

A Day Away

Fall/Winter 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

Fall/Winter 2026

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ROUTE 66 TURNS 100

Route 66 Motorheads Bar & Grill, Museum and Entertainment Complex. Photo courtesy enjoyillinois.com



ON THE COVER

In this Associated Press file photo, a child picks a pumpkin for carving. (AP Photo/Andreea Alexandru)

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Trip planner for FRIENDS

Discover Downstate Illinois prepared a trip planner to help you plan the ultimate weekend getaway with friends filled with adventure, local culture, and vibrant hangouts across Downstate Illinois.



Mullen's Dressing, Palestine

DOLL'S ORCHARD (POCAHONTAS)

Pick-your-own fruits and seasonal events – perfect for groups who enjoy outdoor fun and fresh flavors.

CUMBERLAND ROAD COFFEE HOUSE (ST. ELMO)

Grab a delightful cup of joe from this independent coffee roaster.

NATIONAL ROAD MURAL (MARSHALL)

A vibrant outdoor gallery perfect for group strolls and photo ops celebrating Illinois heritage.

LOOKING GLASS PLAYHOUSE (LEBANON)

Engage in theater performances and live shows tailored for younger adult audiences.

THE FILLIN' STATION (TOLEDO)

Tasty snacks and events crafted for social gatherings with friends.

WHITE BARN (NEW BADEN)

Shop unique antique vendors from talented local makers.

KAYAK EAST FORK LAKE (OLNEY)

Spend a day paddling with Rent.fun, a self-service kayak rental company located at Rotary Park.

IRON SADDLE RANCH (SALEM)

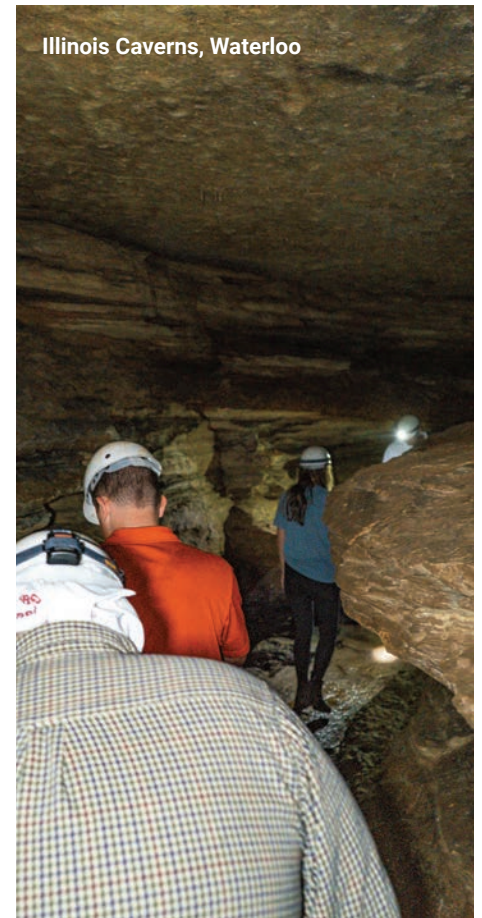
Iron Saddle Ranch is your one-stop spot for great food, trailer shopping, and unforgettable rodeos and events.

MULLEN'S DRESSING (PALESTINE)

Grab your friends for a weekday Mullen's tour. Learn the history, see the production in action, and take-home tasty treats.

ILLINOIS CAVERNS (WATERLOO)

A unique outdoor adventure below ground.



Illinois Caverns, Waterloo



National Road mural, Marshall

Spend A DAY AWAY in Illinois Amish Country

Founded over 150 years ago, the Amish Community in the Arthur Area is the oldest and largest Amish settlement in Illinois. Over the last century and a half, the Amish community has grown to become a large and integral part of the Arthur way of life. While farming has always been a significant part of the Amish culture, other cottage industries have arisen such as woodworking, cabinet-making, quilting, and baking. The Amish maintain a level of craftsmanship in all their work that keeps their community thriving to this day.

The Amish religion and culture are most notably characterized by simple dress, living without electricity, and carefully choosing any technology they adopt, including transportation. It is not out of the ordinary to see horse-drawn buggies, wagons, farm equipment, and bicycles on the road. These traditional forms of transportation are hallmarks of the Amish Culture.

The main street of Arthur offers several shops and many Amish farms and businesses can be found on the outskirts of town. You'll find the proprietors of these farms and businesses to be quite accommodating, but remember all Amish businesses are closed on Sundays.

While visiting the Arthur Area, please be reminded that out of respect for the members of the Amish faith, we ask that you do not take photographs of their likeness. And remember to be watchful of the many horse-drawn buggies, bicycles, and farm implements as you drive through Amish country. Keep in mind that they are probably moving slower than you think.

This slower pace of life is what draws tourists to this area. The peacefulness of our rural area and the wide variety of quaint shops, hard-to-find



goods and bakeries keeps visitors yearning to come back again and again to escape the hustle and bustle, some for just a few hours while others spend a day or entire weekend.

Much like a handcrafted patchwork quilt, the Amish and "English" (non-Amish) communities are woven together in everything we do- we shop together, we go to school together, we work together. Come experience for yourself the rich history and time-honored tradition of the Arthur Area. It will undoubtedly give you a whole new appreciation for the simpler things in life.



53rd Cheese Festival
September 4 & 5
Arthur, IL

2 - DAYS OF FAMILY FUN

- National Cheese Curling Competition
- Cheese Eating Contest
- Buggy Rides / Pony Rides
- Cheese Curd Spitting Competition
- Car Show
- Cheese Carving
- Food Vendors / Crafters Market
- Live Entertainment

FREE CHEESE GIVEAWAYS DAILY



Scan this code for more information on Arthur events

SAVE THE DATE!

Arthur's PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 3, 2026
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Arthur, Illinois

- FOOD TRUCKS
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Douglas County Events

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. Petting zoo. Train rides. Friday Auction 6-9 p.m. BBQ Pulled Pork Dinners & Food Booths 4:30-8 p.m. Saturday Pancakes & Sausage 6-10 a.m., Auction 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Lunch 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Silent Auction 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Children's Auction 10 a.m. For more info visit www.arthurreliefale.org or contact Glen Rhodes at 217-273-5026 or Stan Helmuth at 217-246-3712. Funds raised this year will go to support food and water needs in Africa and Asia.

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

Sept. 4 & 5: Amish Country Cheese Festival in Arthur IL. Cheese Eating Contest, National Cheese Curling Competition, Cheese Carving Contest and Cheese Curd Spitting Competition, Buggy Rides / Pony Rides, Car Show, Food Vendors / Crafters Market, Live Entertainment and more!

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. Pick up maps at the Arthur Visitor's Center.

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 & 19: Town Wide Garage Sales in Atwood 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. 19: The Amish Country Tour - Annual Bike Ride through Arthur, Atwood and Arcola.

Sept. 25: Semi-Annual Toy Auction 9:30 a.m. at the Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910.

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Sept. 26: Kiwanis Club Pancake Breakfast at Community Building in Tuscola IL.

Sept. 26: Annual Fall Consignment Sale 8:00 a.m. at the Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910.

Oct. 3: Arthur Pumpkin Festival 10 a.m.–6 p.m. in Arthur IL. Food Vendors, Mums and Pumpkins, Pumpkin Pie Eating Contest, Homemade Ice Cream, Straw Maze, Pumpkin Painting, Nationally-Renowned Pumpkin Carver, Corn Bin for Kids to play in, Tractor Show, Highland Cows, Music, Kids Tractor Pull and more! Fun for the whole family!

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. Registration at 9 a.m.

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. Friday Oct. 23 events include Bake Sale, Open House, Singing Program, Serving Fresh Mississippi Catfish 4–7:30 p.m., Gospel Singing Program 5:15–6:15 p.m., Mini Auction 6:30–8 p.m. Saturday Oct. 24 events include Bake Sale, Breakfast Bar 6–9 a.m., Lunch at 10 a.m. Auction starting 8 a.m. includes furniture, quilts, flowers, Haitian items, oak items, storage buildings and much more. Bring your family and stay for the day! All proceeds to Christian Missions in Haiti. For more info go to www.ilhba.org

Oct. 24–31: Lighted Pumpkin House Display in downtown Arthur IL.

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.

Oct. 27: Halloween activities in Tuscola.

Oct. 31: Trunk or Treat on Main Street in downtown Arcola IL 4–6 p.m.

Oct. 31: Halloween Festival in Atwood IL.

Nov. 6: Antique Tool Auction 9:00 a.m. at the Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910.

Nov. 7: Bi-Annual Fish Fry at the Otto Center in Arthur IL serving 11 a.m.–1 p.m. and 4–7 p.m. All day bake sale.

Nov. 13 & 14: Homesteaders Antique Show at the Arthur Sale Barn, 1204 Vine Street, Arthur IL 61911.

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 8 a.m.–3 p.m. at the Otto Center in Arthur IL. Primitives, Antiques, Country Furniture, Stoneware, Baskets, Tinware, etc

Nov. 21: 3rd Saturday Market / Bazaar at the Otto Center in Arthur IL showcasing crafters, woodworkers, direct sales businesses, baked goods and more.

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 9:00 a.m. at the Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910 with a Country Store Antiques Auction at 4:00 p.m.

Nov. 28: Advertising Signage, Petroliana & Collectibles Auction at 9:00 a.m. 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. Events include Elf Run / Walk, Bounce Houses, Food Trucks, Hot Chocolate Trail through downtown businesses, Local Artisans, Kids Activities, Carriage Rides, Lighted Parade at 5:30 p.m., Tree Lighting and more!

Dec. 5: Breakfast with Santa at Yoder's Kitchen 8–10 a.m. in Arthur IL.

Dec. 5: Central Illinois Rabbit Breeders Association Show at the Otto Center in Arthur IL.

Dec. 5: Great Christmas Sweep in downtown Arcola IL. Great food, vendors and fun during the holidays. This all-day community-wide festival features a charming lighted Christmas parade, horse-drawn carriage rides, local vendor markets, family-friendly events and more!

Dec. 12: Santa Arrives in Atwood IL.

Dec. 19: 3rd Saturday Bazaar at the Otto Center in Arthur IL.

Dec. 25: Free Community Christmas Lunch at Vine Street Christian Church in Arthur IL.

Dec. 28: Year End AG. Advertising / Memorabilia Auction at Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910.

2027 EVENTS

Feb. 2: Annual Winter Toy Auction at Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910.

Feb. 6: Annual Arthur EMT Association Chili Supper at the Arthur Fire & Ambulance Dept. on Rt. 133 in Arthur IL.

March 5 & 6: Country Spirit Antique Show & Sale in 2 locations: Best Western Green Mill Village, 917 Green Mill Road, Arcola IL 61910 and Tuscola Mall, 700 Tuscola Blvd, Tuscola IL 61953.

March 6: Gathering on the Prairie Antique Show 8 a.m.–3 p.m. at the Otto Center in Arthur IL. Primitives, Antiques, Country Furniture, Stoneware, Baskets, Tinware, etc

March 12 & 13: Annual Arthur Home & Garden Expo at the Otto Center in Arthur IL on Friday 10 a.m.–8 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m.–3 p.m.

March 19: Gospel Echoes Auction at the Otto Center. Prison ministry benefit auction / supper.

March 20: 3rd Saturday Bazaar at the Otto Center in Arthur IL.

April 2: Spring Toy & Farm Memorabilia Auction at Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910.

April 3: Spring Annual Consignment Auction at Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910.

April 3: Bi-Annual Fish Fry at the Otto Center in Arthur IL serving 11 a.m.–1 p.m. and 4–7 p.m. All day bake sale.



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April 9: Arthur Legacy of Love Foundation Benefit Supper & Auction at the Otto Center in Arthur IL. Bake Sale all evening. Live and Silent Auctions.

April 17: 3rd Saturday Bazaar at the Otto Center in Arthur IL.

April 29–May 1: Annual Arthur Quilt Show at the Otto Center in Arthur IL featuring over 100 quilts on display. Vendor shopping. Lunch stand on site. Open Thursday and Friday 10 a.m.–4 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

May 14: Strawberry Jam Festival in Arthur IL.

June 4 & 5: Arthur Days Fest in Arthur IL

June 26: Freedom Celebration / Parade / Fireworks in Arthur IL.

July 26–31: Moultrie-Douglas County Fair

August 20 & 21: Heart of Amish Country Pro Rodeo in Arthur IL.

August 27 & 28: Arthur Mennonite Relief Sale in Arthur IL.

Sept. 3 & 4: Amish Country Cheese Festival in Arthur IL.

Sept. 24: Fall Toy Auction at Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910.

Sept. 25: Fall Consignment Sale at Tri-County Auction Facility, 650 E. CR 400N, Arcola IL 61910.

Oct. 22 & 23: Haiti Benefit Auction in Arthur IL.

Oct. 24–31: Lighted Pumpkin House Display in Arthur IL.

Nov. 6: Bi-Annual Fish Fry at the Otto Center in Arthur IL.

Nov. 12 & 13: Antique Weekend in Arthur, Arcola and Tuscola.

Nov. 26: Black Friday Shopping Event in downtown Arthur IL, County Line Rd and Rt. 133 businesses.

Dec. 4: Breakfast with Santa at Yoder's Kitchen in Arthur IL.

Dec. 4: Lighted Christmas Parade and Festival in Arthur IL.

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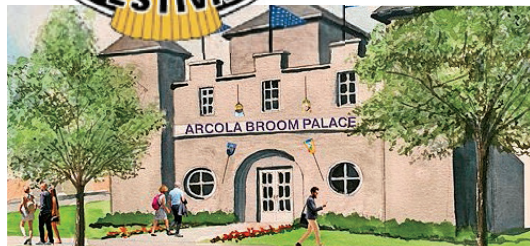


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Eagle Creek Golf course is at 2341 Eagle Creek Road in Findlay. It's nestled amid 34,000 acres of woods and prairie at Eagle Creek State Park.



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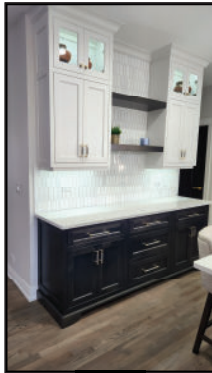
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Moultrie County Events

Sept. 5: Makers Market for Handmade and Homegrown 10 a.m.–2 p.m. at Building 1225 in Sullivan IL.

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.

Oct. 3: Fall Flea Market Day 9 a.m.–4 p.m. in downtown Lovington IL. Chili cook-off, kids face painting, music, local vendors, flea market items, and more!



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26 ways to explore Downstate Illinois in 2026

BY DISCOVER DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS

From castles and covered bridges to creamery cones and curious critters, Downstate Illinois is packed with 26 adventures you'll want on your 2026 bucket list.

1 Gateway Kartplex Madison

Located inside the oval track at World Wide Technology Raceway, the Gateway Kartplex delivers high-octane thrills with karts that can reach speeds of up to 60 mph. Its 11-turn, half-mile track offers a mix of long straights, tight turns, and multiple configurations, including the high-speed SuperTrack, for both casual drivers and seasoned racers. With rental karts, competitive racing series, a fully stocked pro shop, and private garage spaces, it's the ultimate spot for karting enthusiasts of all ages.

2 Eckert's Family Farms Belleville

Eckert's is a year-round destination for farm-fresh festivities. Pick seasonal favorites from peaches to pumpkins, then enjoy homestyle meals, shop at the country store, sip at the Cider Shed, or indulge in Mr. E's famous donuts and custard.

3 Fort de Chartres Prairie du Rocher

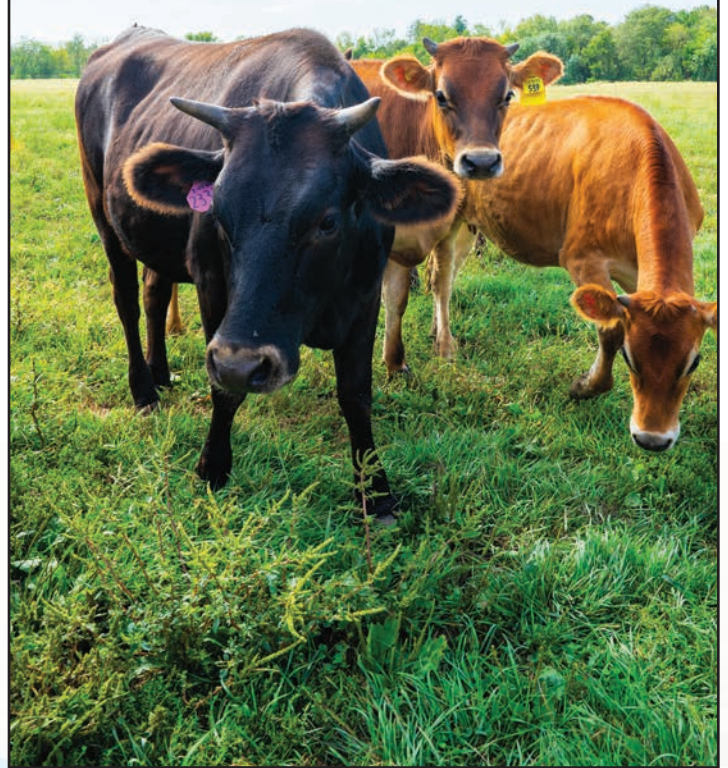
Fort de Chartres is a history lover's dream, open daily from sunrise to sunset. Built by the French in 1753 during their colonization of Illinois Country, this remarkable site offers a fascinating glimpse into 18th-century frontier life. The fort also comes alive with unforgettable events year-round, most notably the annual Rendezvous each June.

4 Popeye & Friends Character Trail Chester

Chester, the hometown of Popeye creator E.C. Segar, celebrates its famous sailor with 19 granite statues featuring Popeye and his beloved crew. Each statue includes a QR code to reveal fun facts about the character, making it a playful adventure for all ages. Before you leave, be sure to stop by Spinach Can Collectibles for the perfect Popeye souvenir.

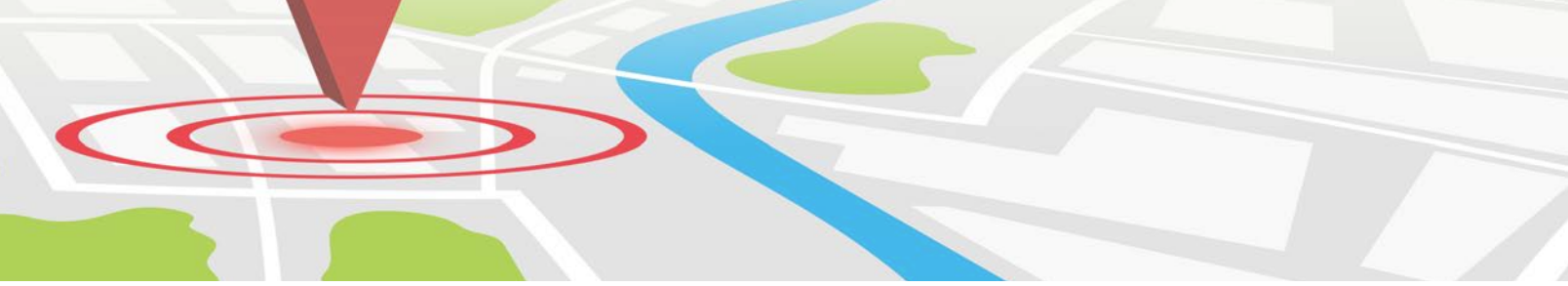
5 Marcoot Jersey Creamery Greenville

This seventh-generation, family-owned Jersey dairy farm produces artisan cheeses, creamy ice cream, savory beef, and even dog treats. Visitors can watch the cheesemaking process through large viewing windows, meet adorable calves, and see the state-of-the-art Robot Barn in action. With a legacy dating back to the 1840s, Marcoot blends rich heritage with sustainable farming to create farm-fresh flavors worth savoring.



6 The Game Yard Highland

Talk about the ultimate hangout spot, combining unique activities with a laid-back, welcoming atmosphere. Challenge friends to projected target axe throwing, giant Jenga, yard soccer, or high-speed iRacing and golf simulators. After all that fun, unwind with a drink from the full-service bar. With private party options, live entertainment, and the freedom to bring your own food or order in, it's the ultimate place to play, relax, and connect.



7 Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site **Lerna**

Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site preserves the 1840s home of Thomas and Sarah Bush Lincoln, father and stepmother of Abraham Lincoln. This 86-acre living history farm features a reconstructed two-room cabin on its original site, historic farmsteads, and the Moore Home, where Lincoln bid farewell to his family before leaving for the presidency. Visitors can explore daily life in 19th century Illinois while connecting with the personal history of our 16th president.

8 Cumberland County Covered Bridge **Greenup**

Originally built in 1832 as the Jackson Covered Bridge and rebuilt several times, the current structure was completed in 2001 as a faithful replica of the original. Spanning nearly 200 feet across the Embarras River, it's Illinois' longest covered bridge and a charming one-lane stop along the historic National Road.

9 Pyramid State Recreation Area **Pinckneyville**

This is the largest IDNR-managed site in Illinois, spanning over 19,700 acres of forested hills, lakes, and ponds. With more than 500 acres of water — including remote, hike-in lakes — it offers some of the best fishing and outdoor escapes in the state.

10 Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site **Vandalia**

The Vandalia Statehouse, Illinois' oldest surviving capitol building, served as the state's seat of government from 1836 to 1839 and is closely tied to Abraham Lincoln's legislative career. Visitors can explore historically furnished rooms, from the recreated House and Senate chambers to the Supreme Court chamber, with guided or self-guided tours available year-round. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the site also hosts special events.

11 Castle Ridge **Centralia**

Castle Ridge invites you to live like royalty. Whether you're tying the knot in its stunning castle setting or enjoying an elegant meal at Stonewater. The venue also hosts unforgettable events, from concerts to community celebrations, making it a true destination for dining, entertainment, and special occasions.

12 Carlyle Lake Sailing Association **Carlyle Lake**

Ever wanted to learn how to sail? The Carlyle Sailing Association offers youth and adult seminars that cover all the boating basics, then let you put your skills to the test out on the open water.



13 Rainbow Ranch Petting Zoo Nashville

This 170-year old family-owned farm is just 45 minutes east of St. Louis and offers an unforgettable exotic petting zoo experience. Guests can meet and interact with a wide array of friendly animals, from llamas, alpacas, and goats to zebras, zedonks, camels, and kangaroos. Whether you're visiting with kids, a group, or for a special celebration, Rainbow Ranch is a charming slice of countryside adventure.



15 Moonshine Store Martinsville

Tucked away in the pristine Illinois countryside, the Moonshine Store is a bucket-list stop for its world famous Moonshine Burger. Visitors from across the nation make the trek - but be warned, the grill shuts off at 12:30 p.m. sharp, so come early or miss out!

16 Sam Parr State Park Newton

Sprawling over 1,180 acres, this park includes a scenic 183-acre lake perfect for fishing, boating, and wildlife viewing. Named in honor of local conservationist Sam Parr, the site offers rolling timber, abundant birdlife, and waters teeming with bass, crappie, catfish, and more.

17 Heath Museum and Confectionery Robinson

Bask in this hometown treat in sweet style. Visitors can sip sodas or enjoy ice cream from an old-fashioned fountain, browse Heath memorabilia, and listen to oldies on a vintage jukebox. Don't forget to grab a bulk bag of Heath bars, or other Hershey favorites, before you go.

18 Historic Flora Train Depot Flora

Built in 1917 and beautifully restored, Flora's Train Depot now houses a museum, event space, and a 23-foot miniature train display. The layout features two moving trains, mountain backdrops, and a live-feed camera offering a passenger's eye view on a 70-inch screen. Visitors can also explore transportation artifacts from the early 1900s and local railroad history, making it a highlight for train lovers of all ages.

124 11 of the World's Largest Things Casey

Casey is home to 11 of the Guinness Book of World Records World's Largest Things, plus over 20 other big things, making it a must-see for roadside attraction lovers. Climb inside the World's Largest Mailbox to send a letter, ride the massive Teeter Totter, and snap photos with other giants like the Rocking Chair, Wooden Shoes, and Golf Tee - plus plenty more larger-than-life surprises.



19 White Squirrels Olney

Yes, you read that right! Olney is famous for its rare white squirrels! The best time to spot them is early in the morning at places like Olney City Park, Millers Grove, or shady residential neighborhoods with mature trees and feeding stations. Bring your camera for a truly one-of-a-kind wildlife sighting.

20 Twin Lakes Park Paris

A community favorite since 1895, Twin Lakes Park is the perfect spot for outdoor fun and relaxation. Visitors can boat, kayak, or paddle across the scenic waters, then enjoy a round of miniature golf, a game on the lighted horseshoe courts, or a stroll through the picnic areas. With a large shelter house, a professional league baseball diamond, and plenty of space to explore, it's a top destination for family friendly recreation in Paris.

21 Two Farmers Mt. Carmel

In Wabash County, this old-school burger joint is a must for smashburgers, flavorful fries, ice cream, creative soda concoctions, and more. Order at the walk-up window or cruise through the drive-thru for a taste of classic comfort food done right.

22 Skateland Rollersports Fairfield

For all of 2026, this will be your new go-to spot for family fun, offering roller skating, an Amazon-themed glowlight mini golf course, a jungle jumper, and a family play zone. Play glow golf for free during any public skating session, then stick around for great music, arcade games, and tasty snacks. It's an all-in-one destination, rain or shine.

23 Bailey's Bistro Albion

Blending American Italian flavors with warm hospitality, this inviting spot serves up specialties like Sammy's open-faced subs, gourmet salads, sweet sauce pizza, and homemade Alfredo. Since 2022, it's been a go-to destination where delicious food and good company meet in true harmony.

24 Fox Prairie Disc Golf Course McLeansboro

This disc golf course features 18 holes with concrete tees, DISCatcher Pro targets, and a mix of wooded and open shots for all skill levels. Established in 2022, it's cat and dog-friendly, with parking near hole one and refreshments available at the golf clubhouse.

25 Sunflower Broom Shop Crossville

Venture over to White County to shop handcrafted brooms that are as functional as they are beautiful. From witch and wedding brooms to everyday household styles, each piece is made the old-fashioned way using 19th- and early 20th-century, hand-and foot-powered equipment – no electricity involved. These timeless creations by artisan Claudie Parson keep a century-old craft alive.

26 Wild Child Flower Farm Sumner

This family-owned paradise for flower lovers offers tulip bunches and spring pop-ups, summer U-Pick days, custom bouquets, and DIY bouquet bars. From vibrant zinnias to towering sunflowers, the farm bursts with color from July to September and hosts lively vendor markets in July and November. It's a welcoming spot to gather, create, and enjoy the beauty of fresh blooms.



Shelby County Events

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

Sept. 5: Firehouse Jeep Fling. Registration starts 9:30 a.m. at the Firehouse in Cowden IL. Ride begins 11 a.m. A fun-filled day of off-road vehicles. There won't be any bar stops: family-friendly event. Food, drinks, raffles. All proceeds benefit Cowden-Herrick Fire Departments.

Sept. 6: Tractor Pull at the park in Sigel IL

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 Rd, Findlay IL 62534 (Lake Shelbyville). For more info visit www.facebook.com/dirtworxmtbfest

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



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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: New Year's Party. 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.

Champaign County Events

Aug. 28: Free Moo-vie Night featuring "Brother Bear" 8-10 p.m. at Prairie Farm, 2202 West Kirby Avenue, Champaign IL 61821. Grab a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy a film under the stars! Also enjoy concessions and time on the farm.

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 Proffitt 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. 3: Opening Night Party at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at the Colwell Playhouse 7:30 p.m. both nights. Performers include Mucca Pazza accompanied by the Marching Illini and large-scale puppets, Antibalas, Dr. Nativo, Funkadesi, and DJ Silkee.

Sept. 10: I Hear America Singing at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL. Created to honor the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, I Hear America Singing is a multimedia musical evening that weaves together traditional spirituals, work songs, and contemporary music by celebrated composers across genres.

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.

Sept. 16: Beetlejuice Broadway show at the State Farm Center in Champaign. StateFarmCenter.com/Broadway

Sept. 16: Cultura Pesa at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at Stage 5 at 7 p.m.

Sept. 17: Somali at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at Foellinger Great Hall 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 18: Sinfonia Da Camera: Mozart in G Minor at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at the Colwell Playhouse 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 24 & 25: Pygmalion Festival at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL with Mary Helen Specht at Stage 5 on Sept 24 at 5:30 p.m., Robby Hoffman at Foellinger Great Hall on Sept 24 at 7:30 p.m. and Julianna Barwick and Mary Lattimore at the Tryon Festival Theatre on Sept. 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 25: Free Moo-vie Night featuring "Luca" 8-10 p.m. at Prairie Farm, 2202 West Kirby Avenue, Champaign IL 61821. Grab a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy a film under the stars! Also enjoy concessions and time on the farm.

Sept. 26: One Piece Music Symphony with the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at Foellinger Great Hall 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 29: Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at Foellinger Great Hall 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. 1: John Summit at State Farm Center in Champaign IL.

Oct. 2 & 3: Cynthia Oliver Company Dance Theatre presents Turn. Turning. TURNT. at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at the Colwell Playhouse 7:30 p.m. both nights.

Oct. 2 & 3: Lyric Under the Stars at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at the Alice Campbell Center Courtyard 7:30 p.m. both nights.

Oct. 7: Clue, Live on Stage! Broadway show at the State Farm Center in Champaign. StateFarmCenter.com/Broadway

Oct. 7: Sasha Velour's Travesty at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at the Tryon Festival Theatre 7:30 p.m.

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. 9: Joshua Redman Quartet at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at the Tryon Festival Theatre 7:30 p.m.

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!

Oct. 14: The Wiz Broadway show at the State Farm Center in Champaign. StateFarmCenter.com/Broadway

Oct 16 & 17: We Interrupt This Program coming to the historic Virginia Theatre in Champaign at 7:30 p.m. both nights.

Oct. 19: Waitress Broadway show at the State Farm Center in Champaign. StateFarmCenter.com/Broadway

Oct 30: Straight No Chaser 7:30 p.m. at the historic Virginia Theatre in Champaign.

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.

Nov. 10: Echoes Across The Atlantic: Apollo's Fire at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at Foellinger Great Hall 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 12: Campus Nights Tour featuring Elevation Rhythm at 7 p.m. at the historic Virginia Theatre in Champaign, IL.

Nov. 15: Little Feat: The Last Farewell Tour 7:30 p.m. at the historic Virginia Theatre in Champaign IL.

Dec. 4: Sinfonia Da Camera: Handel's Messiah at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at Foellinger Great Hall 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 9: Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra: Holiday Magic at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at Foellinger Great Hall 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 15: Mannheim Steamroller Christmas by Chip Davis at 7 p.m. at the historic Virginia Theatre in Champaign IL.



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2027

April 1: Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at Illinois in Urbana IL at Foellinger Great Hall 7:30 p.m.

May 6: The Book of Mormon Broadway show at the State Farm Center in Champaign. StateFarmCenter.com/Broadway

May 10: Shucked Broadway show at the State Farm Center in Champaign. StateFarmCenter.com/Broadway



Football Saturdays bring a special energy as Illini fans gather at Memorial Stadium for Big Ten matchups. Photo courtesy of Experience Champaign-Urbana

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Coles County Events

Sept. 3: Concerts in the Park featuring Solidgold Oldies. Free concert 7-8 p.m. in Kiwanis Park at the Daum Amphitheater in Charleston IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and listen to Solidgold Oldies.

Sept. 5: Labor Day Picnic and Vintage Base Ball at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site in Lerna IL. Step back in time and join a 19th-century game. Free and open to all — play or watch!

Sept. 10: Concerts in the Park featuring Yvonne Larson Trio. Free concert 7-8 p.m. in Kiwanis Park at the Daum Amphitheater in Charleston IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

Sept. 11: Cruisin' Broadway Downtown Mattoon 6-9:30 p.m. A fun event for the entire family!

Sept. 17: Concerts in the Park featuring Moondogs. Free concert 7-8 p.m. in Kiwanis Park at the Daum Amphitheater in Charleston IL. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

Sept. 19: Special Olympics Family Festival 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Lake Land College in Mattoon IL with The Wizard of Oz / Wicked energy "There's No Place Like SOFF" theme.

Sept. 19: Mumfest at Bloomfield Garden Center in Mattoon IL. Pumpkins, mums, fall floral arrangements, vendors, live music, fun activities for the kids, food trucks and more!

Sept. 26 & 27: Lincoln Log Cabin Fall Harvest Frolic. Celebrate autumn at the Harvest Frolic!



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Activities at both the Lincoln and Sargent farms at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site in Lerna IL 10 a.m.–4 p.m. both days include children's crafts, food preservation, hearth cooking, and artisan demonstrations: spinning, pottery, blacksmithing, embroidery, and more. live music, storytelling, food trucks.

Oct. 2 & 3: The Full Throttle Rodeo at Coles County Speedway, 10743 E. Co. Rd. 900N, Mattoon IL, features bull riding, bronc riding, barrel racing, and a mechanical bull. Live music Friday night.

Oct. 9: Cruisin' Broadway Downtown Mattoon 6–9:30 p.m. A fun event for the entire family!

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, a premier holiday shopping event, at McKenna Yost Convention Center, 100 Coles Centre Parkway, Mattoon IL Nov. 6 from 4–8 p.m. and Nov. 7 from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. 40+ vendors, guest photos, food and drink trucks and donations to local charities.

Nov. 19: Mattoon Lightworks Walk Through in Peterson Park in Mattoon.

Nov. 20–Dec. 27: Mattoon Lightworks open in Peterson Park in Mattoon.

Nov. 26: Bare Bones Turkey Trot at Mattoon Area Family YMCA. This non-competitive road run with one self-service water station has a 5-mile or 3-mile route option and begins at 6 a.m. The routes take runners through the Mattoon Lightworks display at Peterson Park before sunrise. After the race, head inside the Y at either location for the Early Bird event, featuring energizing group fitness classes. New this year will be the Pre-Race Celebration at Bock Gym beginning at 5 a.m. featuring family fun, games, photo opportunity, hot cocoa and refreshments. Packet Pick-Up is November 25 from 5 a.m.–8 p.m. or November 26 from 5–5:45 a.m. All race proceeds benefit the YMCA's Membership for All program. For more information, call the Y at 217-234-9494.

Nov. 29: Thanksgiving on Goosenest 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.

Dec. 4: Celebrate Mattoon Downtown Christmas

Dec. 5: Christmas in the Heart of Charleston on the square in downtown Charleston IL. Parade at 4 p.m. Christmas season activities 4–7 p.m.

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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Experience the living history program at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site May through October

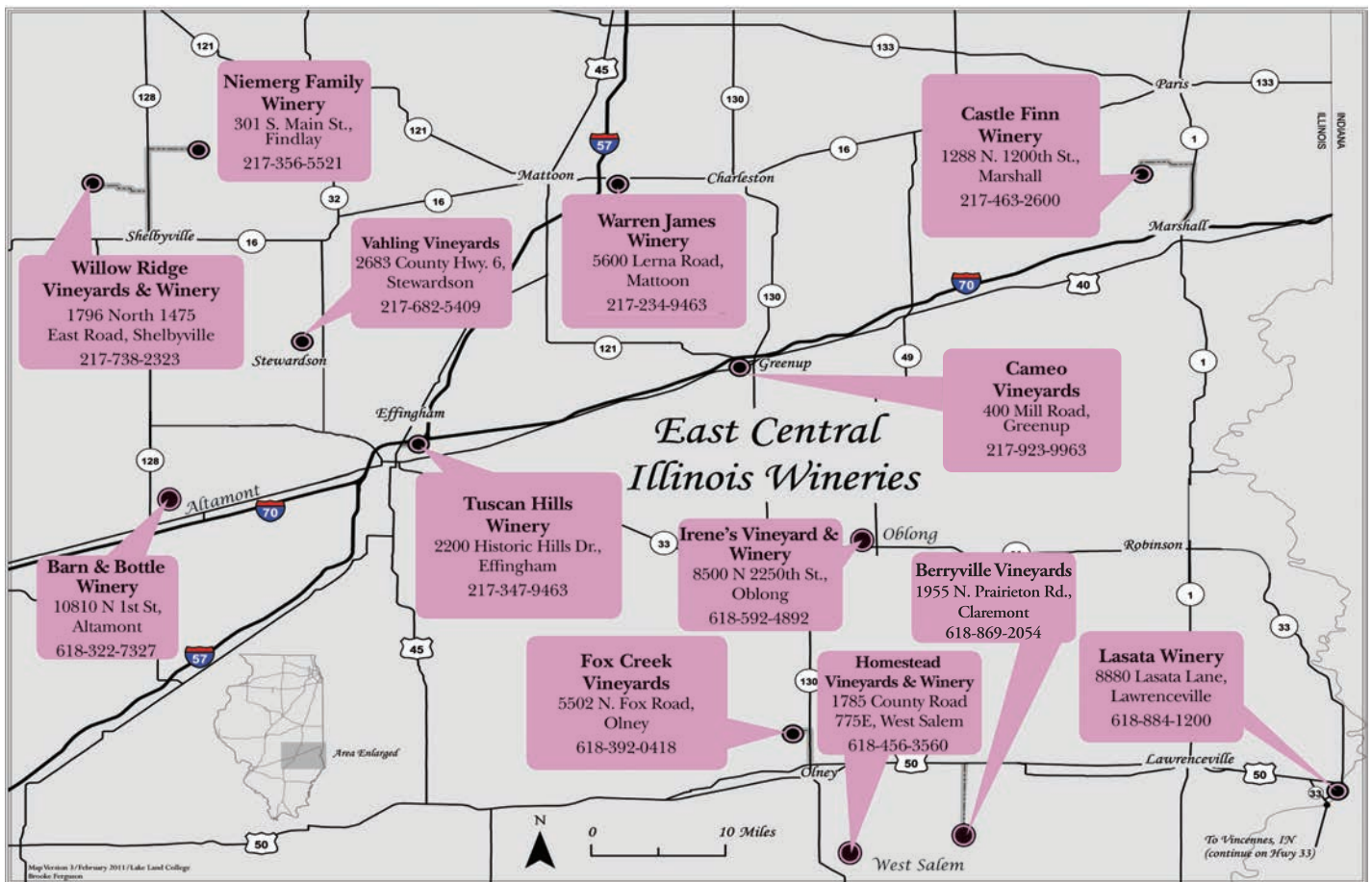


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East Central Illinois Wine Trail



This trail winds through the eastern-central sector of the state bordering Indiana. Rolling hills and farms stretch across the landscape. With 13 vineyards or wineries to choose from, East Central Illinois Wine Trail offers delicious insight into Illinois wines. The region is perfect for outdoor activities, picnics, camping, and hiking.

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- 9. Lasata Winery**
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- 10. Barn & Bottle Winery**
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MARBOLD FARMSTEAD CELEBRATES 175 YEARS

2026 marks the 175th anniversary of the Marbold Farmstead in Greenview, Illinois.

Completed in 1851, Elmwood, the home of the John H. Marbold Family, is being restored by the Historic Marbold Farmstead Association (HMFA), a 501C not for profit with the mission to establish a living history museum dedicated to agricultural practices of the Midwest.

In our 175th year, HMFA invites all to come celebrate with us and support the ongoing restoration efforts at the farmstead.

Here's how you can be a part of this milestone:

FESTIVAL

The Marbold Farmstead Heritage Festival, Sept. 12 and 13, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day — will commemorate this remarkable 175-year milestone.

The festival will feature the popular Tour de Heartland bike ride, a wide variety of vendors and demonstrators, guided tours of the historic house and grounds, a children's area — the Corn Crib — displays of farm tractors and engines, historical interpreters, Civil War reenactors, live music, delicious food, and much more.

175TH ANNIVERSARY BRICK FUNDRAISER

To commemorate the 175th anniversary of the Historic Marbold Farmstead, HMFA has launched a special fundraising

campaign. Our objective is to secure donations from 175 individuals, each contributing \$175.

In recognition of their support, donors will receive a personalized 4 x 8 brick that will be installed on the south walkway.

HISTORIC MARBOLD FARMSTEAD

Located in Greenview, just 20 miles north of Springfield, is an iconic agricultural landmark. Established in 1851 by German immigrant John H. Marbold, the farm reflects his singular ambition upon arriving in America: to acquire land and build a successful farming enterprise.

In time, his determination and hard work — together with the leadership and adoption of innovative farming practices by his son, H. H. Marbold — transformed that early dream into a thriving agricultural enterprise.

What began as a 200-acre farmstead in 1851 was, by the late 19th century, one of Central Illinois' most successful and influential farming operations with Marbold holdings expanded to more than 4,000 acres.

Join us as we celebrate the 175th anniversary of Elmwood/ Marbold Farmstead. All proceeds directly support the ongoing restoration of Elmwood.

Questions may be directed to 217-341-8293.





BY DISCOVER DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS

Looking to spark inspiration or find tranquility? We've curated a collection of independently owned bookstores and plant shops across the region. Whether you're searching for



your next favorite read or bringing home a new leafy companion, these small businesses offer a perfect mix of creativity, calm, and connection.

1. Hostas on the Bluff in Fairview Heights is truly one-of-a-kind. Family-owned and operated, this serene destination boasts over 500 varieties, making it perfect for those with a green thumb. While they do offer shipping, nothing compares to visiting in person, where you can stroll the beautiful grounds, take in stunning views of the St. Louis skyline, and even say hello to their friendly goats. Be sure to keep an eye out for special events like yoga nights!

2. Located in a historic former bank, Belleville Books blends old-world charm with a passion for literature. With the original vault still intact, this community hub hosts storytimes, book clubs, and open mic nights, making it a welcoming space where stories and neighbors come together.

3. From monstera to string of pearls and everything in between, Evergreen





4. Plant Co. in Greenville is your one-stop shop for all things green. This vibrant plant store features a make-and-take arrangement station where you can pot your own tropicals, succulents, or cacti at their interactive potting bar. As if that weren't enough, they also serve up delicious coffee crafted with house-made syrups, making it the perfect place to sip, shop, and get your hands a little dirty.

4. Conveniently located right next to Evergreen Plant Co., **The Freckled Press in Greenville** is a welcoming independent bookstore offering a thoughtfully curated selection of new and used books for all ages. With a cozy children's area, unique gifts and knick-knacks, and refreshing Lotus energy drinks available, it's the perfect spot to relax, browse, and discover something new.

5. When visiting the World's Largest items in **Casey**, don't miss a stop at **Terra Cottage**. This charming shop is a plant lover's dream, offering a wide



variety of unique houseplants, stylish planters, and accessories to elevate any space. With fresh finds and plenty of character, it's the perfect place to pick up a little green souvenir from your big adventure.

6. **Pensees Bookshop in Charleston** is a charming, family-owned gem that's been welcoming readers since 1999. Specializing in thoughtfully curated titles across a wide range of genres, the shop places a particular emphasis on History, Antiquarian works, Literary Criticism, French literature, and unique Abraham Lincoln ephemera — making it a must-visit for curious minds and collectors alike.

7. **Seed + Soil in Du Quoin** is a plant lover's paradise with a modern, earthy vibe. Browse lush greenery, stylish planters, and décor that bring the outdoors in. Whether you're after a statement plant or a simple succulent, this cozy shop makes it easy to add life to your space.



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Effingham County Events

Aug. 28: Irwin's Farmer's Markets Day 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at 610 East Cumberland Rd, Altamont IL. Vendors set up in parking lot to the east of Irwin business. Parking available. Craft vendors, food truck, ice cream truck and more!

Aug. 29: Effingham Farmer's Market on Effingham County Museum lawn 8 a.m.-noon.

Aug. 29: Central Illinois Truck Convoy Night concert with Colt Ford, Wes Bayliss and Laila Smith at the Effingham County Fairgrounds in Altamont IL.

Sept. 4 & 5: Hobnob Vintage Harvest Handmade Market at the Effingham County Fairgrounds, 722 E. Cumberland Rd, Altamont IL 62411 Sept. 4 from 4-8 p.m. and Sept. 5 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sept. 5: Effingham Farmer's Market on Effingham County Museum lawn 8 a.m.-noon.

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. www.millroadthresherman.org

Sept. 11 & 12: I-70 Large Car Working Truck Show at Effingham County Fairgrounds in Altamont. 9 a.m.-9 p.m. both days. Food, vendors, antiques, music. Light show at dark Friday night. Best light combo and best bobtail will be judged during light show. Live music by Max Heuerman & The Little Truckers Friday night. For more info contact Kyle Feldkamp at 217-663-0788.

Sept. 11 & 12: Effingham Vintage Cruise Weekend. This year will be bigger and better than ever! On Friday, we're having 5 different events at 5 different locations: Mopar Muscle Night at Goeckner Bros, GM Party at Legacy Harley-Davidson, Mustang Alley at The Orchard Inn, The Rural King Nascar at Rural King, and other Nascar racers at Sav-a-Lot. Saturday starts with Cars & Coffee at Gabby Goat, a Road Rally to Vandalia, then a Show & Shine on the square and then we cruise at 5 p.m.! There will be live music, beer tents, food trucks, and fun events (Racer's Alley, the Raminator) all up and down Jefferson Avenue! As always, it's free to watch, it's free to cruise, and free to come by. You just gotta pay for the food and drinks!

Sept. 11 & 12: Fall into Downtown Effingham Fall Open Houses at downtown stores. New fall merchandise, Treats and Drinks, and Downtown photo spots.

Sept. 11-13: Summer Sundown Music Festival at The Stage at Lake Sara, Effingham. Full details and tickets at SummerSundownFest.com

Sept. 12: Effingham Farmer's Market on Effingham County Museum lawn 8 a.m.-noon.

Sept. 12: Last Chance Tractor / Truck Pull 5 p.m. at Beecher City Community Park in Beecher City IL.

Sept. 12: Glo Bingo, Not Your Grandma's Bingo! at Effingham Event Center in Effingham. Doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo at 7 p.m. Must be 18 or older to attend. Over \$1,000 in cash prizes. Cash bar, food trucks, raffles.

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

Sept. 18 & 19: Crossroads Music Festival at Lake Sara featuring many band at The Stage with live music, artists, vendors, wellness, beach access, late night silent disco, free camping, food, full bar and more!

Sept. 19: Effingham Farmer's Market on Effingham County Museum lawn 8 a.m.-noon.

Sept. 19: Wine & Music 2-9 p.m. at the Wright House, 3 W. Jackson Avenue, Altamont IL. Plenty of beer and wine to enjoy. Live music by Dakota Danielle 2:30-5:30 p.m. and Drew Sheafor & Audrey Simes 6-9 p.m. Bring your lawn chairs. You are also welcome to bring tables, umbrellas, games, snacks, etc. to enjoy. We have five acres and plenty of shade. No outside alcohol. Fundraiser to maintain the 137-year-old Wright House. Food available for sale. Beer for sale by the glass or bottle. Beware of scammers attempting to use this event to coerce funds/donations from you. If a post, reply, or message doesn't come

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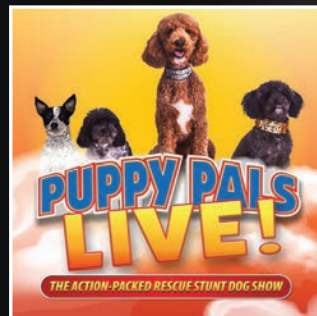


VISIT www.effinghamcountymuseum.org for visiting hours



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from the official Dr. Charles M. Wright House Facebook page, please do not engage with the author. That is for your own safety. We will never ask for a donation via Facebook, or advance ticket sales, or money to reserve a spot, or anything else. Our Wine & Music committee, all of whom are from Altamont, will reach out personally, for sponsorships and financial assistance between now and September.

Sept. 19: Country Peddlers Flea Market 8 a.m.–4 p.m. at 1709 W. Avenue of Mid America in Effingham.

Sept. 19: Jamey Johnson. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Sept. 19: St. Francis of Assisi Church Picnic behind the Teutopolis Grade School 4–11:30 p.m. Outdoor Mass at 4 p.m. Adult raffle plus a kids raffle, live music, live auction, kids games, cake walk, golf ball drop, BINGO, Teutopolis treats, craft stand, hamburger stand, beer stand.

Sept. 25: Adult Pumpkin Hunt at Tuscan Hills Winery. Doors open 7 p.m. Hunt at dusk. Live music 7–10 p.m. Food trucks. Prize in every pumpkin. Grand prizes. Proceeds will help feed & clothe over 1700 people a month with Enduring Freedom Ministries.

Sept. 26: Effingham Farmer's Market on Effingham County Museum lawn 8 a.m.–noon.

Sept. 26: Oktoberfest 5 p.m.–midnight at Teutopolis Banquet Hall grounds.

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

Oct. 2: HSHS St. Anthony Foundation Golf Benefit at Effingham Country Club. Visit stanthospital.org/golf for more information.

Oct. 3: Effingham Farmer's Market on Effingham County Museum lawn 8 a.m.–noon.

Oct. 3: Effingham Jeep Fest at The Stage at Lake Sara. Gates open 11 a.m. Proceeds benefit the Effingham County Sheriff's Department "Shop with a Deputy" program. Highlights include a Show 'N Shine, sound and light show competitions, food trucks, vendors, prizes, giveaways, raffles and live music by the Matt Poss Band starting at 7 p.m.

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

Oct. 10: Effingham Farmer's Market on Effingham County Museum lawn 8 a.m.–noon.

Oct. 10: Hogs & Dogs 11 a.m.–3 p.m. at Legacy Harley-Davidson in Effingham. Music, food, drinks, raffles, bike show and more! Every dollar raised goes to Koda's Gift of Pawsitivity for animals in need.

Oct. 10: 1964: The Beatles Tribute. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Oct. 15: Women's Health Showcase presented by HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital at Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

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. www.theepc.org

Oct. 17: Effingham Farmer's Market on Effingham County Museum lawn 8 a.m.–noon.

Oct. 17: Ham City Fall Fest in downtown Effingham IL. Live music, kids activities, 5K, Bavarian-style brunch, German beers, and so much more!

Oct. 23: Disney's Hocus Pocus Interactive Movie. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Oct. 23: Community Support Systems Art Auction & Community Celebration at Teutopolis Banquet Hall. Grounds open and artist reception 5 p.m. Auction begins 6 p.m. Live music by Jake & Mikayla at 7:30 p.m. Food, bake sale, free kids activities, CSS vendor fair and more!

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. 24: Halloween Bash, Trick-or-Treat and Trunk-or-Treat Night Halloween Bash starts 5

p.m. and Trick-or-Treat and Trunk-or-Treat starts 6 p.m. at the Watson Civic Center. Fun for the whole family. Concessions in the WACO building. The trail from the Civic Center to Chaparral Subdivision will be lit up and signs will be put up on either side.

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

Oct. 31: Effingham Farmer's Market on Effingham County Museum lawn 8 a.m.–noon.

Nov. 5: Trace Adkins. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Nov. 6: How to Solve a Murder. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

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

Nov. 12: Mitchell Tenpenny. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Nov. 14: Little River Band. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Nov. 19: Home Free Coming Home for the Holidays. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

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

Nov. 20: Hairball: A Tribute to Arena Rock. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 8 p.m. www.theepc.org

Nov. 20: Guess Who's Dying for Dinner? Murder Myster Dinner at Tuscan Hills Winery. The world's best celebrity chefs are locked in a life-or-death reality TV cooking contest! Doors open 6 p.m. Show at 7 p.m.

Nov. 21: Dailey & Vincent Candy Canes & Coal Tour. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Nov. 27: Black Friday in downtown Effingham

Nov. 28: Small Business Saturday in downtown Effingham

Nov. 28: Downtown Effingham Hometown Christmas. Step into the glow of the season and enjoy an evening filled with lights, laughter and hometown holiday magic. Hop aboard a festive tractor train ride, visit Santa, snap photos with favorite Christmas and Disney characters and get creative inside Santa's Workshop with hands-on holiday crafts. Stroll through the twinkle-lit streets with hot chocolate in hand, grab a bag of warm kettle corn, and soak in the joy that only small-town Christmas can bring. Additional activities include Wild Foam Adventures and Story time with Mrs. Claus. Enjoy the sparkling style of the Lighted Christmas Parade at 5 p.m. beginning at Baseball Card Connection, heading down Jefferson Avenue to The Heart Theatre and ending at 3rd Street. Santa's house will be open 5:45–8 p.m. Live music at the Old Courthouse at 6:15 p.m. with the FACE Christmas Concert and 6:45 p.m. with the FACE Community Orchestra.

Dec. 5: The Wizards of Winter Music of Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Dec. 12: Dr. Seuss' The Grinch Interactive Movie. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 3 p.m. www.theepc.org

Dec. 13: National Trail Farm Toy Show at Effingham Event Center 9 a.m.–3 p.m. For more info contact Robert Spencer at 217-254-6178 or Greg Warner at 217-821-7124.

Dec. 18: Chris Young "Holiday & The Hits" Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

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

Dec. 19: Christmas with Elvis Featuring Scott Wattles & The Blue Suede Crew. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

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Dec. 20: Jingle Bell Jam. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 2 p.m. www.theepc.org

Dec. 21–23: Late Night Shopping In downtown Effingham.

Dec. 31: I'll Be Homicidal for Christmas Murder Mystery Dinner at Tuscan Hills Winery. Doors open 6 p.m. Show at 7 p.m.

Jan. 16: Beauty & The Beast Interactive Movie. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 3 p.m. www.theepc.org

Jan. 21: Ty Pennington. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Jan. 30: Sebastian Bach. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Feb. 5: Jamey Johnson. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Feb. 13: Toast: The Best of Bread. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Feb. 19: Who Whacked Willy Wonka? Murder Mystery Dinner at Tuscan Hills Winery. Doors open 6 p.m. Show at 7 p.m.

Feb. 19: Vicki Lawrence & Mama. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

Feb. 27: Six String Summit. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

March 4: Josh Turner. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

March 5: Ultimate Johnny Cash. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

March 6: Dirty Deeds: The AC/DC Experience. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

March 12: Artrageous. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

March 14: Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat Live on Stage! Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 3 p.m. www.theepc.org

March 19: Glenn Miller Orchestra. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

March 19: Ain't Nothin' But A Homicide Murder Mystery Dinner at Tuscan Hills Winery. Doors open 6 p.m. Show at 7 p.m.

April 2: Lee Rocker of the Stray Cats. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

April 9: The Kentucky Headhunters & Confederate Railroad. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

April 10: Under the Streetlamp: Music of Frankie Valli & The Jersey Boys. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. www.theepc.org

April 18: Puppy Pals Live! Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 3 p.m. www.theepc.org

April 23: SCOOPY DOOM Murder Mystery Dinner at Tuscan Hills Winery. Doors open 6 p.m. Show at 7 p.m.

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.

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- » pickleball courts

2026 ENTERTAINMENT AT LAKE SARA

- » September 11-13: Summer Sundown Music Festival at The Stage at Lake Sara, Effingham. Full details and tickets at SummerSundownFest.com

- » Sept. 18 & 19: Crossroads Music Festival at Lake Sara featuring many band at The Stage with live music, artists, vendors, wellness, beach access, late night silent disco, free camping, food, full bar and more!
- » October 3: Effingham Jeep Fest at The Stage at Lake Sara. Gates open 11 a.m. Proceeds benefit the Effingham County Sheriff's Department "Shop with a Deputy" program. Highlights include a Show 'N Shine, sound and light show competitions, food trucks, vendors, prizes, giveaways, raffles and live music by the Matt Poss Band starting at 7 p.m.





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DESTINATION DOWNTOWN EFFINGHAM

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 through October 31, 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!



JOIN US ALL YEAR LONG — DESTINATION DOWNTOWN EFFINGHAM!

Sept. 11 & 12: Effingham Vintage Cruise Weekend.

This year will be bigger and better than ever! On Friday, we're having 5 different events at 5 different locations: Mopar Muscle Night at Goeckner Bros, GM Party at Legacy Harley-Davidson, Mustang Alley at The Orchard Inn, The Rural King Nascar at Rural King, and other Nascar racers at Sav-a-Lot. Saturday starts with Cars & Coffee at Gabby Goat, a

Road Rally to Vandalia, then a Show & Shine on the square and then we cruise at 5 p.m.! There will be live music, beer tents, food trucks, and fun events (Racer's Alley, the Raminator) all up and down Jefferson Avenue! As always, it's free to watch, it's free to cruise, and free to come by. You just gotta pay for the food and drinks!

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JOIN US ALL YEAR LONG — DESTINATION DOWNTOWN EFFINGHAM!

Sept. 11 & 12: Fall into Downtown Effingham. Fall Open Houses at downtown stores. New fall merchandise, treats and drinks, and downtown photo spots.

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

Oct. 17: 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. 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



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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.

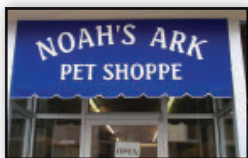
Nov. 28: Small Business Saturday in downtown Effingham.

Nov. 28: Downtown Effingham Hometown Christmas. Step into the glow of the season and enjoy an evening filled with lights, laughter and hometown holiday magic. Hop aboard a festive tractor train ride, visit Santa, snap photos with favorite Christmas and Disney characters and get

creative inside Santa's Workshop with hands-on holiday crafts. Stroll through the twinkle-lit streets with hot chocolate in hand, grab a bag of warm kettle corn, and soak in the joy that only small-town Christmas can bring. Additional activities include Wild Foam Adventures and Story time with Mrs. Claus. Enjoy the sparkling style of the Lighted Christmas Parade at 5 p.m. beginning at Baseball Card Connection, heading down Jefferson Avenue to The Heart Theatre and ending at 3rd Street. Santa's house will be open 5:45–8 p.m. Live music at the Old Courthouse at 6:15 p.m. with the FACE Christmas Concert and 6:45 p.m. with the FACE Community Orchestra.

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

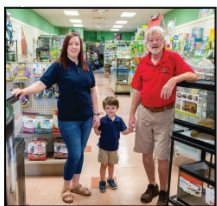
Dec. 21-23: Late Night Shopping in downtown Effingham.



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ROUTE 66 TURNS 100

On the road through vintage Americana in Illinois

HANNAH STEPHENSON
PA MEDIA/DPA
PHOTOS COURTESY ENJOYILLINOIS.COM

If you love the open road, Americana, neon, retro murals, classic cars and carb-heavy historic diners, you'll need at least three weeks to enjoy Route 66 – the most famous road trip of them all – in its entirety.

In the 'Mother Road's' centennial year, historic towns in the 2,448 miles over the eight states it crosses – from the skyscrapers of Chicago, Illinois, through Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona to the sunny Californian Pacific pier of Santa Monica – are holding their own celebrations, from car rallies and museum exhibitions, to 100th anniversary drone shows and community festivals.

But if your time is limited it's easy to just do part of the route and I've opted for a city/Route 66 combo exploring the first leg from Chicago, Illinois to St Louis, Missouri, on a girls' road trip with my daughter, Grace, a Gen-Z-er keen to temporarily step out of her digital-driven age and into a freedom-filled road of vintage Americana.

Route 66 was created in 1926 to stimulate economic growth via a direct, continuous commercial highway between the towns of the industrial Midwest and the agricultural Southwest, but also served the Great Migration of African Americans venturing to the Midwest after fleeing the Deep South.

At the time, Chicago was considered a key gateway in the east for travelers heading west.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, as the automobile industry flourished, dozens of repair garages, tire suppliers and car dealers set up shop along the route, along with motels and diners looking for passing trade.



While the original Route 66 was decommissioned in 1985 and replaced by the quicker, more direct Interstate 55, travelers can follow the old historic route to see the highlights – over 90% of the original 301 miles in Illinois is still driveable.

Here, the trail is well marked with historic signs, and sat nav will lead you on to the old road if you tap in the landmarks situated there. We even drive several sections of the original brick road once created for the early travelers.

Giant fiberglass figures greet motorists in many towns, a throwback to a quirky advertising craze in the 1960s, frequently appearing at gas stations, restaurants and repair shops.

Some still operate as kitsch tourist attractions, others occupy blink-and-you'll-miss tiny towns whose colorful giant statues seem to be the only ghostly remnants of a bygone age.

The journey serves up a feast of Instagram-worthy photo opportunities – and here's where to stop along the way.

CHICAGO

Take a few days to explore this vibrant city, which this year has a new Route 66 start marker at the tourist-friendly Navy Pier, a symbolic "pier-to-pier" connection with California's Santa Monica Pier.

The old historic 'Begin' sign remains downtown at Jackson Boulevard and Michigan Avenue.

First-timers can save money on attractions with the Chicago CityPASS (\$144) for entry to five top attractions including the Skydeck, on the 103rd floor of the Willis Tower, where you can stand on one of five heart-stopping glass ledges jutting out for a better view. Look hard from the 360-degree observation deck and you can locate the start of Route 66.



Walk the city to take in its stunning art deco landscape, Batman landmarks, Magnificent Mile shops, steel bascule bridges occupied by trundling overhead 'L' trains and the immense Lake Michigan.

A perfect starting point is the Fairmont Chicago, Millennium

Park (Rooms from \$250, or 'gold guestrooms' from \$400) which has introduced themed travel packages in celebration of the centenary, offering curated Route 66 amenities such as dining, commemorative keepsakes and enhanced stays tied to the iconic road.

The hotel is a short walk from the famous Cloud Gate reflective sculpture known as the Bean, and from Chicago River boat trips, shopping on the Magnificent Mile and many other attractions.

Route 66 landmark dining options include Lou Mitchell's, founded in 1923 and famed for its all-day breakfast and complimentary doughnut holes. Road signs, gonks and US flags embellish the setting of the diner which has welcomed celebrities including Will Smith and Barack Obama.

One of Chicago's oldest restaurants, The Berghoff, first opened in 1898 near the start of Route 66, serving German and American fare, while a little farther out of town, it's hard to miss the huge colorful Route 66 mural on the outside wall of Lulu's, a must-do pitstop where the Chicago hotdog is king, but don't ask for ketchup – it's considered a sacrilege.

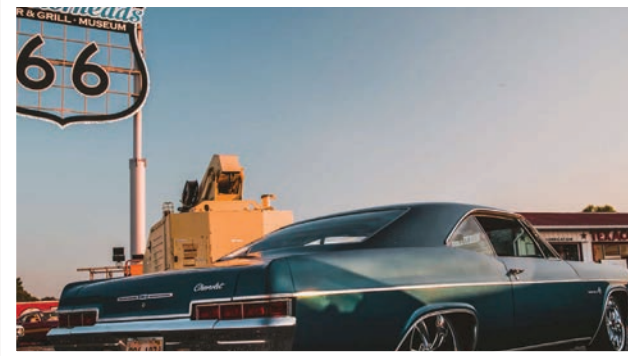
JOLIET

Fans of The Blues Brothers should make a stop in this little town, an hour's drive from Chicago, not only to get a picture with the mannequins of Jake and Elwood from the iconic 1980 film "The Blues Brothers" in the Joliet Area Historical Museum, but also to see Old Joliet Prison, where "The Blues Brothers" and the first season of "Prison Break" were filmed.

Built in the 1850s and later housing nearly 2,000 inmates in hugely unsanitary conditions, we toured the tiny 7-ft x 4-ft cells. It closed in 2002, only to reopen to the public in 2018 as a museum.

PONTIAC

Downtown Pontiac, anchored by the 1875 Livingston County Courthouse in its square, feels community-spirited, its streets lined with preserved storefronts and local eateries, an artistic array of Route 66 murals and vintage cars parked in the downtown area.



During our visit, speakers outside the courthouse play the Eagles' "Take It Easy" to any passer-by who will listen.

Nestled together at the Pontiac Museum Complex is a trove of Route 66 memorabilia, and we headed round the corner to the Pontiac-Oakland Museum, an Aladdin's cave of vintage cars. Check out Cruise Night, on the third Saturday each month through to August, a mini festival of classic cars which fill the downtown area.

SPRINGFIELD

The legacy of Abraham Lincoln comes alive in the state capital of Illinois, 200 miles south-west of Chicago, with the imposing State Capitol building dominating the historic sites, plus nods to Barack Obama, whose national political career began here, where he announced his 2008 presidential bid.

Illinois State Museum has just opened a new exhibit, Miles Of Memories: Stories of Route 66, where we admired historic memorabilia including neon signs, a Route

66 giant and a collection of interviews with people who experienced the road when it was the main route between Chicago and Los Angeles.

In the evening, entering the Route 66 Motorheads Bar & Grill, Museum and Entertainment Complex, there are motorbikes elevated by chains to the ceiling, a vintage car on a raised mezzanine, neon signs, TV screens showing sports, plus an array of Route 66 markers, even on the floor.

That's before you get to the menu, which offers driving-connected delicacies including 'Hubcaps' (fried pickles), 'Lug Nuts' (cheese curds) and salad dressings entitled 'Gear Lubes,' amid the classic burger fare.

ST LOUIS, MISSOURI

Crossing the Mississippi River via the Martin Luther King bridge which links Route 66 to Missouri, this is the natural end to the first leg of the Mother Road.

British Airways has recently launched direct flights to St Louis, so it's possible to catch a flight home from there.

There's a lot here – you can take a tram to the top of the 630-ft Gateway Arch, explore multiple breweries or take a quiet walk through Missouri Botanical Garden, but Route 66 purists should head for the mile-long Old Chain Of Rocks Bridge, with its unusual 22-degree bend, where the rubber first met the Mother Road in Missouri, now only open to cyclists and pedestrians.

We're just about done with diners, dogs and driving – a spa hotel is the ideal end to this girls' road trip, so we take refuge in the Four Seasons Hotel St Louis (summer room rates from \$355), which has just had a major spa refurbishment and offers fine dining at Ramsay's Kitchen.

We head for a relaxation lounge, an oasis of calming, cool textures which provides brilliant views of the Mississippi River and the tranquillity we need – a million miles away from our Americana pitstops.

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Fayette County Events

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 Street, 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 many floats and marching bands and

begins at 7 p.m. near Fayette County Courthouse and travels down Gallatin Street in Vandalia. Registration starts at 5 p.m. at the former Washington School, 301 S. 8th Street in Vandalia.

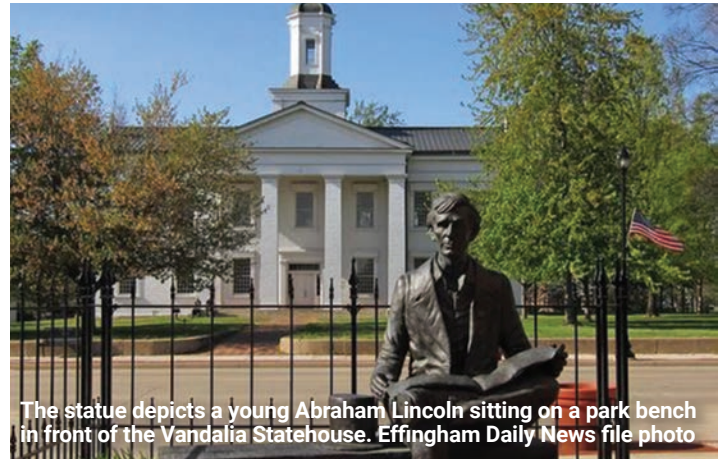
Oct. 31: City of Vandalia Trick-or-Treat downtown 10:30-12:30. Costume Contest 12:30 p.m. at Charters Patio. City-wide Trick-or-Treat 6-8 p.m.

Nov. 6: Olde Tyme Christmas Festival of Trees "Stars, Stripes & Holiday Lights" at the Vandalia Moose Lodge.

Nov. 13 & 14: Olde Tyme Christmas Festival "Stars, Stripes & Holiday Lights". 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! Nov. 13 5pm-9pm & Nov. 14 10am-2pm.

Nov. 14-Jan. 1: Olde Tyme Christmas Presents: A Festival of Lights — "Stars, Stripes & Holiday Lights" at 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!

Dec. 12: Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site Christmas Open House & Candlelight Tours 5-7 p.m. at Vandalia Statehouse, 315 W. Gallatin Street in Vandalia.



The statue depicts a young Abraham Lincoln sitting on a park bench in front of the Vandalia Statehouse. Effingham Daily News file photo

Visit Historic

VANDALIA

Illinois

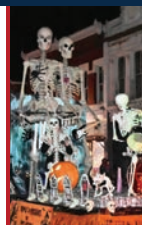
UPCOMING EVENTS



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



**City of Vandalia
Trick or Treat**
October 31, 2026
Downtown:
10:30-12:30pm
Costume Contest:
12:30pm at
Charters Patio
City wide: 6pm-8pm



**Vandalia Statehouse
State Historic Site
Christmas Open House
& Candlelight Tours**
December 12, 2026
5:00pm-7:00pm
Vandalia Statehouse, 315
W. Gallatin Street



**Olde Tyme Christmas Festival
of Trees – Stars, Stripes &
Holiday Lights**
November 6, 2026
Vandalia Moose Lodge

**Olde Tyme Christmas –
Stars, Stripes & Holiday
Lights**
November 13-14, 2026
Downtown Vandalia

**Olde Tyme Christmas Presents:
A Festival of Lights – Stars,
Stripes & Holiday Lights**
Opening Night – November 14,
2026, 5:00pm
Displays on November 14 –
January 1, 2027
Rogier Park, Fillmore Street



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

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Macon County Events

Aug. 27: Winger with Special Guest Jonny Vodka 7 p.m. at The Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater in Decatur IL.

Aug. 28: Country Tribute Night featuring music from Stapleton, Church and Wilson 7 p.m. at The Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater in Decatur IL.

Aug. 29: One Night in Memphis 7 p.m. at The Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater in Decatur IL.

Sept. 5: Banda Y Mariachi Tour: La Original Banda El Limon with special guest Julian Torres Y Mariachi Cenzontle 7 p.m. at The Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater in Decatur IL.

Sept. 6: Russell Dickerson 7 p.m. at The Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater in Decatur IL.

Sept. 7: Millikin-Decatur Symphony Annual Labor Day Pops Concert 6 p.m. at Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater. Free concert offering patriotic pieces and film and stage favorites.

Sept. 12: Live and Let Die — Tribute to Paul McCartney 7 p.m. at The Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater in Decatur IL.

Sept. 12: Taste of History 2026 from 5–8 p.m. A progressive evening of cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Features four participating historic venues: the James Millikin Homestead, The Staley Museum, The Governor Richard J. Oglesby Mansion and the Culver House. Age 21+. Tour four historic homes and museums. Non-alcoholic beverages will also be served. For more info go to www.staleymuseum.com/news/

Sept. 12: Macon County Conservation District's Fall Festival at Rock Springs Nature Center 1–4 p.m. with fall-themed activities including archery, canoeing, pumpkin painting, wagon rides, tours at Homestead Prairie Farm, food and more.

Sept. 13: Cruise 11 to Remember 9–11. Car and Bike Show with a DJ, food, and a remembrance cruise. Downtown Decatur's Central Park. Cruise-in registration begins 8 a.m. on the west side of Central Park. Admission is FREE to the event. Unique awards given to those in the Top Ten. This event has raised tens of thousands of dollars for various military and veteran causes. Family fun event. Awards at 2 p.m. and 911 recognition service at Central Park stage. Yellow ribbon Cruise after the ceremony.

Sept. 19: Finders Harvest Market 9 a.m.–3 p.m. at Progress City, next to Richland Community College at 1 College Park, Decatur. 100 curated vendors filling 3 barns + lots of outdoor spaces, featuring unique, original and irresistible goods, great vintage and antiques, flea market finds, handmade items, original art, gourmet and artisanal items, furniture, décor, boutique clothing, seasonal goods and more. Food Trucks.

Sept. 20: The James Millikin Homestead 150th Anniversary Celebration 2–5 p.m. Music, activities, food and fun!

Sept. 26: Zach Rushing — The Redneck Logic Tour at Decatur Civic Center in Decatur IL at 7 p.m.

Oct. 9–11: Thrive Theater Group presents Fiddler on the Roof at Decatur Civic Center in Decatur IL Friday 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m.

Oct. 16: Dixon's Violin Live 7 p.m. at Decatur Civic Center in Decatur IL.

Nov. 13–15 & Nov 20–22: Decatur Unity Theatre presents Mean Girls the Musical Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.

Jefferson County Events

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 5:00 PM to 8:00 p.m. It features a variety of local food trucks, artists, and live music, acting as a vibrant social gathering for the community.

Sept. 12: Rock & Roll Dreams: Meatloaf & Fleetwood Mac 7:30 p.m. at The Granada Theatre in downtown Mt. Vernon.

Sept. 18: The Reunion: Beatles & Beyond 7:30 p.m. at The Granada Theatre in downtown Mt. Vernon.

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 & 4: Fall Foodie Fest at Marlow's Pumpkin Patch, 14003 N. Harmony Lane, Opdyke, IL. Join us for a variety of antique, boutique, and handmade vendors as well as vendors bringing delicious eats and treats. Family-friendly fall activities and produce available as well. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Oct 3 and Noon–6 p.m. Oct. 4.

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!

Oct. 24 & 25: Fall Into Winter Fest at Marlow's Pumpkin Patch, 14003 N. Harmony Lane, Opdyke, IL. Get a head start on your holiday shopping and enjoy our family-friendly fall activities in-between browsing vendor offerings and our fall produce. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Oct 24 and Noon–6 p.m. Oct. 25.

Nov. 20 & 21: Festival of Trees at Cedarhurst Center for the Arts, Mt. Vernon. An evening of elegance featuring auctions, entertainment, and festivities, all set among the sparkle of The Lights! The beautifully decorated trees are on display all weekend.

Upcoming Events at the Staley Museum

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SEPTEMBER 12
2026
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**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2026
10AM–4PM**

FREE ADMISSION

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
with Santa & Mrs. Claus
DECEMBER 16TH, 5–8 PM

Nov. 21–Dec. 27 Weekends: The Lights 2026 – Southern Illinois' most spectacular holiday program returns! Immerse yourself in winter wonder with more than 1 million Christmas lights twinkling along a one-mile walking trail through the heart of the Cedarhurst Center for the Arts 80-acre campus in Mt. Vernon. Roast a s'more, view the art galleries, enjoy special holiday programs, and capture the moments at unique photo opportunities along the way.

Dec. 3, 10 & 17: Thursday Night Live Holiday Style! Enjoy live music set amongst the beautiful holiday décor as you stroll The Lights at Cedarhurst Center for the Arts in Mt. Vernon.

Dec. 4–6: Christmas Craft Market at Cedarhurst Center for the Arts, Mt. Vernon. Craft booths open all weekend and is included with admission to The Lights + daytime visitors to the museum can shop The Market from 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

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 1940's and 50's and also sets from other countries. Exhibit located at the Schweinfurth Museum located inside the Jefferson County Historical Village at 1411 North 27th Street, Mt. Vernon IL 62864.

Dec. 10 & 13: Ride The Lights! offers everyone access to view The Lights from a guide-driven golf cart at Cedarhurst Center for the Arts in Mt. Vernon.

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 1940's and 50's and also sets from other countries. Exhibit located at the Schweinfurth Museum located inside the Jefferson County Historical Village at 1411 North 27th Street, Mt. Vernon IL 62864.

Dec. 12: Winter Wonderland Dinner with our friends from Toy Story. Join us for an evening of Toy Story Family Fun! Meet and take photos with Woody, Jessie, and Buzz for a fun holiday memory. Enjoy a buffet dinner, games and crafts. After dinner, walk The Lights. Event at Cedarhurst Center for the Arts in Mt. Vernon.

Your Easy Weekend Escape Starts in Mt. Vernon, Illinois

Just a short drive away, discover lakeside adventure, local flavor, and small-town charm—without the big-city hassle.

Looking for a quick getaway that feels like a true break?

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.



Your Weekend, Your Pace

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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Discover everything waiting for you in Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

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FALL FEST PARADE



MARLOW'S PUMPKIN PATCH



BEAUTIFUL FALL FOLIAGE

There's no better place to celebrate the beauty and magic of the season than Mt. Vernon, Illinois. From festive events and twinkling lights to colorful fall foliage and cherished traditions, our community comes alive with experiences for all ages. Plan your fall and holiday getaway today!

KICK OFF FALL WITH FALL FEST!

Join us Friday, September 25th & Saturday, September 26th for our annual Fall Fest! Enjoy a parade, FREE live music, a Kidz Zone, a vibrant vendor marketplace, and a car show cruise-in that brings classic rides and community spirit to our charming downtown.

MARLOW'S PUMPKIN PATCH

A must-see destination for families and kids of all ages! With pumpkins, play areas, and plenty of fall fun, it's the perfect place to make lasting memories.

SOAK IN THE BEAUTY OF FALL

Brilliant foliage paints the landscape in rich reds, oranges, and golds. Explore our parks, trails, and historic downtown—every corner is picture-perfect.

CELEBRATE THE SEASON AT THE GRANADA THEATRE

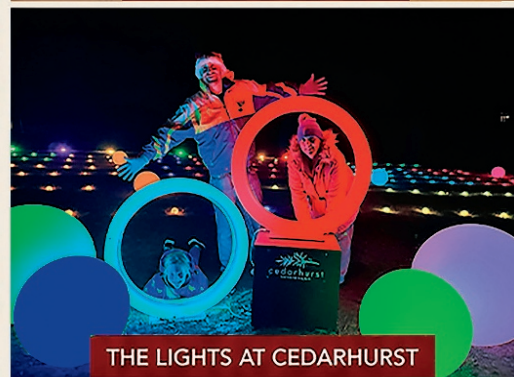
Celebrate the season with incredible events, concerts and holiday activities in the beautifully restored Granada Theatre - where timeless charm meets unforgettable performances.

THE LIGHTS AT CEDARHURST CENTER FOR THE ARTS

During the last week of November and all of December, experience "The Lights"—a breathtaking walk-through Christmas lights event that dazzles the whole family with twinkling wonder.



GRANADA THEATRE



THE LIGHTS AT CEDARHURST



FALL FEST CONCERTS

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FALL & HOLIDAY
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TODAY



Perry County Events

Aug. 28–Sept. 7: Du Quoin State Fair at the Du Quoin State Fairgrounds in Du Quoin IL. Aug. 28 events include Twilight Parade at 7 p.m. and high school marching band contest. Aug. 29 grandstand features Wiz Khalifa at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 30 grandstand features Kameron Marlowe & Ashley Cooke at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 3 grandstand features Tyler Hubbard at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 4 grandstand features Night Ranger at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 5 grandstand features Russell Dickerson at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 7 grandstand features Randy Houser at 7:30 p.m. Harness Racing Aug. 31, Sept 1 and 2 with post time at 4 p.m. each day. Dirt track races Sept. 5 at 1 p.m. and Sept. 6 at 6:30 p.m. Carnival daily. For more info go to dsf.illinois.gov

Oct. 3: Fall Fest 10 a.m.–5 p.m. at Keyes Park in Du Quoin IL. Food trucks, live music, vendors, games, activities and so much more.

Oct. 4: Flea Market 7 a.m.–3 p.m. at Du Quoin State Fairgrounds Expo Hall, 655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin IL 62832.

Oct. 31: Pinckneyville Mardi Gras Halloween Festival includes a flea market, wine tasting, car show, vendor fair 9 a.m.–3 p.m. and parade at 7 p.m.



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9 AM to 4 PM

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Closed holidays.

illinoisruralheritagemuseum.org

**187 Fairground Rd
Pinckneyville, IL 62274
618-357-8908
irhmuseum@gmail.com**

The Museum provides an opportunity to experience the changing rural lifestyles from the 1850's forward.

The three buildings house a large variety of exhibits that display the ever-changing innovation of the time.



VISIT OLNEY ILLINOIS

A perfect day trip full of color, charm, & community!

Take a scenic drive and spend the day where Fall feels like Fall. Celebrate the season taking a scenic walk through our parks and trails, or enjoy peaceful time by the lakes, while spotting a white squirrel or two. A few Fall events you won't want to miss include the Fall Festival, Annual Squirrel Count, & fun Halloween festivities.

Visit our website:

www.cityofolney.com

618-395-7302

 City of Olney, Illinois

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Nov. 1: Flea Market 7 a.m.–3 p.m. at Du Quoin State Fairgrounds Expo Hall, 655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin IL 62832.

Nov. 26–Dec. 30: Annual Holiday Lights Fair at the DuQuoin State Fairgrounds in DuQuoin IL featuring a drive-through display, a three-mile route and festive evening hours.

Dec. 5: Alvis Yule Ball 5 p.m. at Alvis Backroad Bar & Grill, 239 N. Maple St, Tamaroa IL 62888. A magical, wizarding-themed holiday event. Enjoy an enchanting evening filled with elegance, music, and magical moments in a winter ballroom environment.

Dec. 6: Flea Market 7 a.m.–3 p.m. at Du Quoin State Fairgrounds Expo Hall, 655 Executive Drive, Du Quoin IL 62832.

Richland County Events

Sept. 12: White Squirrel Bluegrass Festival at Olney City Park starting at 10 a.m. Live bands include the Burned Biscuits 11 a.m.–noon, Dennis Stroughmatt Band 12:15–1:15 p.m., Aaron Thomas Band 1:30–2:30 p.m., Barkley Cove 2:45–3:45 p.m., the Mountain Music Ambassadors 4–5 p.m. and the Junior Sisk Band 5:30–7 p.m. Food trucks and beer tent.

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 p.m.–7 p.m.

Nov. 26–Dec. 31: Olney Christmas Light Display. Downtown Olney 5 p.m.–9 p.m.

Nov. 28: Olney Christmas Parade. Downtown Olney 6:30 p.m.–9 p.m.

White squirrels

For more than 100 years, Olney area has been home to the largest known population of white squirrels. The best viewing spots are Olney City Park, Millers Grove and several residential neighborhoods with mature trees and feeding stations. Look for them in the early morning hours when they are most active.

The Elliott Street Historic District is a historic district comprising five blocks of South Elliott Street in Olney, Illinois. The district is primarily residential; all but four of the 33 main buildings in the district are single-family homes.

Clinton County Events

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

Sept 6: Albers Hootenanny at Lehrter/Jaycee Park & Stage, 500 Park Ave, Albers, IL. Hoop-ennanny 3-on-3 basketball at 11 a.m., vendor fair Noon–4 p.m., live music by The Jorrells 2–6 p.m., live music by Clueless 8 p.m.–midnight. All day: inflatables, music, kids activities, and concessions.

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, zip line, poker, laser tag and lots of family fun! Live music by Lost Highway on Sept. 11 and Chapman Brothers Band on Sept. 12. Festival is 4–10 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m.–9 p.m. on Saturday.

Sept. 17–21: Illinois Lincolnland Hippie 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. 19: Community Link Buddy Walk at Breese Northside Park in Breese IL. A royal-themed celebration with a 1-mile walk, fashion show and family fun.

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 <https://www.mserracing.com/carlyle-lake-triathlon>

Sept. 26: Breese Optimist Fall Fest at Breese Northside Park in Breese IL 11 a.m.–midnight. Chili cook-off, homebrew contest, live music, tractor / car show, petting zoo, games and vendor fair.

Oct. 2–4: One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest production at Avon Theatre in Breese IL. 8 p.m. show Oct. 2 and 3. Matinee Oct. 4 at 2 p.m.

Oct. 9–11: One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest production at Avon Theatre in Breese IL. 8 p.m. show Oct. 9 and 10. Matinee Oct. 11 at 2 p.m.

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.

Nov. 21: Mistletoe Market 9 a.m.–2 p.m. at Trenton First United Methodist Church, 3324 Old U.S. Highway 50, Trenton IL. Local vendors offering handcrafted gifts, home décor, boutique items, baked goods, holiday treats and so much more!

Dec. 4–6: The Man Who Came To Dinner performance at Avon Theatre in Breese IL Dec. 4 and 5 at 8 p.m. and Dec. 6 Matinee at 2 p.m.

Dec. 5: Breakfast with Santa (and the puppets!) 9 a.m.–Noon (breakfast ends 11:30 a.m.)

at Trenton First United Methodist Church. Fun-filled morning for the whole family includes all-you-can-eat breakfast, two make-and-take Christmas crafts, Elfie Selfie Station, Visit with Santa & Mrs. Claus and a special blacklight puppet show presented by the Miniature Ministers Puppet Ministry. Tickets can be purchased by calling 618-224-7364.

Dec. 11-13: The Man Who Came To Dinner performance at Avon Theatre in Breese IL Dec. 11 and 12 at 8 p.m. and Dec. 13 Matinee at 2 p.m.

Feb. 5-7: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf performance at Avon Theatre in Breese IL Feb. 5 & 6 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 7 Matinee at 2 p.m.

Feb. 12-14: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf performance at Avon Theatre in Breese IL Feb. 12 & 13 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 14 Matinee at 2 p.m.

April 23-25: Into The Woods performance at Avon Theatre in Breese IL April 23 & 24 at 8 p.m. and April 25 Matinee at 2 p.m.

April 30-May 2: Into The Woods performance at Avon Theatre in Breese IL April 30 & May 1 at 8 p.m. and May 2 Matinee at 2 p.m.

St. Clair County Events

Aug. 28-30: Midwest Salute to the Arts Festival in Fairview Heights IL.

Aug. 28: One Night in Memphis, the Number One Tribute to Presley, Perkins, Lewis and Cash at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

Sept. 12: 4NRS Journey, the Ultimate Foreigner & Journey Experience at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

Sept. 18-20: Belleville Oktoberfest in downtown Belleville IL.

Oct. 10: ABBA Mania, the longest running ABBA Tribute Concert in the world at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

Oct. 15: The Music of Lewis & Clark at 10 a.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL. Recommended for K-8.

Oct. 17: Fall Festival at the Farm, 610 N. Madison Street, Lebanon IL 62254. Local vendors, live music, hay rides, small petting zoo, pumpkin painting, local food vendors.

Oct. 20: The Accidental Hero, A True Story that transcends time. One-man show about a WWII American officer who miraculously liberates the Czech villages of his grandparents. Show at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

Nov. 6-8: The 39 Steps, presented by McKendree Theatre, involves a murder and a nationwide manhunt follows. Shows Nov. 6 and 7 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 8 at 2:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon 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.

Nov. 14: Mississippi Moon, the music of Michael McDonald & The Doobie Brothers 7 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

Dec. 8: Grand Ol' Christmas Show, a Retro Christmas Radio Show, at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

Dec. 11 & 12: USAF Spirit of the Season Concerts Dec. 11 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. and Dec. 12 at 2 and 7 p.m.

Jan. 16: Speak Easy / Move Loud, A Cross-Era Journey Through Music, Movement and Meaning at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

Jan. 23: Funky Butt Brass Band, the St. Louis' Powerhouse of Jazz, Funk & Soul at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

Feb. 5: The Moanin' Frogs, Not Your Average Chamber Ensemble at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL features six saxophones in a blend of jazz, classical, pop, a cappella singing, and comedy.

Feb. 20: Simply Swingin' — The Great American Crooners, A Celebration of the Great

American Songbook at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

Feb. 26-28: One Stoplight Town, presented by McKendree Theatre Feb. 26 and 27 at 7:30 p.m. and Feb. 28 at 2:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

March 7: Goitse, Traditional Irish Ensemble at 3 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

March 15: Sean Astin at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

March 20: Scott Wattles and the Blue Suede Crew, Vegas-era Elvis Presley Tribute at 7:30 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

April 3: Puppy Pals LIVE at 3 p.m. at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

April 23 & 24: Sail On: The Beach Boys Tribute at 7:30 p.m. both nights at The Hett Center for the Arts at McKendree University in Lebanon IL.

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



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 September 12, 2026	 October 10, 2026	 October 20, 2026	 December 8, 2026	 December 11 - 12, 2026	 January 16, 2027	 January 23, 2027
 February 5, 2027	 February 20, 2027	 March 7, 2027	 March 15, 2027	 March 20, 2027	 April 3, 2027	 April 23 - 24, 2027



MAKANDA: Gateway to Giant City and Outdoor Adventure

Here is a peek into what you can explore in the Makanda area.

With its breathtaking natural beauty and unlimited opportunities for outdoor recreation, a trip to Giant City State Park and the Makanda area offers loads of fun. From camping and horseback riding to fishing and rappelling, it's an outdoor lover's paradise. You will love the many hiking trails. Especially popular is the Giant City Nature Trail, home of the "Giant City Streets" — huge bluffs of sandstone formed 12,000 years ago.

GIANT CITY VISITOR CENTER: Learn about the 'Giant Streets' that gave the park its name and get maps and trail details, 8 – 3:30 daily. Giant City State Park Visitor's Center contains an exhibit hall with displays of the natural, cultural, and geological features of the park. Don't miss the 10 minute film about the park in the audio/visual room. There is a Discovery Corner that kids love to explore. Ask about the scavenger hunt for kids. Get a prize upon returning it at the end of the hike all filled out, but watch your time, the center closes at 3:30 PM.

ROCK CLIMBING AND RAPPELLING

Climbing and rappelling are permitted at the park in two locations. The areas of Devil's Standtable cliff and Shelter #1 bluff at the Makanda entrance are accessible to climbers, and ropes are permitted on these cliffs. Climbers should bring their own equipment and go directly to the bluff, no check-in is necessary. No permanent anchors allowed. All climbing activities at the park are conducted at your own risk. Cliffs are steep and sandstone can be slippery when wet. Venomous copperhead snakes, an Illinois protected species, are found on sunny ledges. Please use caution. Southern Illinois sandstone bluff

plant communities are fragile, so tread lightly in these areas. Always carry out what you carry in!

HIKING

Exploration of the picturesque natural wonders of Giant City State Park's 8 trails can be enjoyed along the Post Oak, Devil's Standtable, Giant City, Stonefort, Indian Creek, Trillium and Arrow-Wood trails. The Post Oak Trail has been designed for disabled visitors. The 12-mile Red Cedar Hiking Trail provides an invigorating challenge to the truly dedicated backpacker and offers an overnight campsite at the halfway point. In Spring, Summer & Fall, be sure to use insect and tick repellent. Trillium Trail is a great place to see spring flowers.



Shawnee National Forest's, Panther Den Wilderness

Hike: For those up for a more challenging hike, this nearby wilderness trail will take you to the rock formations and is a loop (4 to 6-miles). It is rugged and hilly.

Don't miss this rustic beauty of Giant City Lodge, and a great place to refuel your body after an active day! Amazing hand-hewn log built lodge always impresses, and is a fun place to dine.

The Lodge serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. You're sure to enjoy some of the best fried chicken ever if you choose the specialty of the Lodge, the all-you-can-eat Family Style Chicken Dinner. Be sure and save room for some warm fruit cobbler!

Much of Giant City was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps or CCC. A statue dedicated to the CCC sits in the courtyard. Be sure and climb the spiral staircase of the **Giant City water tower** for the scenic views.

Giant City Stables: Saddle up for trail rides with experienced wranglers through private trails **(Mid March to Mid Nov.)** Even if you don't want to ride, walk through the stables to see, and even pet, the horses.

The Stable maintains approximately 30 horses of different types and breeds for your enjoyment. There are horses of all different levels and will match you with a horse that meets your needs. The trail rides are guided by experienced wranglers, who lead you through 3-plus miles of private trails in the heart of Giant City State Park.

Pony Rides: (Mid March to Mid Nov.) Hand led pony rides are available for children. These rides are hand led by one of our wranglers on a short trail.

Mountain Bike Trails: The nearby Touch of Nature Trails system offers over 12 miles of multi-use trails for bikers, hikers, and runners only. The Kid's Terrain Park includes a pump track, a push bike track, and .25 mile fun loop to introduce kids to riding on trails. The trail system offers a variety of difficulty levels for users and can be accessed just off of Giant City Road.

Boo Castle Park: Located along Giant City Road, this free park has a Dungeons and Dragons theme and there are over 30 sculptures to encourage the imagination of magic. The centerpiece is a very large wood and stone castle that has an elaborate jungle gym of tunnels, stairs, and bridges. Hidden doors and passageways invite the small and flexible; most adults are





content to walk the battlements. Gargoyles and knights guard the ramparts. An ogre with a spiked club stands atop the portcullis, and an extensive sword collection is bolted to the lofty inner ceiling of one of the towers. Small treasures are scattered throughout the maze of towers for the eye to discover.

Shawnee Bluffs Canopy Tour: Enjoy the breeze zipping through the trees!

Safety is always number one here, so don't be afraid. This is the place to check zip lining off your bucket list! You will start off with 'flight school' before you ever get out in the canopy.

Allow 3 hours for an exciting canopy tour. The guides will educate you about the flora, fauna, geology and history of the outdoors by safely traversing an established route of ziplines and aerial bridges between platforms built in the trees. You must leave your phones and cameras behind, but staff will take photos for you, and you can rent a GoPro if you want to capture your zipping experience.

The tour includes 11 platforms high in the trees, three aerial suspension bridges, the longest stretching 180 feet, and two short ground hikes. Want to add to the excitement — try one of the night time tours! www.shawneezip.com

Little Grassy Fish Hatchery: One fish, two fish, red fish blue fish! Well, Bluegill and Redear Sunfish anyway. Little Grassy produces about a million fish per year, on average, including channel catfish, blue catfish, largemouth bass, bluegills and redear sunfish. Most of the channel catfish produced by the state come from Little Grassy.

Great place to take your children for a lesson on how our fisheries help stock our ponds and other needs to our ecosystem. The kids and adults alike can enjoy it.

The main event at Little Grassy is the catfish production. The production process of the channel catfish provides a great viewing experience for visitors. 'Prime time' for viewing the production process is in June. Yearling catfish in outdoor raceways are available for feeding by visitors from Memorial Day

through July. While prime viewing is in the summer months, tours are available year round between 8:30 and 3:30. Be sure and ask about the record channel cat!

Rolling Oak Alpaca Ranch is a family owned and operated farm. Schedule a visit to the ranch and you will get to know the alpacas that call Rolling Oak their home. While you are there you can shop locally produced products that include alpaca fiber scarfs, socks, hats and even soaps.

Makanda: The Most Hippie Town In Illinois. Visit the unique shops on the Makanda boardwalk. X doesn't mark the spot, the Smiley Face water tower does! When you're not wandering through the woods, a good place to go is the Makanda Boardwalk.

Each fall, vultures fly over Makanda and the surrounding areas and signal the arrival of the incredible fall colors of Makanda and southern Illinois.

The 3rd weekend of October each year, Vulture Fest features live music, food, shopping, and art by local artists for purchase; all under the watchful eyes of Black and Turkey Vultures roosting in the trees overlooking the village.

Many attractions in this hippie town give it that feeling of being free-spirited. Don't miss the Rainmaker Garden, and it will certainly put you in that Earth child, flower power vibe.

Learn more at www.southernmostillinois.com or call 618-833-9928.





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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Massac County Events

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. Event at the historic Harry Satham Gymnasium in Brookport IL. Tickets at heroesofmassacendeavors.org

Sept. 26: Walk for Hope starting 4 p.m. at Washington Park, 308 Park Street, 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. 1, 2026-Jan. 17, 2027: Hunting Weekend Trophy Deer. World-Class Deer Hunting. Amazing Hunting Land. Big Bucks. Great Memories. Metropolis IL.

Oct. 17 & 18: Fort Massac Encampment at Fort Massac State Park in Metropolis, Illinois. 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.

Nov. 12-14: Shopping Weekend: Christmas Barn Trail Sale. Unique Finds in Rustic Barns such as unique gifts, handmade crafts, vintage collectibles, antiques, shabby chic, rustic, farmhouse, repurposed and "vintage Christmas" items. Main Hub is 606 Market Street, Metropolis IL 62960. Annual festive driving event that transforms 14+ barns into enchanting holiday marketplaces within a 7-mile radius. Barns are decorated with Christmas themes, photo ops and holiday treats with Santa Claus appearances at select barns. Typical hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. VIP pass available for Nov. 12. Free admission on Nov. 13 & 14.

Nov. 14-Dec. 6: Water Fowl Weekend Ducks. Legendary Duck Hunting. Prime Wetland Locations. Chasing Birds. Making Memories. Metropolis IL.

Dec. 19, 2026-Jan. 24-2027: Water Fowl Weekend Ducks. Legendary Duck Hunting. Prime Wetland Locations. Chasing Birds. Making Memories. 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.

Which Fall Weekend Are You?



History Weekend
Fort Massac Encampment



- ★ Living History & Artillery Demos
- ★ Period Crafts, Food & Music
- ★ Free Fun for the whole family!

October 17 & 18, 2026



Hunting Weekend
Trophy Deer



- ★ World - Class Deer Hunting
- ★ Amazing Hunting Land
- ★ Big Bucks. Great Memories

Oct. 1, 2026 - Jan. 17, 2027



Water Fowl Weekend
Ducks



- ★ Legendary Duck Hunting
- ★ Prime Wetland Locations
- ★ Chasing Birds. Making Memories

**Nov. 14th - Dec. 6th, 2026
Dec. 19th, 2026 - Jan. 24, 2027**



Shopping Weekend
Christmas Barn Trail Sale



- ★ Unique Finds in Rustic Barns
- ★ Holiday Season Kick-off
- ★ Support Small Businesses

November 12th - 14th, 2026

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you'll want to stay another day.

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Crawford County Events

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 www.pioneeracity.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 Confectionery 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. Sat 11 a.m.-7 p.m. & Sun noon-5 p.m. Contact: Susan Goodwine 618-586-2035

Oct. 30 & 31: 60th Annual Oblong Fall Follies and "Spooktacular" Band Fest and Parade. Oblong's biggest event of the year starts Friday Oct. 30 at 5 p.m. with food trucks, music and games, ending at 8 p.m. Bluegrass Band "Coal Creek Station" will play 6-8 p.m. on Friday at the downtown mini park. Saturday Oct. 31 includes a full day of entertainment from 9 a.m.-9:30 p.m. of games, vendors, costume contest, food trucks, cake walk, bounce houses, downtown shopping, contests and more, and ends with the largest nighttime parade in Illinois! New this year will be bed races Saturday at 11 a.m. on North Range Street. Call 618-480-1062 for more information.

Nov. 27-Friday after Thanksgiving: 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

Nov. 28: Christmas on the River. Visit the Village of Hutsonville for beautifully decorated Christmas Trees, food, and entertainment starting at 5 p.m.

Dec. 4: Merry Hometown Christmas in the Park 5-9 p.m. starting in downtown Oblong at the mini-park with a firepit, smores and hot cocoa. Take a train ride through the park and around the lake to view the large Christmas lights display. The train makes a stop along the way at the Crawford County Saddle Club for pony rides and opportunities for photos with Highland cows.



Dec. 4-5: Home for the Holidays. Join us for 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.

2026 Crawford County Calendar of Events

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

September 3 – September 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
www.pioneeracity.com or Email: PalestineCofC@verizon.net

October 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 Confectionery 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.

October 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. Sat 11am-7pm & Sun 12-5pm
Contact: Susan Goodwine 618-586-2035

October 30 & 31
60th Annual Oblong Fall Follies and "Spooktacular" Band Fest and Parade
Oblong's biggest event of the year starts Friday October 30 at 5 p.m. with food trucks, music and games, ending at 8 p.m. Bluegrass Band "Coal Creek Station" will play 6-8 p.m. on Friday at the downtown mini park. Saturday October 31 includes a full day of entertainment from 9 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. of games, vendors, costume contest, food trucks, cake walk,

bounce houses, downtown shopping, contests and more, and ends with the largest nighttime parade in Illinois! New this year will be bed races Saturday at 11 a.m. on North Range Street. **Call 618-480-1062 for more information.**

November 27 – Friday after Thanksgiving
Leaverton Park Holiday Lighting Festival
5:00 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

November 28
Christmas on the River
Visit the Village of Hutsonville for beautifully decorated Christmas Trees, food, and entertainment starting at 5 p.m.

December 4
Merry Hometown Christmas
5-9 p.m. starting in downtown Oblong at the mini-park with a firepit, smores and hot cocoa. Take a train ride through the park and around the lake to view the large Christmas lights display. The train makes a stop along the way at the Crawford County Saddle Club for pony rides and opportunities for photos with highland cows.

December 4-5
Home for the Holidays
Join us for 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.**

Visit The Only Oblong

OBLONG FALL FOLLIES
AND GIANTIC NIGHTTIME PARADE
LAST OCT SAT ONLY IN OBLONG ILLINOIS FUN FOOD MUSIC

Merry Hometown Christmas in the Park
Downtown Oblong Friday December 4th 5pm to 9pm

STAY AWHILE, WE'RE ALWAYS GLAD YOU'RE HERE
PLAY, SHOP, RELAX

Clark County Events

Aug. 29: Country Farm Antiques Show 9 a.m.–2 p.m. at Richards Farm Restaurant, 607 NE 13th Street, 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

Sept. 4–7: Casey Popcorn Fest at Fairview Park in Casey IL. Headliner Sat. Sept. 5 is rising country sensation Greytan 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 www.popcornfestival.net

Sept. 11: Big Swings, Small Town Golf Outing at Casey Community Club & Golf Course. Join us for a day of golf, community and big fun to support Big Things in a Small Town and the Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Fund. Morning flight at 8 a.m. Lunch by Crazy 8's at 11 a.m. Afternoon flight at noon. https://chamberorganizer.com/caseychamber/docs/Big%20Swings%20Small%20Town_Registration%20Form.pdf



**Greathouse
of Country**
Kim Groothuis
103 North Central Avenue • Casey, Illinois 62420
(217) 232-4037
A multi vendor shop offering early American country antiques and needfuls.

Dec. 4 & 5: Candy Canes on Main 2026 Christmas Festival in downtown Casey IL. Merry Market 6:30–9 p.m. on Dec. 4 and 9 a.m.–4 p.m. on Dec. 5. Lighted parade Friday night.



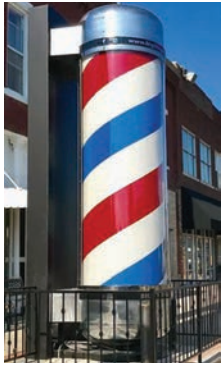

PHARMACIE
We Sell Big Things, Small Town Casey Souvenirs & Maps and Fannie May Candy!
Follow us on Facebook
The Pharmacie Shoppe
1 Staley Avenue, Casey IL • At the Rt 40 / Rt 49 Junction
217.932.4004 • M-F 8:30-5:30; Sat. 9:00-Noon



CASEY ILLINOIS
11 WORLD RECORDS
WORLD'S LARGEST MAILBOX
CANDY CANES ON MAIN 2026 December 4 & 5
CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL DEC 4TH-5TH DOWNTOWN CASEY
discover DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS
enjoy illinois
BIG THINGS SMALL TOWN

11 of the World's Largest Items are in Casey IL

There are also an additional almost 30 other Big Things that can be found around Casey IL. For a list, go to www.bigthingsmaltown.com In Memory of Jim Bolin.



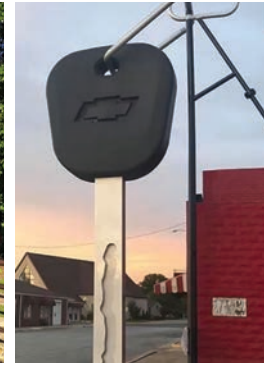
12 W. Main St., in front of Tina's Barber Shop



4 S. Central Ave., near the intersection of Main St. and Central Ave.



607 NE 10th St., at Richards Farm Restaurant



4 West Alabama



19 W. Main St.



117 E. Main St.



111 S. Central Ave., at Brownie's Place



203 NE 13th St.



111 E. Main St.



20 West General Robey, inside Whisk + Lollies Bakery and Candy Shoppe



109 E. Main St.

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Night Special:
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Sunday Buffet 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.



Open: Monday-Thursday 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Sunday 10:30 a.m.-8 p.m.

"Home of the World's Largest Pitchfork" **607 NE 13th St, Casey, IL 62420**
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The World's Largest Gavel can be found at the Clark County Courthouse in Marshall IL.

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 Adult Outdoor Exercise Equipment
 Balance Equipment

The Woodlands

Open
Dawn to Dusk

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

Clark County Events: Marshall & Martinsville

Sept. 18-20: Marshall Autumn Fest on the courthouse square in Marshall IL. Live Music featuring headliners "American Vanity" and "No Fences", Food Trucks, Cake Walk, Over 100 Unique Arts and Crafts Booths, and Parade. Car, Truck and Motorcycle Show on Sunday. Marshallautumnfest.com

Sept. 24: Clark County Veteran Expo at Harlan Hall in Marshall IL. Our goal is to connect Veterans with resources, opportunities, and support all in one place while strengthening the network of services available throughout Clark County and the surrounding communities.

Dec. 5: Hometown Holly Days in downtown Marshall IL. Carolers, bounce houses, food trucks, Christmas music, cookie walk, visits with Santa, Christmas market at Harlan Hall, characters around town, lighting of the Christmas Tee, lighted Christmas parade, live Nativity "The Bethlehem Experience" featuring walk through 10+ different scenes depicting the story of stories, and Ride the Polar Express Train Depot at the Courthouse Square in Marshall IL.

**"Supported by the Community
to Serve the Community"**

Changing Hands
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**Clothing for
the Whole
Family,
Home Decor,
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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.*

CN-1967372



Linn Park in Martinsville IL includes an amphitheater hosting live music primarily during the summer months.

Join us in Marshall!

Where seasonal tradition meets community fun

- **FREE** Live Music All Weekend
Featuring Headliners:
American Vanity & No Fences
Plus non-stop entertainment all weekend long!
- Food Trucks
- Over 100 Arts & Crafts Booths
- Parade
- Car, Truck, & Motorcycle Show



September 18-20, 2026

marshallautumnfest.com

MARSHALL
Autumn
Fest

Join us for *Hometown* **HOLLY DAYS** December 5th Downtown Marshall, IL



Polar Express

Ride the Polar Express Train
Depot at the Courthouse
Square



Live Nativity

Walk through 10+ different
scenes depicting the story of
stories!



- Carolers • Bounce Houses • Food Trucks
Christmas Music • Cookie Walk • Visits with Santa
- Christmas Market at Harlan Hall •
 - Characters Around Town •
 - Lighting of the Christmas Tree •
 - Lighted Christmas Parade •

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FAMILY
FUN**

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ILLINOIS

For more information, visit: marshallilchamber.com

enjoy
ILLINOIS

RESIDENTS AND VISITORS INVITED TO EXPLORE AMERICA'S ROOTS WITH ILLINOIS AMERICA 250'S KEEPSAKE 'PASSPORT TO ILLINOIS'

As Illinois communities continue to celebrate the nation's semiquincentennial in 2026, the Illinois America 250 Commission has unveiled the first ever Passport to Illinois, inviting residents and visitors alike to explore the powerful places, people and events in Illinois that have shaped the nation's history.

The limited-edition keepsake Passport to Illinois uplifts under-told stories of people and places that have contributed to making good on the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.

Among the 56 historic sites, museums and monuments featured in the passport are the Kaskaskia Bell State Memorial and the Elijah P. Lovejoy Monument in southern Illinois; the Western Illinois Museum in Macomb; the Project XV Voting Rights Museum in El Paso; the Ulysses S. Grant Home in Galena; the Jacksonville African American History Museum and Woodlawn Farm and the McLean County Museum of History in central Illinois; the Gichigamiin Indigenous Nations Museum and the Radium Girls Monument in northern Illinois; and the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture and the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum in Chicago.

"The first-ever Passport to Illinois transforms travel into a journey through the very ideals that built our nation. It is an invitation for visitors to Illinois and residents alike to explore history, heritage and the communities that define Illinois today," said Gabrielle Lyon, chair of the Illinois America 250 Commission and executive director of Illinois Humanities. "It's a perfect, hands-on way to connect with our country's 250th milestone anniversary."

Passports are free and will be available at public libraries, highway visitor centers, staffed passport sites and other locations throughout Illinois while supplies last. Pickup locations will be highlighted on the Illinois America 250 website. In addition, a digital version of the passport will be available to download from the site and print at home.

"Illinois America 250 is a wonderful opportunity to invite residents and travelers to experience all that our great state has to offer," said Catie Sheehan, deputy director of the DCEO Illinois Office of Tourism. "The Passport to Illinois encourages everyone to explore communities across the state while celebrating the people, places and stories that have shaped our nation. More than a guide, this passport becomes a travel journal and keepsake, capturing memories, reflections, and connections, while supporting local destinations and tourism economies statewide."

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield is among the stops featured on the passport.

"The point of commemorating America's 250th birthday is not simply to celebrate where we are today. It's also to consider

where we want to go tomorrow. That's exactly what Abraham Lincoln did when he urged Americans to dedicate themselves to a freedom movement that had begun 'four score and seven years ago,'" said Christina Shutt, executive director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and a member of the Illinois America 250 Commission. "I hope everyone who uses this passport to explore history will also think about ways they can make America a better place for all."

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) manages some of the state's most meaningful historic sites, many of which are featured on the passport, including Lincoln's New Salem in Menard County, the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Black Hawk State Historic Site in Rock Island, Cahokia Mounds near Collinsville, and the Vandalia Statehouse in Fayette County.

"The Passport to Illinois offers a trove of ideas for families and individuals who wish to explore our state and national history during this special anniversary year and beyond," said IDNR Director Natalie Phelps Finnie. "Our staff is excited to welcome new and returning visitors at the state historic sites and parks featured in the passport."

The passport cover features a cardinal, a monarch and other state symbols. The artwork is by artist William Estrada, who grew up in California, Mexico and Chicago.

"It's important to remember Illinois' role in the country's foundation," said State Senator Doris Turner of Springfield, who is also an Illinois America 250 Commission member. "The passports share stories and highlight the many people, places and things that make Illinois what it is today."

The passport was developed by the Illinois America 250 Commission in partnership with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois Office of Tourism, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Humanities, the Illinois Association of Museums, the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Illinois Department of Human Services.

Passport to Illinois is one of a series of signature initiatives organized by Illinois America 250 Commission to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The commission was established to lead an inclusive, statewide celebration that uplifts local stories, highlights significant places and programs, and showcases how Illinoisans bring the ideals of the Declaration of Independence to life.

Other signature programs include:

- **Illinois United in Service**, an effort to encourage residents to volunteer with organizations of their choice and log their hours with Serve Illinois to foster community connection and build a legacy of giving back throughout 2026.
- **Illinois Voices 250**, a project to record and preserve Illinoisans' reflections on the 250th anniversary in the Library of Congress.



Cumberland County Events

Sept. 5: Annual Fireworks Show at Lake Mattoon.

Sept. 6: Tractor Pull at the park in Sigel IL

Sept. 12: Homesteaders Market 2026 at Greenup Municipal Building, 115 E. Cumberland St. Greenup. 8 a.m.-noon. Homemade goods, homegrown produce, baked items, handmade crafts, and more! Contact Lacey Thoele at 217-508-9572. Hosted by Growing with Greenup.

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

Oct. 3: Neoga Sooyefest and Smokeoff 1-7 p.m. at Jennings Park in Neoga. Live music all day, Free ham and beans lunch, kids' activities, local craft and food vendors, Smoke-Off Competition and plenty of small-town fall fun!

Oct. 9 & 10: Greenup Fall Festival and Citywide Garage Sales

Oct. 10: Homesteaders Market 2026 at Greenup Municipal Building, 115 E. Cumberland St. Greenup. 8 a.m.-Noon. Homemade goods, homegrown produce, baked items, handmade crafts, and more! Contact Lacey Thoele at 217-508-9572. Hosted by Growing with Greenup.

Oct. 31: Trick-or-Treat 6-8 p.m. in Neoga.

Dec. 5: Christmas Around the Square in Toledo IL. Photos, food, games, vendors, lighted parade, fun for all ages. Festivities begin 3 p.m. Lighted parade 6 p.m. followed by tree lighting.

Dec. 6: Hometown Christmas in Neoga. Enjoy this holiday festival Sunday afternoon and evening culminating with a lighted parade.

Jasper County Events

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

Oct. 31: Jeepoween at MVP Happy Holler, Newton IL

November 7: Bj's Annual Jeepsaving Run. Sign in 11 a.m. Leave at noon. Money raised for coats and Christmas gifts for local children in need. Music by Jake & Mikayla after the ride starting at 6 p.m.

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

Clay County Events

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

Sept. 11 & 12: Shadows of Elmwood Cemetery Tours. Meet at the historic Flora Depot in Flora IL. See the Flora Depot Facebook page for more information.

Sept. 18 & 19: Ford Town Funfest in Flora IL. Join us Friday for music by Just for Spite Unplugged, inflatables, games, a cruise-in from the Clay County Cruisers and more. Saturday's events include food trucks, car show from the Clay County Cruisers, chili cook-off & microbrews and more. Location is Library Park to downtown Flora. For more information call 618-662-5646.

Sept. 26: FAF Appleknocker Festival at Flora High School.

Oct. 7: Moonlight Madness in downtown Flora IL 5-8 p.m.

Oct. 30 & 31: Louisville Fall Harvest Festival. Celebrating 75 years! Food, music, parade, and more on the square in Louisville IL.

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.

Nov. 6 & 7: Fall into Flora (Moonlight Madness) - vendors, downtown businesses, games, and more in Flora IL.



**Pizza, Pasta,
Salads,
Sandwiches
and much more!**

**Joe's Italian Foods
& Pizza - Newton**
113 S Jackson, Newton, IL
618-783-5637

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

Dec. 11 & 12: KrisKindle Market includes vendors, Santa, carriage rides, elf driving school, and more in Flora IL.

Edgar County Events

Aug. 30: Simply Patsy, a heartfelt tribute to Patsy Cline 3 p.m. at Paris Center of Fine Arts in Paris IL.

Sept. 25 & 26: The Honeybee Festival in Paris IL.

Sept. 27: Hollywood Revisited at Paris Center of Fine Arts in Paris IL.

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.

Nov. 28: Christmas in Paris Festival in Paris IL.

Dec. 5: The Dupue Brothers at Paris Center of Fine Arts in Paris IL.

Feb. 27: Daniel Kelly Shakespeare in Jazz at Paris Center of Fine Arts in Paris IL.

April 24: The Taiko Project at Paris Center of Fine Arts in Paris IL.

May 8: Forever Simon & Garfunkel at Paris Center of Fine Arts in Paris IL.



Where the Locals Eat

Find out what makes us a neighborhood favorite!

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