downtown Casey IL 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

June 20: Red, White, Blue & You! Art in the Park with Darbie 9 a.m.-noon at Fairview Park in Casey, IL.

July 4 & 5: Independence Day Celebration in Casey IL to celebrate The Big 250. Saturday events: Parade downtown at 10 a.m. The Great American Picnic Games in Fairview Park in Casey at Noon. Highway 130 Band at 7 p.m. at Fairview Park. Movie in the Park: National Treasure at 9 p.m. at Fairview Park. Sunday events: Community Church Service at Central Park, downtown, at 9 a.m. Motors on Main at 10 a.m. Food trucks, family fun, games in the park all starting at noon at Fairview Park in Casey, IL. Kids fishing derby at 3 p.m. at Fairview Park. Jake & Mikayla live music at 6:30 p.m. at Fairview Park. Fireworks at 9:15 p.m. at Fairview Park.

July 5: 11th Annual Motors on Main Street Car Show in Casey, IL. The car show will be held on East Main Street, in front of the World's Largest Rocking Chair. Pre-register before June 15th for only \$20 per vehicle and receive a FREE event T-shirt! To pre-register, mail \$20 to Casey Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 343, Casey, IL 62420. Include your name, club name (if applicable), address, phone, email, the year/make/model of the vehicle, and your shirt size. The first 50 to register will receive a FREE dash plaque! This year, our judged car show will go by these classes: Top 20: 1973 and older; Top 20: 1974-1999; Top 10: 2000 and up. If you want to wait until the event day to register, the fee is \$25. Registration that day will be at 9 a.m. The car show is 10 a.m.-3 p.m. with the awards at 2 p.m. Show is open to all makes and models of cars, trucks, motorcycles and golf carts!

Aug. 29: Country Farm Antiques Show 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Richards Farm Restaurant, 607 NE 13th St., Casey, IL, presented by Greathouse of Country & Richards Farm Restaurant. A gathering of seasoned vendors offering early American country antiques. For more info, call 217-232-4037 or email greathouseofcountry@hotmail.com



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of Country**
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CASEY POPCORN FESTIVAL

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BIG THINGS SMALL TOWN

Sept. 4-7: Casey Popcorn Fest at Fairview Park in Casey IL. Headliner Sat. Sept. 5 is rising country sensation Greylan James with Brandon Wisham opening. Headliner on Sunday Sept. 6 is superstar Sara Evans with opener Neon Rodeo, the ultimate '90s country tribute act. Headlining on Monday, Sept. 7 are Christian music artists Cochren & Company. For details and tickets, visit popcornfestival.net

Dec. 4 & 5: Candy Canes on Main festival in downtown Casey, IL.

BIG THINGS, SMALL TOWN CASEY, ILLINOIS



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History comes alive in Downstate Illinois



Fayette County Museum



Labor and Industry Museum, Belleville

STORY AND PHOTOS COURTESY DISCOVER DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS

As an area that was once on the edge of the American frontier, Downstate Illinois is teeming with history.

From the early days of American westward expansion to the golden age of manufacturing, the region has played a crucial role in the development of the nation. Come along with us and use this guide to uncover the best niche interest museums in our vast territory.

KINMUNDY LOG CABIN VILLAGE – KINMUNDY

Experience the Illinois frontier just as settlers would have in the 1800s at this well-preserved collection of era-representative log buildings. Totalling 12 in all, the structures range from recreation of humble homesteads to stables and general stores. While their annual four-day Fall Festival is the recommended time to visit to capture the full experience, they accept visitors any time the gates are open!

LABOR AND INDUSTRY MUSEUM – BELLEVILLE

Pay homage to the industrial prowess of 19th-century Illinois at the Labor and Industry Museum in Belleville. This small but mighty museum showcases a variety of equipment and products that originated from the region's factories in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Additionally, the Union Hall exhibit highlights the struggles of labor movements during the period, both locally and nationally.

The museum's collection continues in its detached annex building, where pieces are proudly focused on displaying women's role in labor and public life following the civil war.

FAYETTE COUNTY MUSEUM – VANDALIA

Housed in a former church building that dates to 1867, the Fayette County Museum in Vandalia is one of the best-curated municipal museums in the region. With exhibits that occupy almost every inch of the two-floor building, this historical site is a wonder to behold for history buffs.

Their wonderfully welcoming curators will greet you at the door and share their wealth of knowledge with any visitor, making this detour well worth it!

CUMBERLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL MUSEUM – GREENUP

All aboard the history train! Step back in time to when train travel was king and Greenup was at the edge of the American frontier. This original 1870s train depot has been expertly preserved and outfitted with display cases highlighting a treasure trove of local history.

Two separate buildings on campus welcome visitors to stop in for a while and immerse themselves in the stories of days past in Cumberland County.

LINCOLN DOUGLAS DEBATE MUSEUM – CHARLESTON

Retrace the steps of Illinois' most famous resident during his early political career at the Lincoln Douglas Debate Museum in Charleston.

Physical artifacts and interactive displays allow visitors to take a self-guided tour of the seven historically significant debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas along the Senate campaign trail in 1858. This state-of-the-art facility sits at the location of one such debate, inviting history lovers to stand in the presence of greatness.



Kinmundy Log Cabin Village



Lincoln Douglas Debate Museum, Charleston



Bandstand Concerts in downtown Marshall, IL

Clark County Events: Marshall & Martinsville

May 8: Wine & Arts Festival in downtown Marshall, IL. Enjoy an evening of wine tastings, live art demonstrations, featured art exhibits, and stroll through downtown enjoying a vibrant celebration of community, culture and creativity.

May 16: Martinsville Community Jamboree at Martinsville Rec Complex in Martinsville, IL. 5K run, pickleball tournament, face painting, bounce houses and more!

May 24-31: Martinsville Agricultural Fair at the fairgrounds in Martinsville, IL. Celebrating 80 years! May 24 harness racing Illinois stake races at 3 p.m. and community worship at 7 p.m. May 25 harness racing Great Midwest at 3 p.m. and Great Midwest Talent Search at 7 p.m. May 26 fair queen pageant at 7 p.m. May 27 flat track drags at 7 p.m. May 28 Whippoorwill Rodeo at 7:30 p.m. May 29 Barnyard Scramble at 7 p.m. May 30 South of 70 showdown demolition derby at 7 p.m. May 31 family fun day at noon.

May 31: Family Fun Day at Martinsville Agricultural Fair in Martinsville, IL starting at noon. food vendors, pedal tractor pull, princess for a day, carnival, car show, live music by Cumberland Divide, Lew-ee Comedy, mini golf, truck/tractor show and more!

June 6 through August 7, every Friday night: Farmers Market with local vendors selling fresh produce, flowers, various baked goods, handmade crafts and jewelry on the courthouse square 6-8 p.m. before the city band concert in downtown Marshall, IL.

June 20: Jeep Jam in downtown Marshall IL on the courthouse square. Includes an obstacle course at the Clark County Fairgrounds. A fun-filled afternoon of activities, giveaways, food and drink specials.

June 27: Sail On: The Beach Boys Tribute at 7 p.m. at Linn Park Amphitheater in Martinsville, IL.

July 4: Red, White & Blue Bash in downtown Marshall, IL on the courthouse square during the day. Celebrating 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Live music, bounce houses, food trucks and so much more! Fireworks at 9:30 p.m. at the Clark County Fairgrounds.

Aug. 3-8: Clark County Fair in Marshall, IL. Monday features Miss Clark County Fair Queen Pageant. Tuesday features T & A Bucking Bulls Rodeo. Wednesday features Illinois County Fair harness racing, Thursday features AutoCross, Friday features Motocross and Saturday features demo derby. Enjoy the carnival every day!

Sept. 18-20: Marshall Autumn Fest on the courthouse square in Marshall, IL. Live music, food trucks, cake walk, unique arts and crafts booths, and parade. Car, truck and motorcycle show on Sunday.

LINN PARK

2026

FREE SUMMER CONCERT SCHEDULE

**Concerts start at 7 pm CST.
Bring a chair or blanket!**

JUNE 13	BATTLE CREEK
JUNE 27	SAIL ON BEACH BOYS
JULY 11	ATTA BOY
JULY 27	CLARK COUNTY'S GOT TALENT
AUG 8	SCOTT WATTLES & THE BLUE SUEDE CREW
AUG 22	ZACHARY STEVENSON

Linn Park is at 14 N. Mill St. in Martinsville, IL.

Full concessions available at all events!!

New this year:
Farmers Market before each concert!

Adventure For All Ages

200 ft Zipline • 90 ft. Hillside Slide • Walking Trails
Outdoor Musical Instruments
Adult Outdoor Exercise Equipment
Balance Equipment

The Woodlands

Open
Dawn to Dusk

Parking Entrance - 101 S. Iris Lane, Martinsville, IL 62442

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Clothing for the Whole Family, Home Decor, Household Items & More

19 W. Cumberland St., Martinsville, IL Wednesday: 5 p.m. - 8 p.m., Thursday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.,
Friday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Saturday: 9 a.m. - Noon

Established by Martinsville on the Move 10/1/09
and operated solely by community volunteers since opening on October 1, 2009
Revenue from Changing Hands has been used for many projects/activities in our community.



MARSHALL IL



2026 Events



Wine & Arts Festival - 5.8.26

Enjoy an unforgettable evening filled with wine tastings, live art demonstrations from a variety of talented artists, & featured art exhibits showcasing the creativity of both children and adults. Stroll through downtown, sip local wines, & watch art come to life in this vibrant celebration of community, culture, & creativity.

Farmer's Market (Every Friday Night) 6.6.26 - 8.7.26

A weekly market with local vendors selling fresh produce, flowers, various baked goods, handmade crafts & jewelry. Located on the courthouse square every Friday evening from 6-8PM, before the weekly City Band concert.



Jeep Jam - 6.20.26

Marshall's 3rd Annual Jeep Jam - A fun-filled afternoon downtown on the courthouse square along with an obstacle course at the Clark County Fairgrounds. Enjoy an array of activities, giveaways, as well as food & drink specials from local businesses.

Red, White & Blue Bash - 7.4.26

Join us in downtown Marshall on the courthouse square while we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. There will be live music, bounce houses, food trucks & so much more! Festivities will be followed by fireworks at the Clark County Fairgrounds at 9:30PM



Autumn Fest - 9.18.26 - 9.20.26

The Marshall Autumn Fest is a beloved annual celebration held on the courthouse square, bringing the community together for a weekend full of fun. Enjoy live music the whole weekend, a wide variety of food trucks, the popular annual cakewalk, unique arts & crafts booths, a spectacular parade, as well as a car, truck, & motorcycle show on Sunday. It's a weekend filled with great food, entertainment, & unforgettable memories!



Clinton County Events

May 2: White Barn Picker's Market 8 a.m.–4 p.m. at 11401 Rt. 161, New Baden, IL. Vendors selling antiques, collectibles, vintage items, second-hand goods, and local artisans. Contact Kim at whitebarnmer@gmail.com for more information.

May 2: Pickleball Tournament at New Baden Village Park in New Baden, IL. Sign-in at 8 a.m. Games start 9 a.m. Food and drinks available. For questions, contact Joshua.jackson25@gmail.com

May–September: Carlyle Farmers Market from 5–8 p.m. at Carlyle VFW, 1250 Franklin St. in Carlyle, IL 62231. Fresh produce, meat, eggs and bread, freshly cut flowers, plants, fudge, syrup and more!

May 30: New Baden Farmers Market in New Baden, IL.

June 6: Great Bottlecap Bike Race at Dam West Recreation Area, Lake Carlyle.

June 6 & 7: Fun Sail at Lake Carlyle, 20960 Hazlet Park Road, Carlyle, IL 62231. Gather Saturday morning to rig and launch our boats, raft up in a cove for a picnic lunch and maybe a poker run! After some games, return to the harbor for a cookout and conversation. Sunday

will start with a community coffee and a morning sail. This will be a great opportunity to relax in a non-racing venue with family & friends.

June 20: Dominic Days Church Picnic 4 p.m.–midnight at 493 N. 2nd St., Breese, IL. Children's Mass, quilt bingo, raffles, IDOODIT, food, bounce houses, drinks, The Cheers Band and more!

June 27: New Baden Farmers Market in New Baden, IL.

June 27: Fireworks Spectacular at Dam West Recreation Area, Lake Carlyle.

July 3–5: Carlyle Lake Dam Jam: The Carlyle Lake Dam Jam Annual Music Festival at Beautiful Dam West Recreation Area of Carlyle Lake. 4th of July weekend with all-day events & fireworks.

July 12–18: Clinton County Fair: Livestock, 5K and parades.

July 25: New Baden Farmers Market in New Baden, IL.

July 25: Carlyle Lake Lighted Boat Parade starting at 8:30 p.m.

Aug. 14: Cruz-In the Dam Car Show at Mariner's Village Resort, Lake Carlyle.

Aug. 29: New Baden Farmers Market in New Baden, IL.

Sept. 6: Albers Hootenanny at Lehrter/Jaycee Park & Stage, 500 Park Ave., Albers, IL. For more information visit the Village of Albers Facebook page.

Sept. 11 & 12: Carlyle Street Fair in downtown Carlyle, IL, around the Clinton County Courthouse Square. Live music, beer and soda wagon, car show, pet parade, kids' activities, delicious food, vendor sales, basketball tournament, bags tournament and lots of family fun! 4–10 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m.–9 p.m. on Saturday.

Sept. 17–21: Illinois Lincolnland Hippy Fest at Carlyle Lake Dam West Campground on Dam West Campground Road, Carlyle, IL. Take in the lake life while stepping back in time to the late 1960s. Think tie-dye, vinyl records, bell bottoms, long hair, lava lamps, flower power, peace signs and a mellow "groovy" vibe. For more information, contact Kathy and Jim Ceryes at 618-444-5101 or email ceryeskm@icloud.com

Sept. 20: Carlyle Lake Triathlon. Experience an exciting beach start for the beautiful Carlyle Lake swim, transitioning to a flat, scenic bike course over the plains of Illinois. The run takes you on rolling country roads to finish coming over the spillway at the end with a view of the largest man-made lakes in Illinois. With multiple distance options to choose from, there is sure to be an event for every type and skill level of triathlete! You'll revel in the famously flat and fast roads of Carlyle, the view over the spillway of the dam, and much, much more!! For more information including course maps, schedule of events, race options, volunteer sign-up, etc., please visit mseracing.com/carlyle-lake-triathlon

Oct. 16 & 17: Carlyle Lake Haunted Trail at Dam West Boat Ramp / Little Prairie Nature Trail at Lake Carlyle.

Oct. 24: Campground Trick-or-Treat at Dam West Campground at Lake Carlyle.



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2026-2027 Season Announcement - May 28, 2026
Ticket sales begin August 10, 2026



STOP, SHOP, & EAT LOCAL IN CARLYLE!

ANNUAL EVENTS

- Polar Plunge
- Farmers Market
- City Wide Yard Sales
- Street Fair
- Clinton County Fair
- 4th of July Fireworks
- Cruisin' the Dam Car Show
- Haunted Trail
- Pumpkin Patch
- Christmas in Carlyle



St. Clair County Events

May 2: May Market Home & Garden Show 9 a.m.–4 p.m. on Brick Street in Lebanon, IL. A family-friendly event. Close to 100 vendors selling plants, crafts, and food. Live music.

May 2: Kentucky Derby Day Celebration in downtown Mascoutah noon–5 p.m. at the Visitor Center (Main & Jefferson). Get gussied up and celebrate the Derby in style. 20+ craft vendors, bags tournament, food and drinks, free photo booth, virtual horse racing with prizes, hat contest and more.

May 3: The St. Louis Academy Brass Band, along with the St. Louis Academy Brass and the St. Louis Youth Brass, come to the Hett at McKendree University for an afternoon of terrific music. Under the direction of Dr. John Bell, the St. Louis Academy Brass Band placed second in their section at the 2024 North American Brass Band Association Championships. Audiences will be treated to delightful music ranging from standard brass band repertoire to lighter toe-tapping tunes and beautiful ballads. 3 p.m.

May 9: Vine Street Market Opening Day featuring local vendors, live music and food trucks 8 a.m.–noon at O'Fallon Station in O'Fallon, IL.

May 15–17: Art on the Square at the Veterans Memorial Fountain in downtown Belleville, IL featuring original work of over 100 accomplished artists from over 27 states and one artist from outside the U.S. with over 50 new artists in 2026, Wine Court entertainment, delicious local food and drink, children's art garden and more.

May 16 & 17: Belle-Clair Fairgrounds Flea Market. More information online at bcfairgrounds.net/

June 26 & 27: Freedom Fest, a two-day concert festival in Belleville, IL at Lindenwood University.

July 31–Aug. 2: 100th Mascoutah Homecoming Und Augustfest, Southwestern Illinois' largest summer festival with three days of parades, live music, carnival rides, delicious food including German cuisine and fair food, truck and tractor pulls, a classic car show and more for a community celebration. Visit mascoutahhomecoming.org for more information.

August 28–30: Midwest Salute to the Arts Festival in Fairview Heights, IL.

Sept. 18–20: Belleville Oktoberfest in downtown Belleville, IL.

Nov. 14: Art & Wine Walk in downtown Belleville, IL. Stroll downtown Belleville Main Street while sampling wines & celebrating unique local artisans and their work at 30 locations.



Shelby County Events

May 2: Westside Car Show at Johnstowne Mall in Shelbyville, IL. All makes, models, years welcome including classic, custom, muscle, modern, trucks and more! Awards and trophies, community favorite voting. Family-friendly event. Live outdoor music, food trucks, vendors, and more!

May 8 & 9: Chet Kingery Memorial Bluegrass Festival at the historic Chautauqua Auditorium at Forest Park, Shelbyville, IL. Friday Evening music by Kenny & Amanda Smith — Coal Creek Station. Saturday features Appalachian Road Show, Lonesome River Band, Tony Holt and the Wildwood Valley Boys and Illinois Rail. Host band is Mackville on Friday and Saturday. For more info, visit mackvillebluegrass.com

May 9: Mother's Day Bake Sale in Herrick, IL.

May 16: Free Movie Day at the Roxy Theatre in downtown Shelbyville. Free entry for kids and their families. "Trolls Band Together" will be the feature movie starting at 10 a.m.

May 16: Makers & Growers Markets at Johnstowne Mall parking lot in Shelbyville 8-11 a.m.

May 23: Village Wide Rummage Sales starting 7 a.m. in Strasburg, IL. Hot breakfast served by SCAN on Commercial Street.

May 23: Live music by Flight Fifty band 7-10 p.m. at The Foxmore in downtown Shelbyville. Doors open at 6 p.m.

May 25: Memorial Day service at Veterans Memorial 11 a.m. in Strasburg, IL. Meal at the park.

June 4-6: Moweaqua Pow Wow Days in Moweaqua, IL. Carnival rides, food vendors, cow-abunga bingo. Pow wow pageants. Cake walk. Annual parade. Nightly music entertainment. 90s Daughter band will play Saturday at 6:30 p.m. Bring lawn chairs! Free show! Visit the Moweaqua Pow Wow Facebook page for updates.

June 6: Lions Club Chicken Fry 4-7 p.m. at the park in Strasburg, IL.

June 20: Makers & Growers Markets at Johnstowne Mall parking lot in Shelbyville 8-11 a.m.

June 20: Free Movie Day at the Roxy Theatre in downtown Shelbyville. Free entry for kids and their families. "Trolls World Tour" will be the feature movie starting at 10 a.m.

June 20: Father's Day Bake Sale in Herrick, IL.

June 28: Stewardson's 4th of July Celebration: Happy 250th Birthday Moo-Merica — A Small-Town Celebration of Freedom, Farming & Community featuring a lighted parade and fireworks.

July 3 & 4: Herrick 4th of July Celebration in Herrick, IL.

July 3-5: 250th 4th of July Celebration in Shelbyville, IL. Parade, outdoor movie, fireworks, and more!

July 10 & 11: Lions Club Homecoming with tractor pull and sandwiches at the park in Strasburg, IL.

July 18: Makers & Growers Markets at Johnstowne Mall parking lot in Shelbyville 8-11 a.m.

July 18: Free Movie Day at the Roxy Theatre in downtown Shelbyville. Free entry for kids and their families. "Spirit" will be the feature movie starting at 10 a.m.

July 18-22: Shelby County 4-H & Junior Fair at the Fairgrounds in Shelbyville, IL. 4-H Junior Horse and Pony Show July 18 at 4 p.m. Youth Livestock Auction July 22 at 6 p.m. Visit the Shelby County, IL 4-H Facebook page for more info.

July 24 & 25: Findlay Walleye Festival featuring the Greg Bickers Band from 3-6 p.m. on Saturday, July 25.

Aug. 13-15: Windsor Harvest Picnic in the park in Windsor, IL.

Aug. 15: Makers & Growers Markets at Johnstowne Mall parking lot in Shelbyville 8-11 a.m.

Aug. 19: Free Movie Day at the Roxy Theatre in downtown Shelbyville. Free entry for kids and their families. "How To Train Your Dragon" will be the feature movie starting at 10 a.m.

Aug. 21 & 22: Pioneer Days of Cowden at the park in Cowden, IL. Rodeo, multiple music and variety acts, a full carnival, food stands and vendors. Celebrating America 250.

Aug. 23: Car-Truck-Motorcycle-Golf Cart Show at Windsor American Legion Post 725 on Maine Street in Windsor, IL. Registration noon-2:30 p.m. Awards at 3 p.m. Dash plaques for first 50. Rain or shine. Proceeds to benefit American Legion projects. For more info, call Mike at 217-962-9945 or Jeff at 217-259-5333.

Sept. 5: Fall Village Wide Rummage Sales in Strasburg, IL. Hot breakfast served by SCAN on Commercial Street.

Sept. 18-20: Dirtworx MTB Fest 2026 at Lone Point Campground in Findlay, IL featuring mountain biking, camping and trail riding at General Dacey and Camp Camfield Trails. The weekend includes night rides, group rides, a lighted bike parade, bike games / scavenger hunt, live music and community meals. Location: 1653 2175 East Road, Findlay, IL 62534 (Lake Shelbyville). For more info, visit facebook.com/dirtworxmtbfest

Sept. 19: Makers & Growers Markets at Johnstowne Mall parking lot in Shelbyville 8-11 a.m.

Oct. 9 & 10: Scarecrow Daze in Shelbyville, IL. Barstool open, mystery walk, vendors & food trucks, car show, contests, parade and more!

Oct. 9-11: Touchstone Energy Balloon Fest in Shelbyville, IL.

Oct. 30: Halloween soup supper, parade, costumes and cake walk at the community center in Strasburg, IL.

Nov. 7: Santa Brigade Breakfast 6 a.m. & Christmas Market starting 7 a.m. at St. Paul's Social Hall & Gym in Strasburg, IL.

Nov. 7: Turkey Bingo in Herrick, IL.

Nov. 20: Shelbyville Festival of Lights opens in Forest Park in Shelbyville, IL. Drive-thru lights display is open every night through New Year's night. Festival of Trees features decorated trees in the Chautauqua building at Forest Park in Shelbyville, IL.

Nov. 21: Holiday in Herrick in Herrick, IL.

Nov. 28: Moweaqua Christmas on Main 8 a.m.-9 p.m. in Moweaqua, IL.

Dec. 5: Christmas in the 'Burg at Strasburg, IL.

Dec. 11 & 12: Christmas Store / Cookie Walk at the Community Center in Strasburg, IL. Santa arrives Saturday 9:30-11 a.m.

Dec. 13: Annual Lutheran Churches Christmas Cantata. Visit St. Paul's Lutheran Church / Strasburg, IL for more information on location and time of event.

Dec. 31: Live music by Decade of Decadence band at The Foxmore in downtown Shelbyville, IL. Rock in the new year with an 80's rock party! Doors open at 8 p.m. Music 9 p.m.-12:30 a.m.




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Mt. Vernon, Illinois offers the perfect mix of relaxation and adventure—all within a couple hours' drive. Whether you're planning a couples retreat, a family weekend, or a spontaneous road trip, you'll find plenty to explore (and plenty of reasons to stay a little longer).

Relax, Recharge, and Explore

Spend your mornings on the water at Rend Lake, one of Southern Illinois' most scenic outdoor destinations. Go boating, cast a line, hike peaceful trails, or simply enjoy the view. Prefer a slower pace? Pack a picnic and soak in the fresh air.



Savor Local Flavor

From cozy cafés to local favorites, Mt. Vernon's dining scene delivers. Start your day with a fresh breakfast, grab a casual lunch downtown, and wind down with dinner at one of the area's welcoming restaurants. Don't forget dessert—because weekends are for treating yourself.

Something's Always Happening

Plan your trip around one of Mt. Vernon's signature events and festivals, where live music, local vendors, and community spirit come together. From seasonal celebrations to can't-miss festivals, there's always a reason to visit.



Stroll, Shop, and Discover

Explore charming shops, local boutiques, and hidden gems throughout town. It's the kind of place where you'll find something unexpected—and meet people who make you feel right at home.

Stay Your Way

With a variety of comfortable and affordable lodging options, it's easy to turn a day trip into a full weekend escape.



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Arrive Friday night, wake up to fresh coffee and a day outdoors, spend the afternoon exploring shops and local eats, and cap it off with live music or a sunset by the lake. Simple, memorable, and exactly what a weekend should be.

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Jasper County Events

June 4: Magic Hunks Australia Takeover 7-9:30 p.m. at MVP Happy Holler, 10524 East 1400th Ave., Newton IL 62448.

Saturdays June-September: Farmers Market 8 a.m.–noon at Picquet Park in Sainte Marie, IL.

June 20: Rock the River Bottoms afternoon and evening event at The Hill Bar, 20006 E. 400th, Willow Hill, IL. Live music by 13 Grit, Mitch Faulkner & The MF Band and Whiskey Weekend. Food trucks, bartender dunk tank, cold beverages and mechanical bull 8 p.m.–midnight.

June 21-27: Jasper County Fair at the Fairgrounds in Newton, IL.

June 27: Whippoorwill Rodeo at Jasper County Fair in Newton, IL 7 p.m.

July 3: America 250 — A Jasper County Celebration — Downtown Ste. Marie, IL. Celebrate America's 250th birthday smalltown style at the Jasper County America 250 Celebration this July. Enjoy an evening of live music from a local band, old-fashioned games that are fun for all ages, and plenty of cold drinks to keep you cool. As the sun sets, the night will cap off with a dazzling fireworks show lighting up the Jasper County sky — perfect for family photos, date nights, and community pride all in one festive summer celebration.

Nov. 28: Whoville Christmas Celebration in Sainte Marie, IL.

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Jefferson County Events

April 29-May 3: Mt. Vernon Big Spring Carnival. Join us on the grounds of Roadhouse Harley Davidson in Mt. Vernon, IL for an unforgettable event featuring carnival rides, games, delicious food, and so much more! Whether you're looking for a fun family outing, a night out with friends, or an adventure on the rides, this carnival has something for everyone.

May 1, June 5, Aug. 7, Sept. 11, Oct. 2, and Nov. 6: Friday's Food & Art is a monthly community event held at The Commons in downtown Mt. Vernon, Illinois, running from 5–8 p.m. It features a variety of local food trucks, artists and live music, acting as a vibrant social gathering for the community.

May 9, June 13, July 4 and Aug. 8: Market days 10 a.m.–3 p.m. Mt. Vernon's Flea Market & Vendor Fair returns with indoor and outdoor vendor booths, food trucks and so much more! S. 9th St. & Broadway Commons, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

May 23: Strawberry Festival 10 a.m.–5 p.m. at Jefferson County Historical Village, 1411 N. 27th St., Mt. Vernon, IL. Food, plant sale, cruise-in (for more info, contact Brian Burwell at 618-246-6622), vendors, and more!

May 30: Pride in the Park 10 a.m.–9 p.m. at Rolland Lewis Building, 800 S. 27th St., Mt. Vernon IL. Food, vendors, music and entertainment. Full day of activities for the LGBTQIA+ community and allies.

June 6: Mt. Vernon Brewers Festival noon–4 p.m. at The Commons, 911 Broadway St., Mt. Vernon, IL. This event celebrates the craftsmanship of home and craft beer brewers from our vibrant community and beyond. Savor a variety of brews and delicious food. Enjoy live music. This is a 21 and over event and tickets are required for entry.

June 13: Paw Fest 10 a.m.–3 p.m. at The Commons in Mt. Vernon, IL. Many vendor booths offering special pet items, crafts, delicious food and more! Entertaining demonstrations and informative exhibits on stage. Pet contests. Fun activities for all ages — children, dogs and owners. Pet runway show featuring adoptable dogs from the local Animal Control and regional rescues.

July 4: Salute to Freedom at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport, 100 Aviation Drive, Mt. Vernon, IL. Free admission, free parking, free shuttle bus and golf cart rides from the parking area. Live DJ, lazer tag, inflatables, Market Days vendors, food concessions, live music and a colossal fireworks display at dusk.

Aug. 8: Drive Thru Ice Cream Social 11 a.m.–3 p.m. at Jefferson County Historical Village in Mt. Vernon. Choices of ice cream flavors and toppings will be available, plus cake or a large cookie

and water. Outside and inside seating will be available.

Aug. 15: Ash Bash Art & Music Festival Farewell Tour 6–10 p.m. Aug. 14 and 4–11 p.m. Aug. 15 downtown & The Commons, Mt. Vernon, IL. Live music, beer & wine garden, food trucks, art & craft vendors, kids at the commons youth activities, live auction, raffles, fire dancers, unique artistic entertainment and more! Annual event raises funds for lymphoma and leukemia research and local cancer patients. Family-friendly festival.

Aug. 22: Village of Bluford 100th Year Anniversary Flea Market 8 a.m.–4 p.m. at Bluford School Track, 901 Sixth St., Bluford, IL. Vintage items, antiques, collectibles, crafts, treasures and an ice cream social.

Sept. 25 & 26: Mt. Vernon Fall Fest. Enjoy free live entertainment on the main stage both days, delicious festival foods, and fun for the whole family. Explore the Kids Zone with free laser tag, bounce houses & arcade games, dance to great music, shop from a wide variety of vendors, and take part in the ever-growing Fall Fest Parade. Unwind at the beer and wine tent, view classic cars and trucks on display, and so much more in downtown Mt. Vernon!

Oct. 3: Heritage Festival 10 a.m.–4 p.m. at the Jefferson County Historical Village, 1411 N. 27th St. in Mt. Vernon. Food & food vendors, demonstrations & vendors including baskets, blacksmiths, old coots' advice, woodcarvings, rope making, black powder guns, spinning, antique tractors, ham radios, Civil War doctor, soap, copper and silver jewelry, crafts, dulcimers, old-fashioned games and much more!

Dec. 5 & 6: Christmas Model Train, Nativity Set & Decorated Doll House Exhibit 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Dec. 5 and 1–4 p.m. Dec. 6. The model train exhibit will have running train sets with different gauges and village settings. The Nativity exhibit will feature a variety of sets including contemporary and vintage collections with some sets dating back to the 1940s and 50s and also sets from other countries.

Dec. 12 & 13: Christmas Model Train, Nativity Set & Decorated Doll House Exhibit 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Dec. 12 and 1–4 p.m. Dec. 13. The model train exhibit will have running train sets with different gauges and village settings. The Nativity exhibit will feature a variety of sets including contemporary and vintage collections with some sets dating back to the 1940s and 50s and also sets from other countries.

The 2026 Illinois camping magazine available in print and digital formats

The Illinois Campground Association (ICA) invites travelers to order a free copy of the 2026 Illinois camping magazine or view a digitized version by going online to www.illinoisgocamping.com

The 36-page magazine not only provides detailed information for scores of Illinois-based campgrounds and RV parks but also includes editorial celebrating two important 2026 milestones – the 100th anniversary of U.S. Route 66 and the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

ICA board chairman Jamie Rogers, owner of Mendota Hills Campground in Amboy, recently handed out the magazine to attendees at the Chicago RV & Camping Show, and received a lot of positive feedback on the content.

“We are proud to be the starting point of Route 66 for so many travelers. I saw firsthand the look of nostalgia on people’s faces as they explored our new ICA guides seeing the Route 66 signage on the cover and reading the articles. Many reflected on what it meant to them. There’s no doubt that 2026 will place this historic highway at the heart of unforgettable journeys and memories for years to come. Our campgrounds across Illinois are ready and excited to welcome this incredible community of travelers!”

U.S. Route 66 originates in Chicago, Illinois, and passes through central and southern Illinois and across seven more states to the west coast. It was one of the original highways in the United States Numbered Highway System and has a big presence in pop culture. In its early years, people used U.S. Route 66 to migrate west, before the advent of freeways and interstates.

ICA President and CEO Don Bennett, Jr., says, “It is a natural fit for campgrounds to celebrate an iconic route that brought prosperity to the outdoor hospitality industry and many other small businesses along the way. We hope many people are planning to slow down and take ‘the scenic route’ in their travels around Illinois this year, stopping at some of our terrific campgrounds along the way.”

The Illinois camping magazine is a useful planning and travel tool. Content including maps, park descriptions, editorials, and advertisements can inspire travelers in their search for a great place to camp and things to do nearby and give them the resources they need to make reservations and know what to expect whether they’re planning from home or looking for a place to stay while on the road.

The campgrounds featured in the magazine are members of the Illinois Campground Association, a not-for-profit organization of privately operated businesses ranging from small rustic campgrounds to full-ser-

vice RV resorts. ICA promotes camping in Illinois with its magazine and website, both of which help campers find parks based on location or amenities.

Campers are also encouraged to keep up with Illinois camping and travel information by following ICA on social media at www.facebook.com/illinoisgocamping.

For more information about camping in Illinois, visit www.IllinoisGoCamping.com.

About ICA: The Illinois Campground Association is a not-for-profit organization of privately operated campgrounds dedicated to improving family camping in Illinois through education, promotion, and support for its members and allied suppliers. More information is available at www.IllinoisGoCamping.com.



New recreational route signage unveiled at Du Quoin State Fairgrounds

Nearly a year after unveiling the first nature path at the Du Quoin State Fairgrounds, additional signage and tree identification markers have been installed.

The new sign, titled RECREATIONAL ROUTES, includes maps of three routes of varying lengths for those interested in walking, jogging or biking. The paths range from 1.2 to 2.08 miles in length. The sign is located inside Gate 4 at the Jackson Street entrance.

“The Du Quoin State Fairgrounds are a safe and beautiful location for recreation,” said Jerry Costello II, Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. “We invite the public to take full advantage of the routes, trails and natural spaces throughout the year, but especially as spring weather brings more people outdoors.”

Students from the Du Quoin FFA Chapter have added an interactive element to the Nature Trail at the fairgrounds through the creation of a new Tree ID Trail, also known as “Bark Codes.”

The student-led initiative provides visitors with an engaging way to identify Illinois native trees (and one non-native tree) along the trail. Each tree is marked with a plaque featuring the tree’s common and scientific name, images of its leaves

and fruit or nuts, and a QR code linking to additional information on the fairgrounds’ website.

Blake Asbury, Secretary of the Du Quoin FFA Chapter and head of the Environmental Committee within the National FFA Organization, led the project, which began in November 2025.

“What I hope visitors take away from exploring the nature area and using the tree identification trail is a greater appreciation for the environment and the natural resources around them,” Asbury said. “I hope they leave with new knowledge about tree species, a stronger connection to nature, and a sense of pride in the efforts being made by local students to improve and educate the community.”

Working alongside members of the chapter’s forestry team, Asbury coordinated research, design, construction, and installation of the identification stands.

“These historic grounds have so much to offer for year-round recreation,” said Luke Davison, manager of the Du Quoin State Fair. “We are grateful to the FFA students for their hard work and proud to showcase their contributions.”

Visit Du Quoin State Fair to learn more and follow along on social media for updates on future developments.



Original ‘Grease’ cast and car roll into Belleville drive-in for May event

MADISON LAMMERT
BELLEVILLE NEWS-DEMOCRAT

“**G**rease is the word” for the first weekend of May in the metro-east.

Original cast members and the movie’s original Greased Lightning car are heading to Belleville’s Skyview Drive-In for a special “Grease” fan event the weekend of May 1 and 2. The event, which runs from 5-8 p.m. each day ahead of the film screening, is organized by Greaseville USA.

Rydell High football captain Tom (Lorenzo Lamas), T-Birds Doody and Sonny (Barry Pearl and Michael Tucci), Pink Lady Jan (Jamie Donnelly) and the waitress (Ellen Travolta) are scheduled to appear, along with movie director Randal Kleiser and casting director Joel Thurm, a news release states.

They’ll be meet and greets, photo opportunities, autographs, displays and plenty of “Grease” merchandise.

The release also explains the venue itself is significant.

“The historic Skyview Drive-In provides the perfect setting for the celebration, recreating the nostalgic moviegoing experience that fans remember from the era when Grease first hit theaters,” the news release states.

Tickets are sold online at bit.ly/Greasefanevent. General admission, which includes meet and greets, are \$22 for adults and \$10 for children ages 3-12.

VIPs get access to the event two hours early, first in line for meet and greets, priority parking for the drive-in showing and Grease merchandise, the website states.

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Cumberland County Events

May 14-17: Toledo Spring Festival with theme "Small Town Big Galaxy" in downtown Toledo, IL featuring Luehrs Ideal Rides on the midway, Parade, YMCA Springfest 5K run, car show, food vendors and live music.

May 28-30: Neoga Days with theme Sweet Summertime. Xtreme activities, food vendors, pageants and more! Live music May 29 by Max Heuerman and The Little Truckers 7-10 p.m. and May 30 by Whiskey Weekend Band 7-10 p.m., both evenings in the Beer Garden. All events at Jennings Park in Neoga.

May 30: Greenup Citywide Garage Sales.

July 4: Greenup's Big Town Celebration.

Aug. 8: Camp New Hope Benefit Run.

Sept. 12: Late-Summer Market in Greenup, IL.

Sept. 26: Camp New Hope Family Fall Fest. Train rides on the Camp New Hope Trails, games and inflatables, Wheels of Hope Car Show, food trucks and a variety of vendors. Event at 1364 CR 100E, Neoga, IL 62447.

Oct. 10: Greenup Fall Festival and Citywide Garage Sales.

Richland County Events

April-October: Olney Downtown Market at Bower Park. Every Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Rediscover the charm of downtown shopping with local artisans at the market and nearby merchants.

July 4: Fireworks Spectacular. Richland County Fairgrounds/Olney City Park.

July 4: Ice Cream Social held at the Heritage House with entertainment in Olney.

Thursdays in June and July: 6-8 pm free Sounds of Summer concert series in Bower Park in Olney.

July 17-26: Richland County Fair, Olney City Park. Featuring pro diesel truck pulls, rodeo, livestock shows, carnival rides and demolition derby. For more information, call 618-392-0766 or visit richlandcountyfair.org

Aug. 8: 5:30 a.m.-noon RCRC White Squirrel Triathlon — Richland County Recreation Council. Every competitor receives a participation medal. Individual awards: Top 3 overall male/female, Top 3 overall Zeus/Xena, Top 3 male/female per age group. Teams (2-3 members): Top 3 teams per category in male, female, and co-ed. Tri includes 200-meter swim in an outdoor pool, 14.6-mile bike (helmets required), and a 5K/3.1 mile run/walk at 1200 N. Silver St., Olney, IL.

Aug. 16: WSCCC Car Show, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The White Squirrel Cruisers Car Club will be hosting their annual car show in the Olney City Park! Registration is from 9 a.m.-noon with a fee of \$20 per vehicle. Event is free to the public to come and look at the cars. Several classes of awards are up for grabs, including the Best of Show which will receive a trophy and \$500! Dash plaques will be given to the first 150 entries. Trophy presentation at 3 p.m.

Sept. 26: OAC Fall Festival, Olney Park 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Food, vendors, crafts, entertainment and more.

Oct. 31: Trustbank Halloween Parade, downtown Olney 5-7 p.m.

Nov. 28: Olney Christmas Parade, downtown Olney 6:30-9 p.m.

Nov. 26-Dec. 31: Olney Christmas Light Display, downtown Olney 5-9 p.m.

Clay County Events

April 29-May 2: Black & Tan Days at Charley Brown Park in Flora, IL. UKC Licensed Nite Hunts and Bench Shows sponsored by American Black & Tan Coonhound Association. Three nights of warm-up hunts on Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday!

May 16: Flora Tourism Springfest BBQ Cook-Off and Home & Garden Show at Library Park in Flora, IL. BBQ Cook-off, vendors, home & garden show, bands and more.

May 30: Shriners Hospitals For Children 5th Annual Masonic Lodge Auction 10 a.m. at Charley Brown Park Fairgrounds in Flora. To make a donation to the auction, call 618-843-3815. For monetary donations, all checks and money orders made out to "Shriners Hospital" and mailed to Don Fry at 323 E. Fourth St., Flora, IL 62839.

July 4: Fourth of July Celebration. Includes live entertainment, food and fireworks at Charley Brown Park in Flora, IL.

July 24-31: Clay County Fair in Flora, IL.

July 25: Clay County Cruisers Car Show at Charley Brown Park in Flora, IL.

June through September Saturdays: Flora Farmer's Market on the Flora Public Library lawn in Flora, IL 8 a.m.-noon.

Oct. 31: Flora Chamber Halloween Parade. Floats, bands, masqueraders, antique and emergency vehicles, and much more make up a parade lasting over two hours through Flora's main downtown street, North Avenue. Starting at 7 p.m., the parade each year draws huge crowds the entire length of the parade route, which starts at Flora's historic B&O Railroad Depot and ends about one mile later at Christ's Church. For more information, contact 618-662-5646.

Late November-December: Charley Brown Park Christmas Lights. An annual driving tour through park lights in Flora, IL.

Edgar County Events

May 9: Paris Pirate Festival 4-8 p.m. at the Paris Square in Paris, IL. Event includes a costume contest in front of the courthouse at 7:30 p.m. for kids and adults. Parade at 2 p.m. Dunk tank, plank walk, barrel shooting, sword fighting scene, gold coin dig, treasure hunt and interactive characters scene acting, vendors and more. Family fun event.

June 13: Eiffel Tower Triathlon includes a spring distance with a 500-meter swim, 20K bike and 5K run or an Olympic distance with a 1500-meter swim, 40K bike and 10K run. This is a USA Triathlon-certified event at Twin Lakes Park in Paris, IL.

July 18-25: Edgar County Fair in Paris, IL featuring Dylan Scott with special guest Blake Whiten on Saturday, July 18.

Oct. 10: The Four C Notes live at Paris Center of Fine Arts.

Nov. 21: So Good: The Neil Diamond Experience at Paris Center of Fine Arts.

Where the Locals Eat

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Explore OLNEY Illinois

Between hanging out at the pool, boating at the lakes, exploring parks and nature trails, and relaxing at the wineries, there is a lot of fun to be had in Olney! In the summer, make sure to swing by the City Park on Wednesday evenings to enjoy the Cummins Municipal Band in June through July 4. Concerts start at 7:30pm.



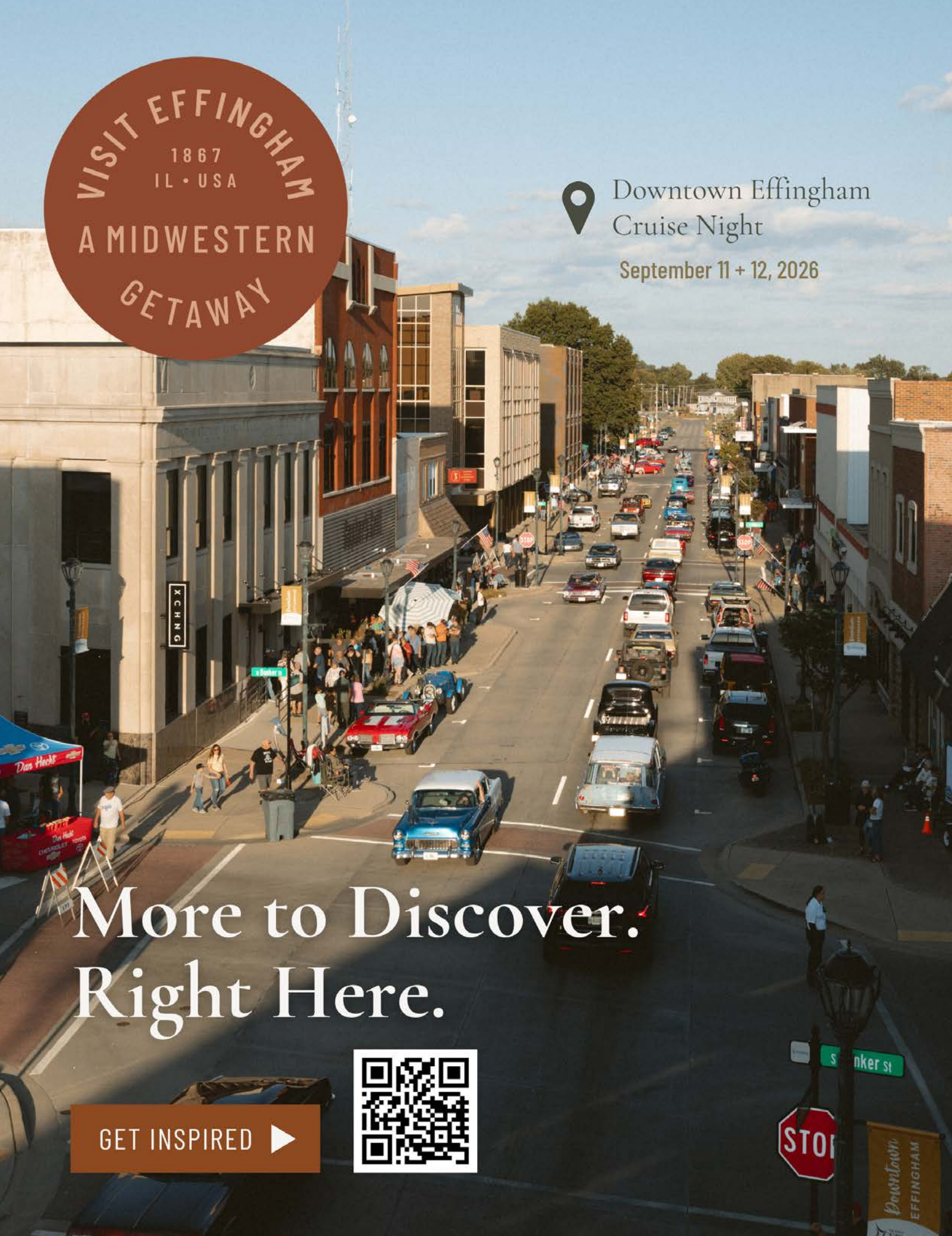

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