

FALL/WINTER 2021

# goguide

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SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS

GREATNESS  
AROUND  
*every turn*

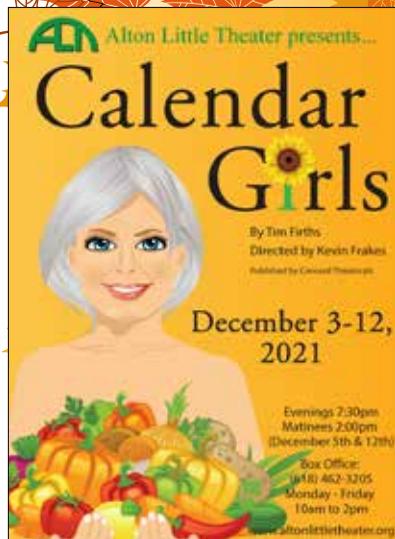
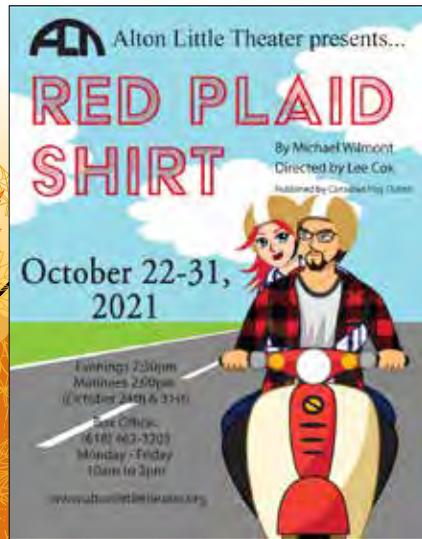


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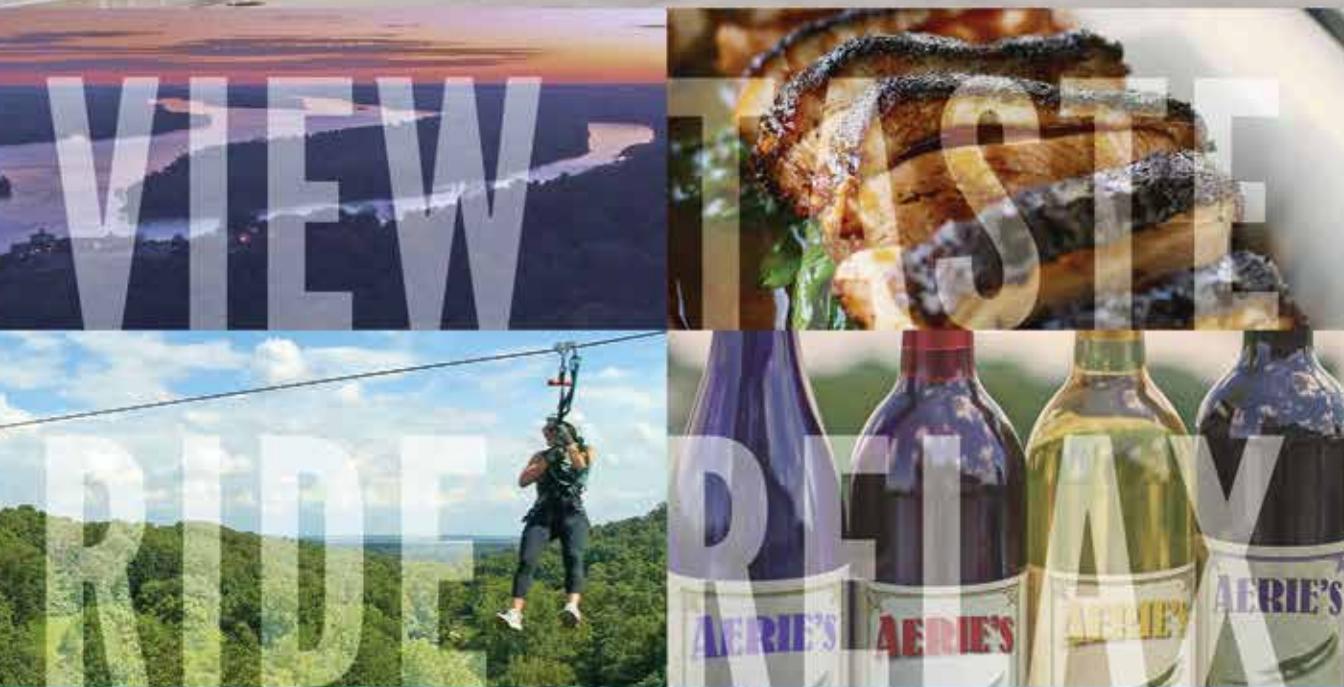
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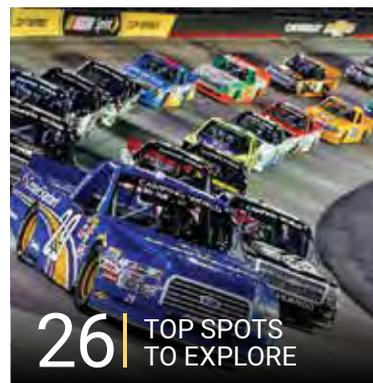
ALTON | COLLINSVILLE | EDWARDSVILLE  
GLEN CARBON | GODFREY | GRAFTON  
MADISON | JERSEY | CALHOUN | MACOUPIN  
MONTGOMERY | GREENE | COUNTIES



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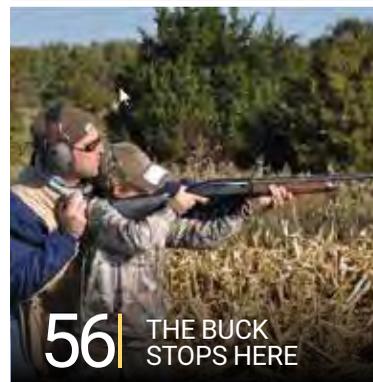
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**STAY SAFE IN GREAT RIVERS & ROUTES OF SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS**

Here's what you can do to remain safe during your visit:



Wash your hands



Maintain social distances of 6 feet



Wear a face mask

### FEATURED WRITERS:

**MELISSA MESKE**, founder and owner of Melissa Meske Publications, is an award-winning writer, editor and communications professional.

**DANETTE WATT**, freelance writer and former regional editor of Community Health, currently writes blogs for clients at Web Design by Knight.





# WHY *wait*

IT'S HERE. THE FALL AND WINTER TRAVEL SEASON YOU'VE BEEN LONGING FOR. AND IT IS AS IF NATURE IS READY TO PUT ON A SHOW.

Summer heat is giving way to cooler days and evenings. The rich green leaves are slowly changing their colors, dressing up in reds, oranges, yellows and browns. It's a signal that life along the rivers and byways in southwest Illinois is changing.

The Great Rivers & Routes region becomes a mecca for wildlife as migrating birds travel the super highway of the Mississippi Flyway passing through on their way to winter homes in the south. The region becomes home to elegant Trumpeter Swans and majestic American Bald Eagles.

Why wait to DISCOVER the only place in America where the Great River Road meets the Mother Road – Route 66?

Why wait to EXPLORE the history and hauntings of Mississippi River towns?

Why wait to ROAM the more than 200 miles of hiking and biking trails that wind through prairies, the famed American Bottoms, woodlands and rivers?

Why wait to meet giants and legends including the world's tallest man, a man-eating dragon bird, and an enormous pink elephant?

Isn't it time to create a getaway that includes soaring above the brilliant fall colors on a zipline adventure, dining on secret recipe fried chicken, mouthwatering pepperloin steaks and entrees inspired by locally grown produce from organic farms; and then ending the evening at a local guest house or bed & breakfast inn teeming with hospitality and freshly baked goodies?

WHY WAIT? FIND YOUR FALL/WINTER ADVENTURE IN SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS WHERE

THERE'S GREATNESS AROUND *every turn!*

# FALL IN TO FALL OUTDOOR DELIGHTS

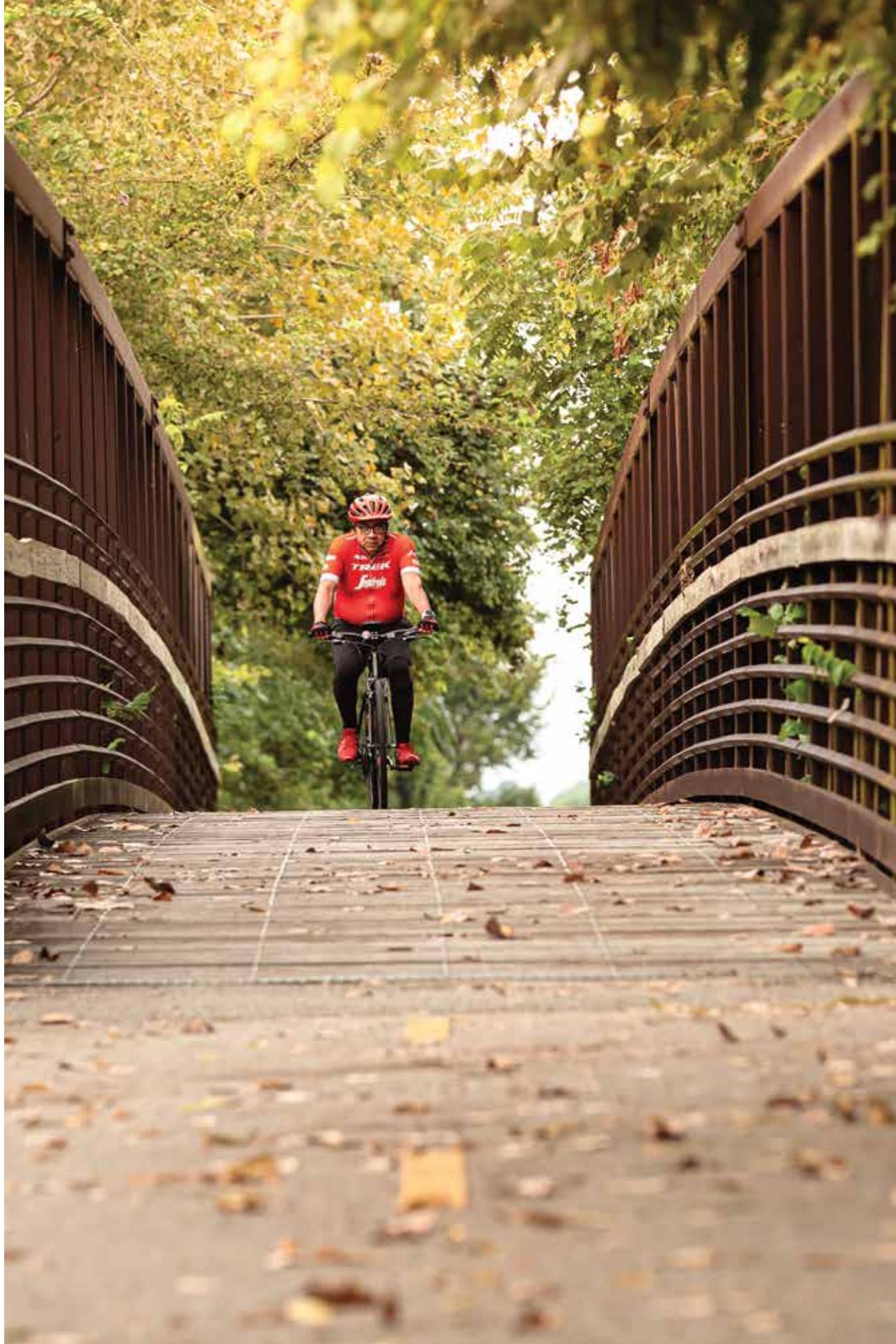
IT'S THE PERFECT FALL DAY. THE AIR IS CRISP AND CLEAN. THE SKY IS BLUE. AND THE OPEN HILLS AND TRAILS IN SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS ARE CALLING YOUR NAME.

That means it's time to roll out the bikes, lace up the hiking shoes and hit the more than 200 miles of trails that wind throughout the Great Rivers & Routes region and enjoy unparalleled outdoor adventure.

"Fall is really a great time to get on a bike and take a ride," says Luke Harris, owner of Crossroads Bike Tours. A bike trail aficionado and local biking expert, Harris says he is starting to see increased interest in biking along the trails in southwest Illinois.

"The Madison County Transit Trails are a great place to ride in the fall. Most of the trails are half shaded by trees and that helps with the heat," Harris says. "But it's the trees that make it a great place to ride in the fall. There are so many different kinds of trees with a variety of colors. And then there is the poison ivy that turns a brilliant red. If you see a tree trunk that is bright red, it's probably covered in poison ivy."

Harris encourages biking enthusiasts to pedal along the paved and well-maintained MCT Trails that criss cross Madison County for a chance to reconnect with nature and escape from the stresses of daily life.



Choose from 10 named MCT Trails that stretch across Madison County and include a Route 66 experience, a rural ride through the fields and woodlands of unincorporated areas and more urban jaunts in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon. Or better yet, take advantage of the MCT Loop system and ensure you don't see the same scenery twice in one trip. The loops combine several different trails into one scenic biking and hiking adventure.

Some of the MCT Trails also have bike lockers available for those who want to get off the trail and explore the surrounding communities.

The MCT trails are located on former railroad corridors and are considered Class I bikeways – meaning they are separated from the road. Overall the trails have 48 bridges, 22 tunnels and a few at-grade crossings.

Harris says one of his favorite trails is the nearly 20 mile long Goshen Trail that starts in Wood River and ends up in O'Fallon.

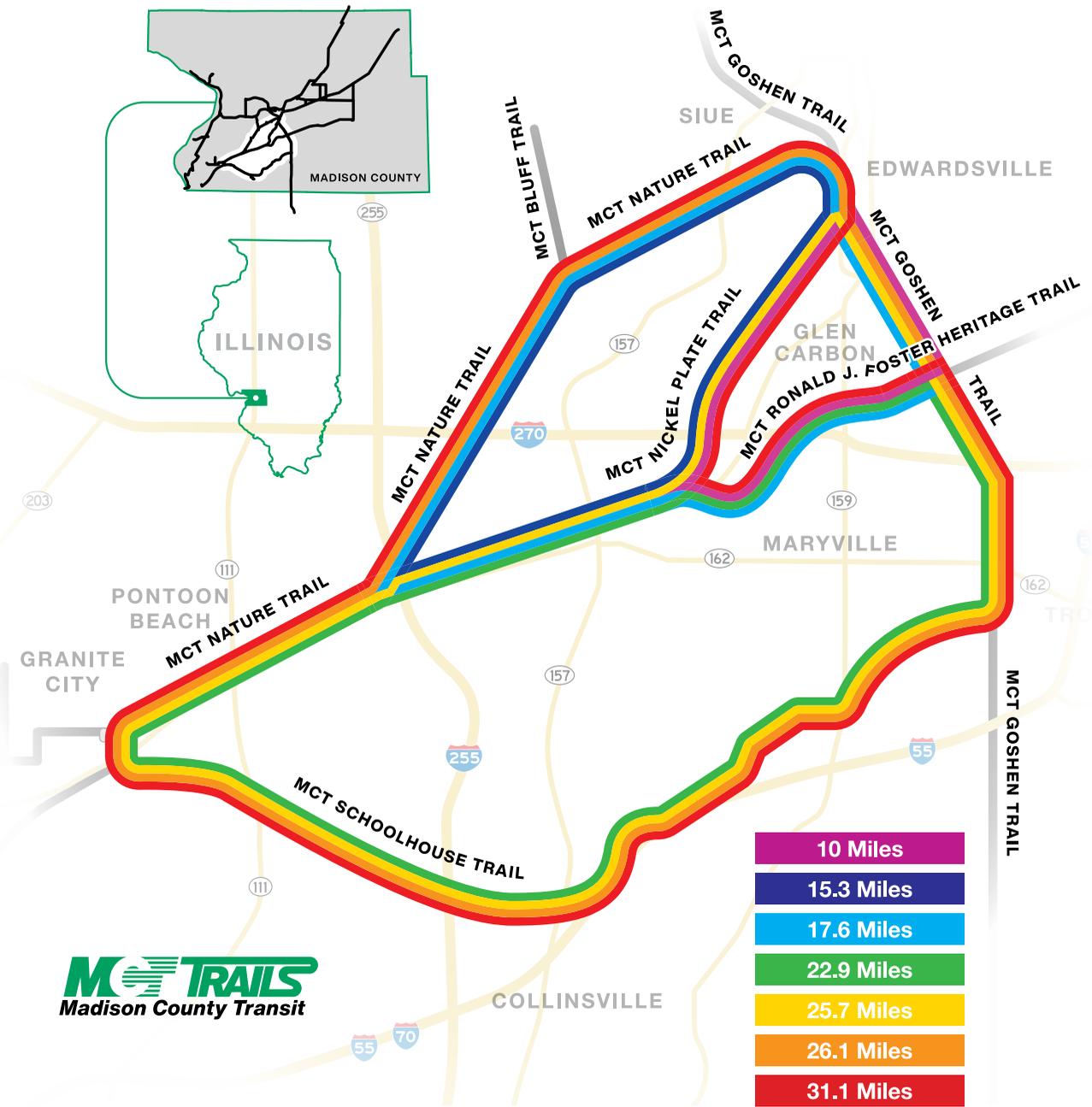
"It is a beautifully long trail that features huge trees and two large bridge trestles that you ride across. It's really impressive," Harris says. "You are riding from an urban area to rural back to urban." Harris estimates the round trip journey along the Goshen Trail could take three to four hours depending on the rider and how many stops are made along the way.

The Sam Vadalabene Bike Trail which runs alongside the majestic Mississippi River and beside massive limestone bluffs is another trail that appeals to bicyclists, Harris says.

"The Vadalabene is one of the most beautiful rides in the area," Harris says. "It's also flat – there aren't many rises and it's easy to ride." The 20 mile trail starts in Alton and ends at Pere Marquette State Park. The picturesque Village of Elsah and the riverfront community of Grafton are smack dab in the middle of the trail and perfect spots to take a break.

**TRAIL TIP:** When riding along the Sam Vadalabene Trail, be sure to visit the Elsah General Store in Elsah. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, the store is a throwback to yesterday and features old-fashioned candy, sodas and locally crafted baked goods.

Visit [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com) for more information on the Elsah General Store.



**MCT TRAILS**  
Madison County Transit

- 10 Miles
- 15.3 Miles
- 17.6 Miles
- 22.9 Miles
- 25.7 Miles
- 26.1 Miles
- 31.1 Miles



HOW FAR WILL YOU GO?

**10.0 MILES**  
GOSHEN TRAIL  
HERITAGE TRAIL  
NICKEL PLATE TRAIL

**FEATURES:**  
Woodlands, access to area parks and historic districts in Edwardsville & Glen Carbon with 10 tunnels and 8 bridges.

**15.3 MILES**  
NATURE TRAIL  
NICKEL PLATE TRAIL

**FEATURES:**  
Woodlands, wildlife and access to SIUE, schools, park. Edwardsville Children's Museum, Glen Carbon Miner Park and Edwardsville Township Park.

**17.6 MILES**  
NATURE TRAIL  
NICKEL PLATE TRAIL  
HERITAGE TRAIL  
GOSHEN TRAIL

**FEATURES:**  
Woodlands, wildlife and urban areas. Visit SIUE, Edwardsville, Glen Carbon and Maryville before returning to the starting point.

**22.9 MILES**  
NATURE TRAIL  
NICKEL PLATE TRAIL  
HERITAGE TRAIL  
GOSHEN TRAIL  
SCHOOLHOUSE TRAIL

**FEATURES:**  
Old growth forests, Collinsville neighborhoods and Horseshoe Lake State Park.

**25.7 MILES**  
NATURE TRAIL  
NICKEL PLATE TRAIL  
GOSHEN TRAIL  
SCHOOLHOUSE TRAIL

**FEATURES:**  
Woods, prairie, Horseshoe Lake State Park, Edwardsville, Glen Carbon and Maryville.

**26.1 MILES**  
NATURE TRAIL  
GOSHEN TRAIL  
SCHOOLHOUSE TRAIL

**FEATURES:**  
Woods, wildlife, connector to Gateway Convention Center and Collinsville Aqua Park and includes Horseshoe Lake State Park, SIUE, University Park and Edwardsville High School.

**31.1 MILES**  
NATURE TRAIL  
NICKEL PLATE TRAIL  
HERITAGE TRAIL  
GOSHEN TRAIL  
SCHOOLHOUSE TRAIL

**FEATURES:**  
Spreading across Madison County, this loop is the longest of the seven and includes woods, farmland, historic districts, Horseshoe Lake State Park, tunnels and bridges. This loop is a great way to see the region by bicycle.

**FALL RIVER CRUISES**

There's always an adventure waiting on the mighty Mississippi River. Just ask Alex Grieves, captain of the **Spirit of Peoria**, an authentic paddle wheel river boat that travels to southwest Illinois throughout the fall.

"The river changes every day. It's always an adventure," Grieves says. The paddle wheeler docks in Grafton at The Loading Dock on Sept. 22 and Oct. 6 for sightseeing and lunch cruises. The brilliantly painted red and white boat stands 47 feet tall and features a calliope, steam whistle, and, of course, a massive red paddle wheel, the boat's sole source of propulsion.

Cruises also feature an onboard storyteller and musician who entertain audiences in classic riverboat style. To book a cruise go to: [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com)



Fall color cruises are also available at **Grafton Harbor** on board the **Hakuna Matata** 49-passenger excursion boat. Spend an hour or more on the ever-changing river with specialty cruises including a Taste of Italy Sunset Dinner Cruise, Oktoberfest Dinner Cruise and Glorious Fall Sunset Cruises. Visit [GraftonHarbor.com](http://GraftonHarbor.com) for information and to book a ride.





## LOOK UP - REALLY!

When rock climbing at **Pere Marquette State Park**, it's always a good thing to look up. Not only will you be able to tell how high you are, but there are some magnificent fall colors at the top of the limestone bluffs.

Famous for its size and history, and as Illinois' largest state park, Pere Marquette has also become a rock climber's retreat. There are 40 routes on highly featured limestone bluffs available for the rock-climbing enthusiast.

There are even more high-level fall adventures in southwest Illinois. Take the **Grafton SkyTour** from Grafton's riverfront to the top of the river bluffs more than 300 feet high and enjoy a leisurely look at fall colors from open air chair lifts or enclosed gondola.

Or do a tree top canopy tour on the highly acclaimed **Grafton Zipline Adventures**. This thrilling, high speed zipline combines, views, rope bridges, trails and a surprise ending for a one-of-a-kind experience.

For more fall fun ideas, visit [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com)



**7 loops**  
**25 tunnels**  
**49 bridges**  
**137 miles of trails**

**MCTRAILS**  
Madison County Transit

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# TAKE A HIKE

"I GO TO NATURE TO BE SOOTHED AND HEALED, AND TO HAVE MY SENSES PUT IN ORDER."  
 – John Burroughs

Shrug off the stresses of daily life and take a walk. Not just any walk either. How about a walk through the woods and prairies of southwest Illinois where mighty rivers and picturesque lakes dot the landscape? A place where bird song replaces office chatter. Where the rustle of fall leaves and water lapping along riverbanks and shoreline replaces the buzz of urban life.

There are dozens of hiking trails throughout the landscape of the Great Rivers & Routes region of southwest Illinois providing outdoor escapes and the opportunity to reconnect with the natural world.

There's no better place to let your body absorb nature than at the **Watershed Nature Center** in Edwardsville. The 40-acre property features wetlands, woodlands and grasslands. The trails are open from dawn to dusk.

Or head over to **The Nature Institute** in Godfrey where magnificent views of the Mississippi River from the limestone bluffs is a highlight. The trails here are rated from easy to difficult and are 3 miles in length. The trails feature forests, restored prairie and a savanna habitat. Be sure to visit Beaver Falls, the largest waterfall on the property. The trails are open from dawn to dusk through December.

Litchfield's **Lake Lou Yaeger's Route 66 Hike and Bike Trail** features 6.6 miles of trails that can range from easy to moderate depending on the chosen route. Unpaved and marked trails include flat terrain and steep downgrades. For a more gentle walk, hike through the Shoal Creek Recreation area which has native prairie, lake shorelines and woodlands.

In nearby Hillsboro, **H & B Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary** showcases nature at its best. Wide walkways allow for serene views of the natural prairie and woodlands. The trails are open from dawn to dusk.

**Pere Marquette State Park** has the most extensive hiking trail system in southwest Illinois. With the difficulty of trails ranging from easy to difficult, it's easy to take your pick of hikes. All trails at the park feature scenic views and take hikers deep in to the park's 8,000 acres. The Goat Cliff Trail at the park gives hikers the chance to stand on the Cap au Gres Fault and pass by an underground spring. The trail ends at McAdams Peak where three different bodies of water are visible. There is also a Native American burial ground nearby. For a deep trip into the park, try out the Hickory Trails, Fern Hollow, Rattlesnake and Oak Trails. These trails connect to one another and total 5 ¾ miles long. They are more secluded and cut through the oldest forest areas of the park.

**And there are more!** For a complete look at the hiking trails available in southwest Illinois, go to: **RiversandRoutes.com**

## BRING YOUR FRIENDS

HIKING ISN'T NECESSARILY A SOLITARY ACTIVITY. GROUPS HAVE DISCOVERED THE JOYS OF HIKING AND EXPERIENCING THE BEAUTY OF NATURE TOGETHER.

Just ask Debbie Njai, founder of "Black People Who Hike."

"I did my first hike in 2019 as an adult and fell in love with it," says Debbie Njai. "Hiking is therapeutic and beautiful."

Although Njai started out hiking with just a few friends, she began letting people know about her hikes through Instagram and the "We Hike Too" movement and her group of hiking enthusiasts grew. Now as many as 50 people show up for group hikes. Njai points out that when she began hiking, she noticed there weren't very many people of color using the local hiking trails. She wanted to change that and organized Black People Who Hike. The group's mission is to empower, educate and reengage people of color in the outdoors.

"Everyone who hikes with us for the first time has that 'aha moment' about 30 minutes in," Njai says. "That's when they get the natural high from hiking. For me it lasts all week."

The group hikes throughout southwest Illinois and Missouri. Njai said she enjoys hiking at Pere Marquette State Park because it is so close to St. Louis and offers scenic views and trail inclines.

"I love hiking in the fall – it's really the best time to hike," Njai says. "The weather is perfect. And leaf peeping is wonderful. It is absolutely gorgeous here in the fall. You can hike the same trail in each season and it always looks different. You see something different each time."

## HIKING TIP

**IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SHOES WHEN YOU'RE HIKING!** Be sure to choose comfortable shoes with a deep tread when hiking on area trails. Lace up hiking boots are best. If you have brand new hiking shoes, wear them around the house for a few days to break them in. **AND DON'T FORGET A FEW FIRST AID SUPPLIES IF YOU ARE PLANNING A DAY-LONG HIKE.** Fabric bandages, antiseptic cream or spray, blister treatment, and tweezers are easy to pack for just-in-case issues.



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# FOR THE

By Danette Watt

# birds

BIRDWATCHING ISN'T FOR THE 'BIRDS' ANYMORE. IT HAS BECOME A POPULAR PASTIME AND A GREAT WAY TO RECONNECT WITH NATURE.



**BIRDING FACT:**  
More than 45 million people watch birds around their homes and away from home, according to a 2016 survey by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



## PACK UP YOUR ENTHUSIASM, A PAIR OF BINOCULARS, A FIELD GUIDE AND HEAD TO SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS FOR A 'BIRDS-EYE' LOOK AT THE WINGED BEAUTIES THAT MAKE THE REGION THEIR FALL AND WINTER HOMES.

If you're new to birdwatching, the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton is the perfect place to start.

And if you're wondering if this is a good time of year to see anything, wonder no more! Fall and winter are great times to see some of the more than 300 species of resident birds or feathered visitors using the Mississippi Flyway. The Flyway is globally significant and provides a breeding, foraging and stopover habitat for migrating and overwintering birds.

## WHAT MAKES THE REGION SO SPECIAL?

"Riverlands is an exceptional place for migratory and resident bird species year-round," said Ken Buchholz, Audubon Center Director at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary. "It's a vast, varied and well-managed habitat at the heart of the Mississippi Flyway."

Riverlands has water, prairie marsh, bottomland forest, and shrubby-type habitat that provides food, shelter, and safe passage for a variety of bird types. There are 8.5 miles of trails, a viewing platform and a uniquely designed Avian Observatory overlooking Heron Pond.

The Audubon Center at Riverlands has knowledgeable staff and volunteers along with bird checklists, maps and latest bird sightings to enhance birdwatchers' experiences.

"The Center welcomes year-round refuge from the elements, visitor information and great telescopes," said Penny Schmidt. Schmidt is an Alton resident who frequents Riverlands.

"Just minutes from downtown Alton, I can be immersed in a rich and diverse eco system. Beautiful, revitalizing, and fresh with discovery. Miles of footpaths flow along the river's edge and through tall prairie grasses for tranquil walks. There is so much to explore and enjoy," she said.

## WHAT WILL YOU SEE?

"Fall and winter are excellent times for viewing birds at Riverlands," said Buchholz.

The Sanctuary is a critical stopover for shorebirds on their way south. With a keen eye and set of binoculars, you may see sandpipers, stilts, snipes, plovers, among others.

First to arrive for the winter are the American white pelicans, ospreys and waterfowl such as blue-winged teal and northern pintails. This species of pelican is larger than bald eagles and has a wingspan of 9 to 10 feet. If you're lucky enough to catch them in flight, you'll see they have brown tips on their wings.

Later in the fall, along with more ducks and geese, Trumpeter swans will fly in. North America's largest waterfowl, the rare Trumpeter Swans will overwinter in the confluence area from about Nov. 1 to Feb. 15, said Buchholz, when they will return to their nesting grounds in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Raptors such as bald eagles, northern harriers and others can be seen in fall and winter months in the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. There are resident bald eagles, said Buchholz, but more wintering eagles will arrive

## WHY ARE BIRDS SO IMPORTANT?

Like the canary in the coalmine that warned miners of dangerous gases, the health of birds and the strength of their populations are an important indicator of the health of our land. Found in nearly every ecosystem on the planet, they are pollinators and seed dispersers, predators and prey.

Buchholz said there are persistent threats to birds and other wildlife brought on by people through habitat destruction, pollution and climate change.

"Grassland birds in particular have faced a steep decline over the past 40 years or so," he said.

But there is hope. Bald eagles, trumpeter swans and the interior least tern have all recovered from dangerously low populations with a chance for long-term survival, thanks to the efforts of conservationists, scientists and concerned citizens.

from Canada and the Great Lakes, looking for open water and fish as lakes, rivers, and ponds in northern regions freeze over.

"On a good day, one can see 50-70 eagles at Riverlands," said Buchholz.

Other raptors wintering over are the American kestrel, red-tail hawk and short-eared Owl.

## TWO RIVERS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Riverlands isn't the only place where a diversity of bird species can be found. The Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge in Brussels is another go-to spot. It's an important stopover for ducks and geese each fall. Bald eagles and American White Pelicans can also be seen wintering over at the Refuge.

Established in 1958, the Refuge is located between the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. It has more than 9,000 acres of wetlands, open water and other habitats that attract nearly 300 bird species, fish, amphibians, reptiles and mammals.

The Refuge offers many outdoor activities and family friendly programs and events. For current hours of operation and programs, call the office.

## RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

301 Riverlands Way  
West Alton, MO 63386  
636-899-0090

Tuesday-Saturday,  
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## TWO RIVERS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

364 Wildlife Conservation Road  
Brussels, IL 62013  
618-883-2524

Monday-Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## BIRDS OF WINTER SERIES

- **Jan. 8 • Eagle Ice Fest**
- **Great Backyard Bird Count Feb. 18-21**
- Five weekends between **Jan. 8-Feb. 15** are **Raptor Saturdays and Eagle Sundays** with live raptor meet & greets, winter bird hikes, Owl Prowls, Bows for Birds, and other activities.

Keep an eye on #RiversandRoutes social media for up-to-date information.

All events take place at Audubon Center.

# TAKE A *drive*

NEED A REASON TO ESCAPE FOR A WEEKEND OR JUST A DAY? FALL IS THE IDEAL TIME FOR A ROAD TRIP AND THE GREAT RIVERS & ROUTES REGION HAS THE COLORS TO PROVE IT.

There is no better time to travel the highways and byways of southwest Illinois than during Fall when the region dresses up in its Fall finery. Brilliant reds, golds and oranges glitter in the sunlight along the roadways providing some of the best Fall color driving routes in the Midwest.

Hop in the car, roll down the windows and get ready to explore southwestern Illinois' best fall color driving tours!



## COUNTRY LOOP ON U.S. 67

Considered one of the best country day drives in Illinois, the Country Loop travels through Alton, Godfrey, Jerseyville, Fieldon and Grafton along U.S. 67, Illinois Route 16 and Illinois Route 100.

The route includes views of river bluffs and Illinois prairie.

**TRAVEL TIP:** *Be sure to stop in Jerseyville's new City Center downtown district and enjoy lunch or dinner at George's Local Brew, Brossio Tavern, Charcoal House or 1880 Pizza and Pasta. Take some time to browse the boutique shops in downtown as well.*

## CALHOUN COUNTY VISTAS AND FERRIES

Who doesn't enjoy a ride across the rivers on a ferry? If you are a ferry fiend, never fear, there are more than enough public boat rides available.

Travel north of Grafton on Illinois Route 100 and ride the Brussels Free Ferry across the Illinois River to Calhoun County. Enjoy beautiful rolling hills and farmland transitioning to their fall colors. The Golden Eagle Ferry in southern Calhoun County will carry vehicles across the mighty Mississippi to St. Charles, MO.

**TRAVEL TIP:** *When driving through Calhoun County, plan to stop at the road side stands and orchards for delicious locally grown fruits and vegetables.*



## MEETING OF THE GREAT RIVERS NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY ROUTE

This 60-mile round trip drive highlights some of the best views available. With the mighty Mississippi River on one side of the car and soaring limestone bluffs dotted with the magnificent colors on the opposite side, there is no better route.

Take Illinois Route 100 from the historic river town of Alton north to

Grafton and on to Pere Marquette State Park. Be sure to return along the same route for entirely different views of the changing landscape.

Enjoy the ever-changing river views and maybe even spot a resident American Bald Eagle along the bluff lines. Be sure to stop in the historic Village of Elsah, nestled between the river bluffs along the route for even more color views.

**TRAVEL TIP:** *Need some fuel for the road? For the people, not the vehicles, that is! Here are some places to stop and refuel: Morrison's Irish Pub (Alton), The Loading Dock (Grafton), Grafton Oyster Bar (Grafton), Pere Marquette State Park (Grafton), Old Bakery Beer Company (Alton). Looking for a to-go cup of coffee or tea? Stop in at The Post Commons or Germania Brewhaus, both in Alton or Lightkeepers Coffee in Grafton.*

## ROUTE 66 SCENIC DRIVE – the Final 100 Miles of Route 66 in Illinois

There are three different ways to enjoy the Mother Road this fall. Three variations of Route 66 were built south of Springfield, IL and made their varying way to St. Louis.

Hop on Route 66 just south of Springfield in Auburn (or in Edwardsville and head north) and drive along the original two-lane highway. Be sure to stay alert for road signs to ensure you stay on the original road. Stop at Weezy's in Hamel, an original Route 66 diner.

The 1930 branch of Route 66 begins in Litchfield, home to the legendary Ariston Café and the Sky View Drive In. Travel south on the road to Mt. Olive and then

hop on Interstate 55 once the original roadway ends for a jaunt to the Pink Elephant Antique Mall in Livingston.

In 1940, Route 66 once again went through a metamorphosis in southwest Illinois when a new branch was created. The youngest portion of Route 66 begins in Raymond and travels through Litchfield, Troy and Collinsville (via Interstate 55). Plan stops at Nana's Hidden Attic in Litchfield for great collectibles. Be sure to see the world's largest Catsup Bottle Water Tower in Collinsville, a Route 66 icon.



**TRAVEL TIP:** *Be sure to walk through the Litchfield Museum and Route 66 Welcome Center.*

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# SEASONAL PICKS

By Melissa Meske

AS WARM HUES OF GOLD, ORANGE, AND RED BLANKET THE MIDWEST LANDSCAPE, QUIETLY USHERING IN THE AUTUMN SEASON OVER ROLLING HILLS, VALLEYS, AND HARVEST FIELDS OF OUR REGION, ANOTHER VARIETY OF COLORS BURST AMONG THE TREE LEAVES AND VINES AT THE MANY LOCAL ORCHARDS AND ROADSIDE STANDS.

Fall-fresh produce stands ripe and ready for the picking, eager for visitors to harvest and enjoy. All the tasty fruits of the season await, sure to make the shorter days and crisper air even sweeter.

At **Broom Orchard** in Carlinville, owners Jeff and Lisa Broom have over two dozen varieties of apples for visitors to enjoy. They also grow peaches, blackberries, nectarines, plums, pears, and that other seasonal favorite – pumpkins!

“We offer our apples as pick-your-own, or you can buy them already bagged up from our farm market,” says Lisa. “Pick-your-own is also available during pumpkin season; visitors can pick their own pumpkins and gourds. We provide a family-friendly atmosphere, giving visitors a chance to feel what it’s like being out on the farm.”

Located at 12803 Broom Road, Carlinville, just two miles from Beaver Dam State Park, the orchard is open seven days a week during the season. Opening in mid-July, their Fall offerings kick off at Labor Day, as a bountiful harvest of apples is bursting from the trees.

Visitors of all ages can enjoy everything Broom Orchard has to offer for no cost other than that of the products purchased. “We sell fruit, the fun is free,” Jeff notes. “We invite you to walk, picnic, enjoy the grounds, take in the beauty of it all, anytime we’re open.”

Broom Orchard also serves as a seasonal host of an abundant sunflower field, adding to its many photo opportunities (*photographers welcome!*).

The annual Apple Festival takes place on the weekend of Sept. 25-26, with the annual Pumpkin Festival Oct. 9-10. Both festivals host free family-friendly activities including pony and wagon rides, cookouts, pick-your-own events, and even more.

A corn maze is also part of the Apple Festival, along with a variety of crafters, a petting zoo, and the opportunity to watch fresh apple cider brew. With the Pumpkin Festival, visitors can enjoy some of those same experiences, but with a more pumpkin-spiced flair.

Carlinville’s Broom Orchard was established in 1920; the Broom family acquired it in 1968. This is Jeff and Lisa Bloom’s 53rd year; they are the third generation of Broom growers. The 128-acre orchard is closed in November and December, but its honey, popcorn, preserves, and spreads are available for purchase nearby at Hawthorn Tree in Carlinville throughout the winter.

A little newer orchard full of local history is just a little way down the road from Carlinville’s Broom Orchard, also offering a variety of pick-your-own produce for the Fall season.



**Liberty Apple Orchard** is located just east of Edwardsville. Celebrating its ninth season when it opens in late August, it features 15 varieties of apples available between August and November, including “GoldRush,” the official Illinois State Fruit. Liberty Apple Orchard also hosts an orchard farm market on-site, filled with products from the orchard as well as from local farmers.

Owners Steve and Lugene Miller had a desire to remain active, contributing community members after retirement; that’s how Liberty Apple Orchard got its start. “It’s always been a favorite family pastime to go with our four girls and pick apples, and when we lived in upstate New York, it was essentially a given,” Steve says. “We want to provide our community with a place where the kids can run and families can enjoy being outdoors,” Lugene adds.

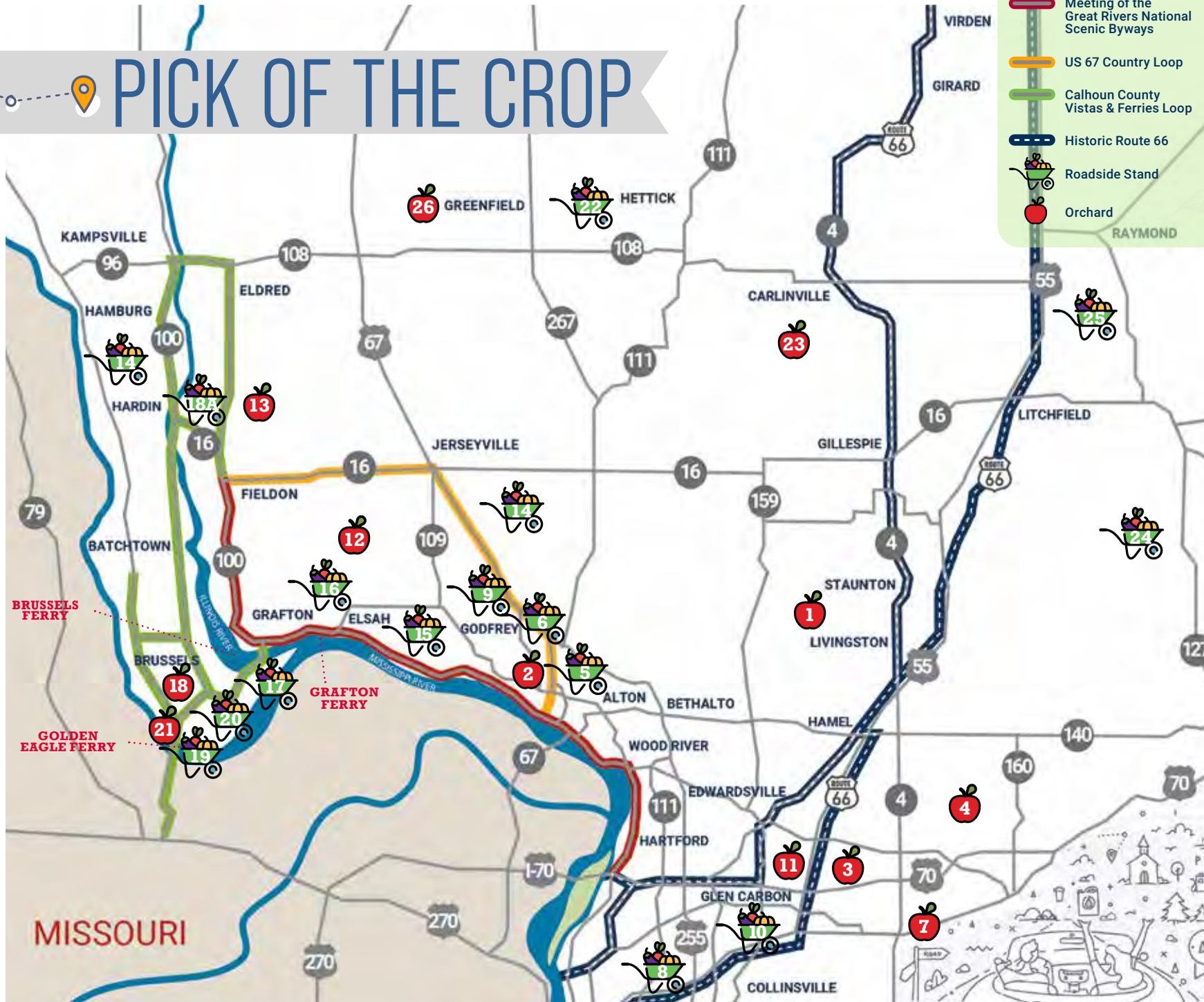
Now in its first full year of operation, Lugene says that the orchard’s farm market includes “pre-picked apples, cider from local orchards, apple cider donuts on Saturday mornings, apple butter and apple sauce made from our apples, local honey from hives on the orchard, caramel apples, children’s books on how apples grow, mother and child homemade apple-print aprons, and apple crisp and apple cake mixes.”

Uniquely hosted at Liberty Apple Orchard is a one-room schoolhouse replica, providing ample opportunity for teaching and learning with its unique design and décor. There are historic maps on the wall featuring local family history, with quotes related to the word “liberty” lining the ceiling and spilling onto the walls as well, further defining the Millers’ vision for Liberty Apple Orchard, located at 8308 Kuhn Station Road.

“Families can discover names of their ancestors on the walls,” Steve notes. “Visitors can envision what it was like for their forefathers living here, in Pin Oak Township, as well as nearby and beyond.” Other notable sites are featured on the maps, including orchards from the past. As to why this is an important piece of what all Liberty Apple Orchard has to offer those who come to experience its newer yet historical offerings, Lugene points out, “It’s simple. We want to be at the center of our community, helping to share its story.”

Liberty Apple Orchard’s produce is also available seasonally at Dierberg’s in Edwardsville, and on Saturday mornings at the Land of Goshen Farmers’ Market in Edwardsville. And although the orchard closes for the season just before the Thanksgiving holiday, you can still purchase their apple butter and applesauce at the Edwardsville Holiday Market held on the first Saturday in December.

# PICK OF THE CROP



TAKE YOUR PICK OF LOCAL PRODUCE AT THESE ORCHARDS AND ROADSIDE STANDS:

## MADISON COUNTY

- 1** BOONIES FARM  
8863 Dustman Rd. Worden
- 2** KRUEGER'S ORCHARD  
2914 Airport Rd. • Godfrey
- 3** LIBERTY APPLE ORCHARD  
8308 Kuhn Station Rd. Edwardsville
- 4** MILLS APPLE FARM  
11477 Pocahontas Rd. Marine
- 5** PEARSON'S PRODUCE  
6304 Humbert Rd. Godfrey
- 6** THEODORA FARMS  
4835 N. Alby Rd. • Godfrey
- 7** DEMANGE CORN MAZE AND PUMPKIN PATCH  
1205 Cypress Rd. St. Jacob
- 8** THE DONAHUE'S SUNSHINE FARM  
3540 Fairmont Ave. Collinsville
- 9** HERITAGE FARM & FRUIT TREES  
1821 Winter Ln. • Godfrey
- 10** KELLER FARMS  
IL Rt. 157 & Hillside Dr. Collinsville
- 11** RINKEL PUMPKIN FARM  
2762 Old Troy Rd. Glen Carbon
- 12** ECKERT'S COUNTRY STORE & FARM  
20995 Eckert Orchard Rd. Grafton
- 13** JOE RINGHAUSEN ORCHARDS & MARKET  
24748 Reddish Rd. Fieldon
- 14** RINGHAUSEN APPLE HOUSE  
19770 U.S. Hwy 67 Jerseyville
- 15** THREE RIVERS FARM STAND  
22935 Chautauqua Rd. Elsah

- 16** HIDEAWAY FARMS MARKET  
1 E. Main St. • Grafton
- 17** CALHOUN COUNTY HAGEN FAMILY ORCHARD  
3879 Illinois River Rd. Brussels
- 18** JACOBS ORCHARD  
148 Ridge Rd. Golden Eagle
- 18A** JACOBS ORCHARD - HARDIN  
Illinois Rt. 16 & Illinois Route 100
- 19** ODELEHR'S ROADSIDE MARKET  
7127 Illinois River Rd. Brussels
- 20** TOPMEYER'S ORCHARD  
480 Meyer Ln. Brussels
- 21** EBERLIN ORCHARD  
1218 Two Story Hill Golden Eagle
- 22** MACOUPIN COUNTY BACKWOODS BERRY FARM  
27244 Hettick Scottville Rd. • Hettick
- 23** BROOM ORCHARD  
12803 Broom Rd. Carlinville
- 24** MONTGOMERY COUNTY D & M ORCHARD & PRODUCE  
243 Spaeth Ln. Hillsboro
- 25** KERN FAMILY ORCHARD  
7375 MacKay Ave. Raymond
- 26** GREENE COUNTY GREENE FIELDS FARM  
311 Daum Station Rd. Greenfield

## ORCHARD TIPS

Call ahead before you go to find out which apple varieties are available.

The best time to pick your own apples is early in the day – it's a great way to avoid crowds.

Pick apples on outside branches first and work your way into the interior. Apples on the outer branches ripen before ones on the interior of the tree.

Put apples gently into baskets or bags to avoid bruising.

McIntosh and Honeycrisp apples ripen during September. Red and Golden Delicious come in by the end of September. Fuji and Granny Smith are October fruits.



# FALL FESTIVALS & FAIRS

## Art. Rivers. Cars. Famiglia.

There is always something to celebrate in southwest Illinois. The Great Rivers & Routes region is full of weekend festivals and fairs. Plan your fall getaway around these classic and cultural fairs and events.

### Kicks on 66 Car Show & Cruise In

Start your engines in Edwardsville on **Sept. 11** at the second annual Kicks on 66 Show. Tickets for the Ultra Car Show are \$10. The show is held at On The Hill Golf Course and Lounge, Legion Post #199. Have a classic car? Join in the cruise up and down Route 66 in Edwardsville throughout the day.

### Collinsville Italian Fest

We are Famiglia, or at least we all want to be, at Collinsville's annual Italian Fest. All things Italian are featured in this cultural festival that celebrates the early heritage of the city. Wine, beer, food, live music and more are part of the fun throughout the two-day event **Sept. 17-18** in Uptown Collinsville.

### Mississippi Earthtones Festival

Celebrate the mighty Mississippi through art, music and conservation at this downtown Alton festival **Saturday, Sept. 18**. Local artisans will be on hand, live music, food and drinks available. There are also demonstrations on ways to incorporate more sustainable practices into daily life.

### Edwardsville Art Fair

Spend a day or two wandering the art stalls of local, regional and national artists at this juried art show that takes place in Edwardsville's City Park **Sept. 24-26**. There's even a special area for the kids!

### Hot Air Balloons Over Marine

Watch brilliantly colored hot air balloons float in the evening sky along with the always popular balloon glow during this seventh annual festival. Food, drinks, a bounce house and more are on hand. There's also a sunrise launch on Saturday morning. **Sept. 24-25** at 155 N. Duncan St., Marine.

### Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair

Bring the kids and let them drop a line in the fishing pond at Pere Marquette State Park during this annual fishing fair. The 27<sup>th</sup> annual event, held **Saturday, Oct. 2**, will include educational activities, Camo the Clown, a 4,000-gallon Fetch-N-Fish Aquarium and more. Fishing poles and bait supplied. Bring the fun.

### Glen Fest

Fireworks light up the night sky at this community festival. Local vendors including food and drinks will be on hand **Saturday, Oct. 9** in Miner Park.

### Cabin Day

See the historic art of blacksmithing, ropemaking, corn grinding and more come to life at the Yanda Log Cabin in Glen Carbon, **Saturday, Oct. 9** from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### Jim Meyer Memorial Art Show

Regional art vendors and original artwork from artist Jim Meyer featured at this inaugural event in the back parking lot of downtown Wood River on **Saturday, Oct. 9** from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Fiesta in Granite City

Dance, drink, eat and celebrate the 95th anniversary of the Mexican Honorary Commission during Granite City's annual Fiesta. Head to the historic Lincoln Place Neighborhood (1801 Spruce St.) **Saturday, Oct. 9** from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. for all the fun.

### Grafton Rendezvous

Step back in time to the early 1800's when fur traders, Native Americans and pioneers gathered together to trade goods and stories. Held on the banks of the Illinois River in Grafton **Oct. 16 & 17**.

For more great event information, go to: [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com) and click on 'Events'

# » ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE...

AUDIENCE LIGHTS DIM. STAGE LIGHTS COME TO LIFE. ACTORS SWEEP INTO PLACE ACROSS THE STAGE. ANTICIPATION BUZZES THROUGHOUT THE THEATER. AND THEN, FOR A FEW HOURS, THE WORLD OUTSIDE FADES AND THE THEATER GLOWS WITH A LIVE PERFORMANCE.



**Comedies. Dramas. Musicals. They all have a home on the stages of theater groups throughout the Great Rivers & Routes region of southwest Illinois.**

The grand dame of the theater world in the area, **Alton Little Theater** is celebrating its 88<sup>th</sup> year as the state's longest, continuously operating community theater.

"This year we are doing 14 shows in 12 months," Lee Cox, Executive Director of Alton Little Theater notes. "We are having a show or concert every month."

The 225 seat Alton theater will showcase a variety of comedies, dramas and musicals from September through May of 2022. The season kicks off with "Gloria's Guy" a Canadian dramedy and ends with the exuberant comedy, "The Wild Women of Winedale."

"Each show runs for eight days and we have a great diverse, young cast," Cox says. "Alton Little Theater has been honored as the top community theater in the nation for innovation. We are very proud of that."

There will also be Extra Entertainment series at Alton Little Theater including "Remembering Christmas" in December and "The Music of Barry Manilow" in April.

"I want people to know that when they come to Alton Little Theater, they are going to be entertained," Cox said.

Not only are community theaters bringing the stage to life. Opera also has a home in southwest Illinois thanks to **Opera Edwardsville**.

Opera Edwardsville burst on to the performance scene nearly three years ago bringing classical European-style opera to Edwardsville and southwest Illinois. Performances this year include an open air concert in

Edwardsville's City Park on Friday, Sept. 10 as well as the annual Holiday Concert at SIUE's Dunham Hall.

**And don't miss productions by these area community groups:**

The **Goshen Theater Project** plans two summer and one fall production a year. This community theater came to life in 2014 when local educators and parents came together to expand theater opportunities for children and adults. Shows are held at various locations throughout southwest Illinois. Be sure to check out the play "Nunsense" at the Nazarene Community Theater in Roxana Oct. 21-24.

In June 2001, a group of Highland residents said, "Hey, let's put on a show." And **Hard Road Theater Productions**

was born. The now 20-year-old theater group has been producing local community shows ever since. Past productions include "Shrek", "Mamma Mia", "Godspell", "1940's Radio Hour", and "Little Shop of Horrors." Of course, there have been many more!

**Alfresco Productions**, based in Granite City, organizes cultural and artistic events for the community. Past activities have included live theater productions at the Alfresco Art Center, holiday community events and more.

**Curtain's Up Theater Company** took a break during the COVID pandemic. Typically shows are presented in Edwardsville and Collinsville and are family focused.

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# TOP SPOTS TO EXPLORE

EVERYONE'S AN EXPLORER AT HEART, RIGHT? SO CHANNEL YOUR INNER INDIANA JONES AND HEAD TO SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS WHERE YOU CAN SPEND DAYS FERRETING OUT HIDDEN GEMS, DIVE IN TO HISTORY AND DISCOVER NEW SPOTS TO HANG YOUR HAT AND RELAX.

Here are highlights of just a few. Unearth more at [RiversandRoutes.com](https://RiversandRoutes.com)

## CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE

Located on the outskirts of Granite City just off Illinois Route 3, this picturesque bridge was once part of the Mother Road and linked Illinois and Missouri across the Mississippi River.

It's retired from active status and is now a pedestrian bridge. The mile-long span is best known for its 30-degree kink midway across the river. Be sure to explore the low water dam below the bridge for a close up of the waters of the mighty river. Just be aware the road to the low water dam floods and it may not be open during high water. The Chain of Rocks Bridge is a great spot for walks, eagle watching in the winter, and Instagram photos.

## CAHOKIA MOUNDS STATE HISTORIC SITE

30 Ramey St.  
Collinsville

Amateur archeologists and history buffs are mesmerized by Cahokia Mounds, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and once home to the largest prehistoric mound civilization north of Mexico. This 2,200-acre site outside of modern day Collinsville includes a world-class interpretive center with life-sized dioramas, artifacts and history of the area.

Be sure to take a trek up Monk's Mound, a 100-foot tall mound that took over 300 years to build! At the top of the mound structure, enjoy panoramic views of the famed American Bottoms and nearby downtown St. Louis.

Plan to spend several hours here. Pack a picnic lunch to enjoy on the center's grounds and explore all Cahokia has to offer.



## LEWIS & CLARK CONFLUENCE TOWER

435 Confluence Dr. • Hartford

Just one mile north of the Lewis & Clark State Historic Site, stands a 180-foot tall monument to the expedition which mapped part of the western U.S. from present day Missouri to the Pacific Ocean.

Take a journey of your own up to the three different tower levels which stand at 50, 100 and 150-feet respectively and enjoy an unparalleled view of the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Guided tours are available. Note: An elevator is used to scale the three levels of the tower!



## LEWIS & CLARK STATE HISTORIC SITE

#1 Lewis & Clark Trail • Hartford

Explorers beware – there could be gigantic beasts ahead! The famed Lewis & Clark expedition that explored and mapped the western United States set off from this site in Hartford in 1804. And they didn't know what they were going to find once they left their winter camp. There was speculation that giant mammoths and more lived beyond the banks of the Mississippi River. Of course, they didn't find any giants, but their exploits meant the western U.S. was no longer a mystery. Discover how they prepared for the exciting journey at this historic site.

## MALCOM W. MARTIN MEMORIAL PARK & GATEWAY GEYSER

185 W. Trendley Ave. • East St. Louis

Located directly across the Mississippi River from downtown St. Louis, the park has unprecedented views of the city's famed Gateway Arch via the Mississippi River Overlook. It is also home to the Gateway Geyser, the tallest water fountain in the U.S.



TOP SPOTS TO EXPLORE



**PIASA BIRD**

*Route 100 • Alton*

Where can you find a man-eating bird/dragon/beast? In Alton, IL of course! The mythic beast was first discovered by explorers Marquette/Joliet in 1673 when they saw an image of it painted on the limestone bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. Discover the legend for yourself.

**PINK ELEPHANT ANTIQUE MALL**

*908 Veteran's Memorial Dr. • Livingston*

Where can you find row upon row upon row of antiques and collectibles? At the Pink Elephant Antique Mall, where a former school gymnasium has been converted into a Route 66 antique mall, diner and candy shop. You can't miss it – a giant pink elephant trumpets the site from beside the road.



**VILLAGE OF ELSAH**

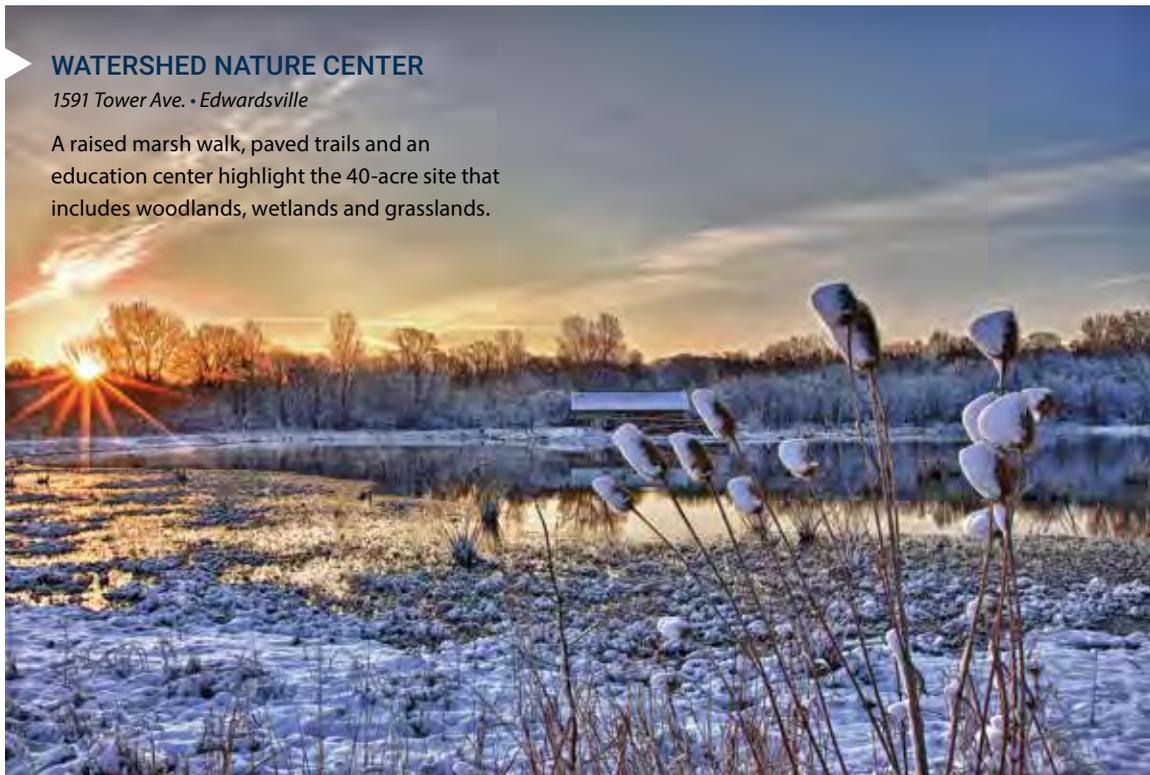
Take a road trip along the Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway and you'll come across the tiny Village of Elsau tucked between two limestone bluffs. The entire village is on the National Register of Historic Places. Take a walk through the scenic streets and discover the Elsau General Store and the Elsau History Museum.



**WATERSHED NATURE CENTER**

*1591 Tower Ave. • Edwardsville*

A raised marsh walk, paved trails and an education center highlight the 40-acre site that includes woodlands, wetlands and grasslands.



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TOP SPOTS TO EXPLORE

**MOTHER JONES MONUMENT**

22152 Old Reservoir Rd. • Mt. Olive

Mary Harris, a tiny Irish immigrant, left her mark on the Illinois labor movement. She founded the Industrial Workers of the World union and fought tirelessly for mine workers rights in southwestern Illinois.



**NATIONAL GREAT RIVERS MUSEUM & MELVIN PRICE LOCKS & DAM**

#2 Lock & Dam Way • Alton

How has the Mississippi River shaped the people, history and lands around it? Find out at this museum perched on the banks of the mighty river. After browsing through the free museum and trying your hand at maneuvering a tow boat via the hands-on exhibit, tour the adjacent Locks & Dam.



**AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS**

301 Riverlands Way • West Alton, MO

Birds of a feather flock together at this birding sanctuary. Hike through the 3,700 acre site and discover how many different species of birds make the region their home. In the winter months, thousands of Trumpeter Swans and hundreds of American Bald Eagles find their way to the site.



**WORLD WIDE TECHNOLOGY RACEWAY**

700 Raceway Blvd. • Madison

Gentlemen, start your engines. Or better yet, simply spend a day or weekend watching drag races, oval track races and more. Located just five minutes from downtown St. Louis.



**AERIE'S RESORT**

14 W. Main St. • Grafton

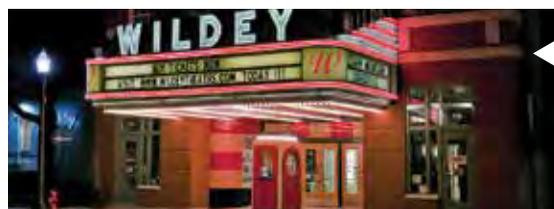
There's a lot of high-flying fun at Aerie's Resort. From the SkyTour aerial lift that carries folks 300-feet high to the river bluffs complex, to ziplining adventures, to live music weekends, and of course great wines, cold drinks and food, there's plenty to see and do.



**WILDEY THEATRE**

252 N. Main St. • Edwardsville

Legendary vaudeville performers like W.C. Fields, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., and Ginger Rogers graced the stage at this historic theatre. It now hosts weekend concerts, comedy shows and Tuesday night movies.



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\*Statewide vote by the Illinois Bicentennial Commission and the State Journal Register

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Bed & Breakfast

Inspiring  
Wooded Cottage

Suite Jane



[escapetoelsah.com](http://escapetoelsah.com)

TOP SPOTS TO EXPLORE

PERE MARQUETTE STATE PARK

13112 Visitor Center Lane • Grafton

Get out and stretch your legs at Illinois' largest state park. Located along the banks of the Illinois River and stretching for nearly 8,000 acres, the park features hiking trails, rock climbing routes, is open for horseback riding and more. Be sure to visit the historic Pere Marquette Lodge. This limestone building was constructed by the CCC during the Great Depression. There is a life-sized chess set, a massive stone fireplace and restaurant.



DOWNTOWN HILLSBORO

You have to get off the beaten path to discover Hillsboro. But it's worth the effort. The charming downtown district features a whimsical statue of Abraham Lincoln, the original brick courthouse, boutique shops, a coffee roaster/café and movie theater where the lobby comes to life for each film. Stop for a pint or two at the aptly named Opera House Brewery. Be sure to drive by the historic Red Rooster Inn which will be home to a new distillery/ brewery and restaurant in addition to apartments and overnight guest rooms.

CASINOS

DRAFTKINGS AT CASINO QUEEN

200 S. Front St. • East St. Louis

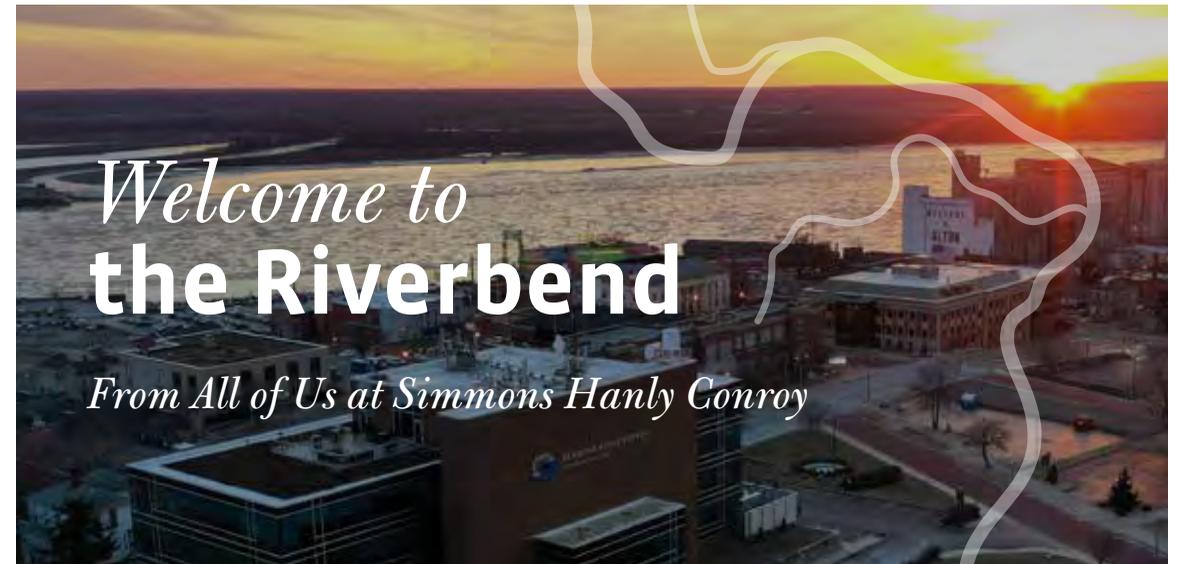
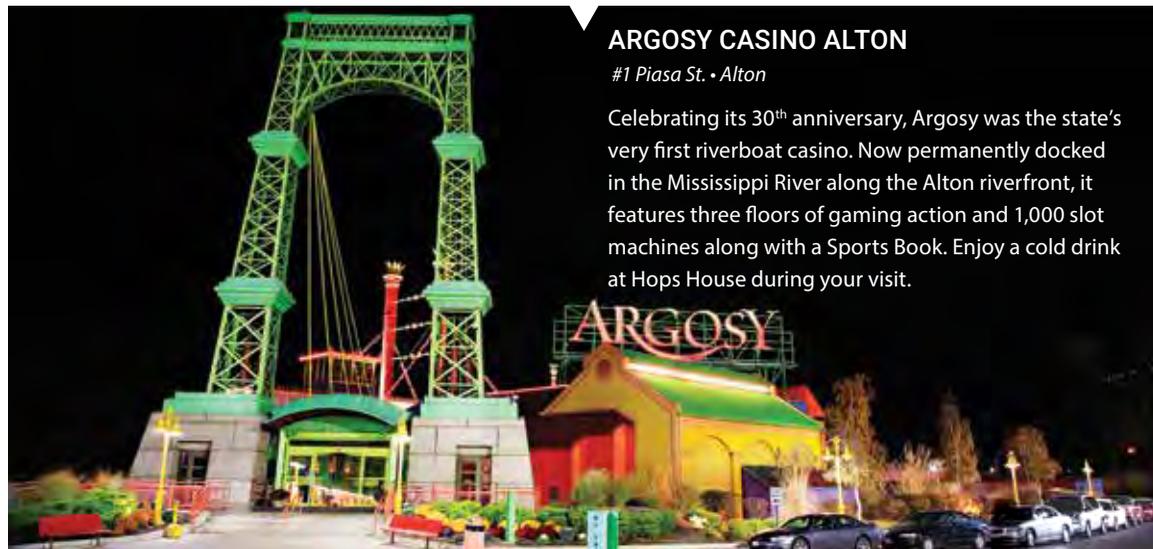
More than 38,000-square-foot gaming floor has 980 slots and video poker games along with 29 different table games. Take a break from the action at the QBar for a refreshing cocktail or enjoy a snack at the Deli.



ARGOSY CASINO ALTON

#1 Piasa St. • Alton

Celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Argosy was the state's very first riverboat casino. Now permanently docked in the Mississippi River along the Alton riverfront, it features three floors of gaming action and 1,000 slot machines along with a Sports Book. Enjoy a cold drink at Hops House during your visit.



Welcome to the Riverbend

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From scenic river views, historic small town vibes and local brews, there's a lot to love about the Riverbend area. These reasons and more are why Simmons Hanly Conroy, one of the nation's largest plaintiff law firms, is proud to call the Riverbend home for more than 20 years.

We invite you to experience the beauty of historic, downtown Alton for yourself by participating in our firm's annual Alton Miles for Meso 5K Race and 3K Fun Run/Walk. The event takes place Saturday, September 25 at our national headquarters and includes a virtual run. This year marks the 13th year of the race, which raises funds for charities that support our clients whose lives have been devastated by asbestos exposure.

Learn more at [www.milesformeso.org/register](http://www.milesformeso.org/register)

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Three Cottages have a total of eight suites, all have a den with fireplaces, Bedrooms all have king size beds & Whirlpool Baths.

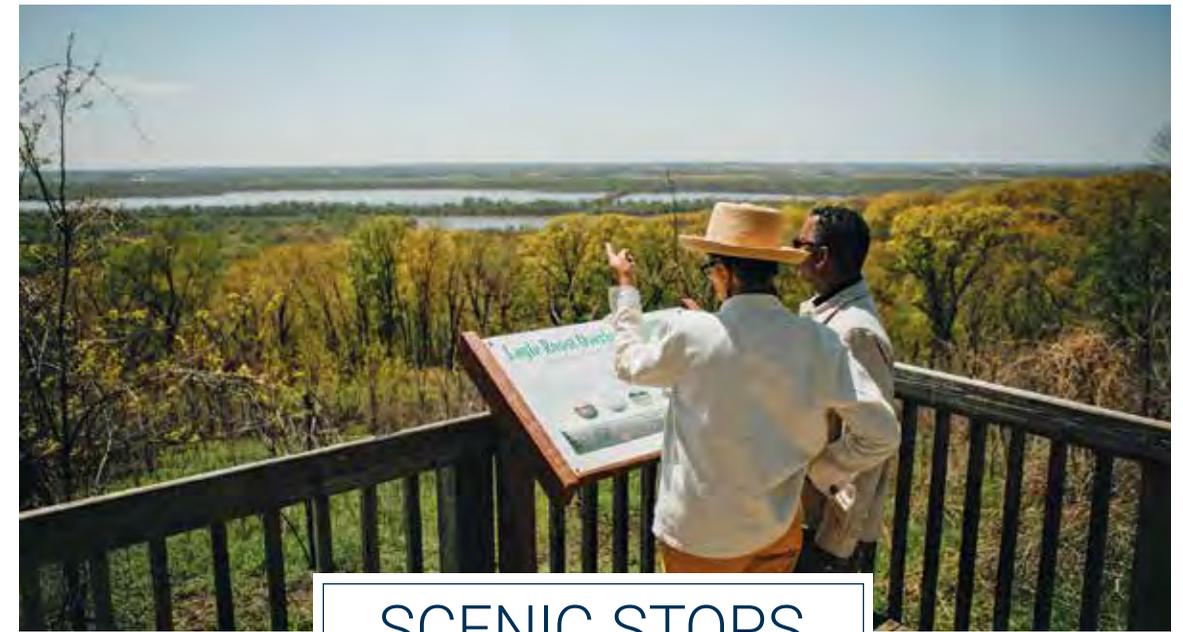
Tara Point is located just 12 National Scenic Byway miles upriver from Alton, atop a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Many say it's the most beautiful view in the Midwest. All Inn Rooms & Cottage Suites have great river views.

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Photos By: Keith Wedge



## SCENIC STOPS

SOMETIMES IT'S ALL ABOUT THE VIEWS. AND THE GREAT RIVERS & ROUTES REGION IN SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS HAS SOME OF THE MOST AMAZING SCENIC VIEWS IN THE MIDWEST.

BUT DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT – SEE FOR YOURSELF!

AND REMEMBER – IN THE FALL NATURE CAN PAINT A PRETTY SPECTACULAR CANVAS.



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**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE**

### › TARA POINT INN & COTTAGES, GRAFTON

Plan a stay at this bluff top bed and breakfast inn and enjoy the views available to guests. The Confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers can be seen from both the main house and the cottages. Bring a bottle of wine and sit in the Adirondack chairs overlooking this spectacular view.

### › AERIE'S RESORT, GRAFTON

High on top of the river bluffs overlooking the Mississippi and Illinois rivers in Grafton sits Aerie's Resort. Home to "The Best Views in the Midwest", Aerie's is accessible via the Grafton SkyTour, an aerial lift featuring open air chairs and gondolas, or by car for guests spending the night at The Lodge. Enjoy the views from the Terrace or the Winery at Aerie's Resort. Better yet, take a treetop canopy zipline trip to for a birds-eye view of the fall bluffs and rivers.

### › THE NATURE INSTITUTE, GODFREY

This 450 acre nature preserves sits high above the Mississippi River. An ideal location for eagle watching in the winter, it also has its charm in the fall. Miles of trails showcase views of waterfalls, and a wide variety of eco systems including a savanna habitat, woodlands and prairie.

### › PERE MARQUETTE STATE PARK, GRAFTON

Not only is Pere Marquette State Park the largest in Illinois, it boasts some of the most spectacular views around. Hike, drive, or saddle up – there are multiple ways to enjoy the sites. Take a hike along the Goat Cliff Trail (*easy to moderate hiking*) and stand on the Cap au Gres Fault and pass by an underground spring. The trail ends at McAdams Peak where you can see three different bodies of water and an ancient Indian burial mound.

### › WORLD'S LARGEST CATSUP BOTTLE WATER TOWER, COLLINSVILLE

A giant catsup bottle looms over Route 66 in Collinsville. This celebrated tower is a photographer's delight and a great place to capture the perfect Instagram shot.

### › THE GARDENS AT SIUE, EDWARDSVILLE

Seasonal variations are highlighted at this 36-acre parcel on the grounds of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Enjoy a stroll around the area highlighting natural areas, gardens, bridges and student-designed sculptures.

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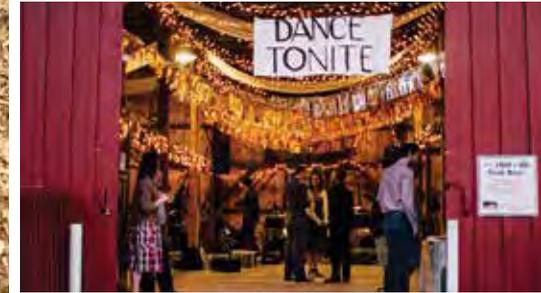


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## HEAD OVER TO THE FARM

*By Danette Watt*

IN THE 1940S, COLLINSVILLE WAS STILL LARGELY A FARMING COMMUNITY. FOR THE MOST PART, THOSE DAYS ARE GONE. BUT VISITORS TO WILLOUGHBY HERITAGE FARM AND CONSERVATION RESERVE CAN GET A GLIMPSE INTO THE LIVES OF THEIR GRANDPARENTS' AND GREAT-GRANDPARENTS' GENERATION.

**Willoughby Heritage Farm**  
631 Willoughby Ln.  
Collinsville, IL  
**(618) 977-0941**  
Open daily, 9 a.m. – dusk

**Basic Horse Care**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month  
through Dec. 2021

Joseph "Boss" Willoughby and his wife, Hannah, bought the property in 1922. They raised seven children and managed the 40-acre farm. The land sustained the family, with an orchard of fruit and nut trees, pigs, chickens, and cattle, and a vegetable garden.

In 2002, the property was divided up – 10 acres were sold to the city of Collinsville to be used as a park and 30 acres were given over to the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resource's Land Trust and Conservation.

Today, Willoughby Heritage Farm is a 30-acre wildlife preserve that takes you back to farm life in the 1940s, complete with barns, animals, original tools and a Craftsman-style farmhouse. Its mission is, "Preservation and education of our farm heritage and natural resources."

The farm gets about 30,000 visitors a year, said Carol Frerker, the farm's manager, and there is something for everyone down on the farm.

### FAMILY GATHERINGS

Admission to the farm is free but there are costs to its upkeep. Perfect for a large family gathering or themed event, the farm is available for rent. Don't need the whole farm? There are three picnic sites and a pavilion available, as well as the first floor of the farmhouse.

Last summer, April Dunham rented the Bank Barn for a "family" reunion of Whoodles and their owners. Whoodles are a mix of Wheaton Terrier and Poodle. Dunham, a military widow, breeds them and donates most of them to be trained as therapy and service dogs for veterans. She lives in Edwardsville and appreciates that the farm is part of the community.

"It's beautiful. I love to sit in the gardens and watch the butterflies," she said. "There are trails to walk, quiet nooks for older guests to sit and rest, and the little ones can come and have a grand time."



### FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN

Kids of all ages will find something to do at the farm. A birthday party was in full swing at the Carl Schultze Pavilion on a summer Saturday. Parents took the children around the farm, checking out the goats, horses, Hank, the pot-bellied pig, and chickens. Two lookout towers give an overview of the farm and a playground has all the right equipment.

The farm isn't just for little ones. Hiking trails take visitors down winding paths, across bridges, and through scenic vistas. There are three trails, ranging from less than a mile to 1-1/2 miles. Dotted throughout the property are benches where a visitor can gaze out on a garden or sit in a woody nook.

### EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Preserving the history of the farm's heritage is important. Equally important is the farm's commitment to research and education.

It's a challenge keeping young minds engaged. To keep visitors interested and sharpen observation skills, there are scavenger hunt sheets in boxes around the farm and interactive question and answer boards at the animal pens.

Across from the farmhouse is a garden tended by University of Illinois Master Gardeners. It's a mix of butterfly garden, prairie representation and raised beds for vegetables.

"Last year, more than 1,000 pounds of produce was harvested and donated to area food banks," said Frerker.

The farm has a pollinator garden with three beehives. Frerker said she would like to see the Urban Ecology Club get involved with it. The club meets monthly at the farm. Educational tours and presentations can be arranged to reinforce topics in school curricula, such as renewable energy, tree identification or area animal life.

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Willoughby Farm continues to grow as it expands its education outreach. Near the greenhouse classroom, volunteers are building a 30-foot diameter round barn pavilion donated by the Kiwanis. A children's exploratory garden and an amphitheater are also envisioned.

"We want to have a challenge to get kids more engaged in a physical and academic way," said Frerker. "But we're not there yet."

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# ENJOY GRAFTON



**FIREWORKS ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER Dec. 31**  
New Year's Eve fireworks will be held at 10 pm at Lighthouse Park by the river.



**MISSISSIPPI MASTERS GOLF TOURNAMENT Oct. 8** Enjoy Fall on the Lockhaven Golf Course playing against some of the best golfers in the region.



**WITCHES ON THE WATER Oct. 23**  
Eat, drink and be scary with your favorite witches and warlocks at the 4th Annual Witches on the Water!



**SANTA'S CHOCOLATE EXPRESS Dec. 4** Hop on the shuttle and travel down Grafton's Main Street. Stop in to local shops to sample chocolatey holiday treats and shop the sales.



**SANTA CON Dec. 11** Dress up as Santa and join many other Santas as they all stroll throughout Grafton!

## GREAT PLACES TO DINE • STAY • PLAY



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# Music in the air

By Melissa Meske

JAZZ, R&B, TECHNO, WORLD, COUNTRY, AND PUNK. CLASSIC, ALTERNATIVE, AND INDIE ROCK. JAZZ FUSION, HIP-HOP, RAP, AND POP. IRISH SHANTIES, LATIN, CLASSICAL, K-POP, METAL, DANCE AND ELECTRONIC.

WHATEVER BEAT DRIVES YOUR FAVORITE SOUNDS, CHANCES ARE YOU'LL FIND IT LIVE ON STAGE SOMEWHERE IN SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS.

One outstanding place to take it all in is at the **Wildey Theatre**, 252 N. Main St., Edwardsville.

Throughout the year, the Wildey hosts a variety of widely popular tribute bands bringing favorite sounds of yesteryear back to life. This season, will also host original performances by Gypsy, Albert Cummings, David Bromberg, Heartsfield, Angel, Wishbone Ash, Alan Doyle, and more.

You can experience a musical journey taking you to the far reaches of the universe and the depths of the ocean through an immersive experience with Nektar as they perform from the Wildey stage Sept. 30 through Oct. 2 as a part of their 2021 tour.

**But that's just the beginning of an impressive lineup at the Wildey this season...**

Pure Prairie League takes the stage on Oct. 29, a country and rock band known for iconic hits such as "Annie" and "Let Me Love You Tonight." In November, the Wildey Theatre welcomes John Waite on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the return of The Ozark Mountain Daredevils on Thanksgiving weekend, Nov. 26 and 27.

Holiday sounds will come alive as well with the music of the season. The theater hosts "A Christmas Story" on Dec. 3-5, a live play presented in partnership with Curtain's Up Theater Company. This story is familiar to most everyone; it's the iconic one of young Ralphie and his quest for a genuine Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas.

From Dec. 9-11, you'll have the chance to sing along as the annual screening of "White Christmas" returns. The musical sound and spirit of the holiday season continues Dec. 16, with a little jazz infusion, as The Erin Bode Group takes to the stage.

Martin Barre takes over the stage at the Wildey on Jan. 21 and 22, performing classic Jethro Tull sounds along with two special guests, original band members Dee Palmer and Clive Bunker.

For performance information, updated scheduling, and to buy tickets, visit [wildeytheatre.com](http://wildeytheatre.com).





MORRISON'S IRISH PUB

MUSIC IN THE AIR

Another great place to visit for live music throughout the holiday season, and essentially every weekend, is **The Conservatory**, 554 E. Broadway, Alton. Featuring local bands from a variety of genres and open mic nights all year long, The Conservatory will also host a "Tunes for Toys" fundraiser event on Dec. 18. Check out the Live Music page at RiversandRoutes.com for an up-to-date schedule of music events.

There are many hotspots throughout the region where you can fill your ears, hearts, minds, and sights with all the "spirits" of the fall and winter season.

Among the locally popular options, you might consider taking in the musical offerings each weekend, along with some amazing tastes, at **Bakers & Hale**, 7120 Montclair Ave., Godfrey; at **The Pump House Bar & Grill**, 1523 E. Edwardsville Rd., Wood River; or at **Morrison's Irish Pub**, 200 State St., Alton.



GRAFTON WINERY & BREWHAUS

The area's wineries are yet another source for some of the best live music the region has to offer.

**Grafton Winery & Brewhaus**, 300 W. Main St., Grafton, offers live music every Saturday and Sunday all year long. The winery will also be hosting their annual Harvest Festival on Oct. 23 and 24 from their vineyard location at 21028 Eckert Orchard Road in Grafton. This is a free event featuring the sounds of Miles Station on Oct. 23 and One Way Traffic on Oct. 24, along with an extensive lineup of activities, vendors, food, and more.

Other area wineries featuring live music for most of the season include **Wild Pickins Winery** at 14223 Route 111, Chesterfield and **The Winery at Aerie's Resort**, 800 Timber Ridge, Grafton.



For a complete look at Live Music in the Great Rivers & Routes region, visit: [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com) and click on the Live Music page.

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# HAUNTED ALTON

By Danette Watt

THE AIR IS FULL OF ANTICIPATION. A COOL BREEZE TICKLES THE BACK OF YOUR NECK. IT IS, AFTERALL, TIME FOR THE GHOSTS AND SPIRITS IN ALTON TO COME OUT AND PLAY.

Spine tingling adventures await in Alton, reportedly one of the most haunted towns in America. Many Alton residents have a story or two to share about a resident ghost or an unexplained phenomenon. If you haven't had your annual dose of fright yet, here are a few ways to get it.

## MCPIKE MANSION TOURS

Are you a ghost hunter at heart? You might get lucky enough to see at least one of the 10 or 12 spirits who reside at the McPike Mansion.

The mansion is a favorite stop on the haunted Alton tour circuit. Built in 1869 by architect Lucas Pfeifferberger for Henry Guest McPike, the house sat empty for decades. Vandals and weather took its toll and by the time Sharyn and George Luedke acquired the house at auction in 1994, it needed thousands of dollars in repairs. To fund their efforts to turn the house into a bed & breakfast, they began giving monthly tours and hosting special events on the property. They also allow paranormal investigations to be conducted on site.

The 16-room home was built in the Italianate-Victorian style and visitors can still see much of the architectural details. Today, the house is on the National Register of Historic Places.

But of greater interest to ghosthunters is the question: **do ghosts really exist?**

The Luedkes had no idea the house was haunted when they placed their bid. But since then, Sharyn Luedke has seen the spirit of Henry McPike and felt a hug from the spirit of a McPike servant. Strange orbs of light and other phenomena have been observed.

"We know who some of them are and try to communicate with them," said Luedke. Of the people who come to tour the house, she said, "Some people come to see the architecture. But the big draw are the spirits of the house. Some people are believers when they arrive, and some when they leave."

October is the peak month for McPike Mansion tours, which attracts about 400 visitors. There will be tours each Friday and Saturday. The 90-minute tours include a history and photos of the mansion and paranormal happenings, a tour of the grounds and crypt, and a trip to the cellar with a Dark session with medium, Sandy Little Lizard.

[www.mcpikemansion.com](http://www.mcpikemansion.com)

## ALTON HAUNTINGS

You don't have to wait until October for the chills and thrills of things that go bump in the night. Alton Hauntings tours, based on Troy Taylor's book, "Haunted Alton," are available year-round.

Ghost seekers can take a walking tour of old downtown Alton, visiting several of the haunts. This isn't a strenuous walk, but for those who would rather ride, there are bus tours in the fall. The bus stops at the same locations the walking tour visits and passengers are encouraged to get out and explore the haunted sites. The Ghost Hunter tour is a four-hour tour with stops at locations not seen on the regular bus tour.

You've heard of "dinner and a movie;" what about "dinner and spirits?" After dinner at Bluff City Grill, Ghosts of the River Road tour takes you up to Grafton after a stop at the haunted Mineral Springs Hotel. Several spirits are reputed to wander the hotel's halls, lobby and pool, including Cassandra, the little girl who drowned there.

Are you a ghost hunter, with ghost hunting gear? Then Taylor's newest tour, Dinner & Spirits with Alton Hauntings is for you. Dinner is followed by a search for the spirits during guided ghost hunts at two of the city's most haunted locations. *Check for dates and times at* [www.altonhauntings.com](http://www.altonhauntings.com)

## ALTON HAUNTED TOURS

Caleb Lewis is familiar with Alton Haunted Tours; his mother was a co-owner of the business for 25 years afterall. When the original partners were ready to retire Caleb bought the business and combined it with his own successful Haunted Craft Beer Walks.

All tours and walks will start from the historic Simon Ryder Building, now the location of My Just Desserts, 31 E. Broadway, Alton. The building was once a courthouse and was home to law cases tried by young Springfield lawyer Abraham Lincoln.

If you're a craft beer aficionado, be sure to check out the Haunted Craft Beer Walk. The stroll is about one mile and includes stops at five haunted locations. Each stop is paired with a five-ounce pouring of one of five different Old Bakery brews. Lewis said he tries to pair the beer to the building. For instance, you'll get a taste of Carrot Cake Brown Ale at My Just Desserts.

Walking tours begin on the second floor of My Just Desserts with Ghosts 101 and a demonstration of ghost hunting tools. From there, you'll be ready for an interactive ghost hunt in some of Alton's most historic and haunted locations.

Waking the Dead, Bare Bones and Witching Hour tours are all trolley tours and begin on the second floor. Eating with the Entities is a tour that begins with dinner. Some of the locations on the tours may include tunnels of the Underground Railroad at the **Enos Sanitarium** and a stop at the **Old Post Office**.

Trolley tours begin at My Just Desserts and are three hours. The last stop the trolley makes will be at the McPike Mansion on Alby Street, one of the most haunted houses in town. There, riders will join in a dark room session in the vaulted wine cellar, where many elemental spirits reside. *Check* [www.altonhauntedtours.com](http://www.altonhauntedtours.com) *for updates and a fall schedule.*

## MORE HAUNTED FUN

- › **ALTON HALLOWEEN PARADE**  
7:30 p.m. • Saturday, Oct. 30. Starts at corner of Washington Ave. and Broadway. This is one of the oldest and longest running Halloween Parades in the U.S.
- › **EDWARDSVILLE HALLOWEEN PARADE**  
6:30 p.m. • Sunday, Oct. 31. Starts at Lincoln Middle School, corner of Schwarz & West Streets.
- › **GRANITE CITY SPOOKY SATURDAY'S**  
are a screaming success in downtown **Granite City**. Enjoy **Magic and Mayhem** every Saturday in October.

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# FALL BREWS



WHEN THE WORDS **FALL** AND **BREW** ARE PAIRED TOGETHER IT CAN CONJURE UP IMAGES OF WITCHES STIRRING BIG BLACK CAULDRONS BOILING OVER WITH UNNAMED SPELLS. A BIT CREEPY, RIGHT?

Thank goodness that's not the case with the fall brews created in southwest Illinois. Local craft beer breweries have spent the summer working on their own brand of fall beers that capture the essence of the season while relying on local produce to help enhance the flavors.

At Old Bakery Beer in Alton, five new beers will be released starting in September and running through November. The Original Pixel, a juicy IPA; Spooky Scary, a bourbon barrel aged Imperial stout; Tannenbaum, a rosemary IPA; Vanilla Porter, a classic porter with a dose of vanilla; and Double Stout flavored with Hairy Mountain Mint. Of course the traditional Oktoberfest Beer, brewed with Munich malt will also be available just in time for fall colors.

Peel Brewing Company in Edwardsville is cooking up a traditional Scotch Ale just in time for fall. And at Recess Brewery, also in Edwardsville, is brewing up hard seltzers in addition to its beer. Look for unusual fall and holiday brews at Opera House Brewing in Hillsboro. And Old Herald Brewery & Distillery in Collinsville has a variety of draught beers including Juicy Gossip, a New England IPA; The Story Gose, a sour, fruited gose; and Spell-Czech Pilsner, a Czech-style pilsner.

For more details on local craft breweries, visit: [www.riversandroutes.com/eat-drink/breweries-distilleries/](http://www.riversandroutes.com/eat-drink/breweries-distilleries/)

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# EPIC Pizzas

There's something about taking that first bite of a thick (or thin) piece of pizza. It's not just the smell of spices, meat and cheese but the way it drenches the taste buds with flavors – tomato, oregano, mozzarella all combine into rich, succulent flavors.

Whether you favor thick or thin crust, tomato or alfredo sauce, veggies or meats, there's no denying pizza has become a go-to food for young and old alike.

Take your pick of mouth-watering pizzas perfected at restaurants in southwest Illinois. Better yet, celebrate all things pizza during **Epic Pizza Week Sept. 13 – 17.**

## 1 OLD BAKERY BEER

400 Landmarks Blvd.  
Alton • (618) 463-1470

Every Thursday night is pizza night at Old Bakery Beer. And a different pizza is put together for every Thursday. It could be a pulled pork pizza with red onion, barbeque sauce or how about a BBQ Bacon Cheeseburger Horseshoe Pizza? The pizza's are always different and always delicious.

## 2 JOHNSON'S CORNER

2000 State St. • Alton  
(618) 465-5640

Stone oven pizzas are hand-tossed and made to order at this neighborhood restaurant/bar. Enjoy specialty pizzas or build your own. Be sure to check out the Pizza of the Month Special.

## 3 PEEL WOOD FIRED PIZZA

921 S. Arbor Vitae Dr.  
Edwardsville  
(618) 659-8561

Looking for a light, flaky pizza crust topped with wild mushrooms or shrimp scampi. The chefs at Peel are also the owners and they work daily to come up with great pizzas, sides and more for the menu. Enjoy a Ricotta Pizza, Triple Pepperoni and more.



## 4 JOE'S PIZZA

5775 Godfrey, Rd.  
Godfrey • (618) 433-8000

(Additional locations in Edwardsville, Brighton & Troy)

Craving a hand-tossed, thin crust, thick crust, Chicago-style or Stuffed Deep Dish Pizza? Head to Joe's for your choice of crust and your choice of specialty pizzas including Spinach Artichoke, Chicken Alfredo, and the Joe's Special, a sausage, pepperoni, mushroom, onion and green pepper pie.

## 5 ROMA'S PIZZA

121 E. Bethalto Dr.  
Bethalto • (618) 377-5800

Authentic Italian pizza has a home in Bethalto at Roma's. The Pizzo family, originally from Sicily, opened Roma's in 1973 specializing in an original recipe pizza from Italy. The thin crust pizza has become a regional favorite. Take your pick of toppings, sauces and gluten free crusts.

## 6 ROPER'S REGAL BEAGLE

3043 Godfrey, Rd.  
Godfrey • (618) 466-2112

Choose traditional or thin crust, plum or sweet Italian tomato sauce and enjoy a Roper's traditional or Neapolitan-style pizza. Choose from the Rope Daddy Deluxe, Stampicker and Smoking Goodfella among other pizza options.

## 7 DEWEY'S PIZZA

112 E. Vandalia St.  
Edwardsville • (618) 656-2200

Create your own pizza at this local parlor located on Route 66. Order a specialty pizza from a menu that includes a Backyard BBQ pizza, Killer Veggie, Green Lantern and more. You can also create your own pie by choosing the sauce and toppings. Enjoy watching staff hand toss the pizza dough while you wait.

## 8 1880 PIZZA & PASTA

208-210 S. State St.  
Jerseyville • (618) 639-1880

Specialty pizzas, choose-your-own and dessert pizzas are main features on the menu of this pizzeria located in the heart of downtown Jerseyville. Choose from an 1880 Western pizza, Philly Cheese Steak, Cuban, Pesto Meatball and more.

## 9 NANCY'S PIZZERIA

13 Thunderbird Circle  
Litchfield • (217) 324-0707

Ever wonder where the stuffed crust pizza was born? Why at Nancy's Pizza. The restaurant originated in Harwood Heights, IL but now has a branch just off the Mother Road of Route 66. Take your pick of size and style of Nancy's stuffed crust pizzas in Litchfield. A classic thin crust, super thin and rustic crust pie is also available.




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You name it, the City of Edwardsville has it, especially when it comes to finding a great place to eat.

That's one reason the city is a self-proclaimed "Foodie Kinda Town". The city's culinary scene is constantly changing and expanding with each new addition highlighting top-notch entrees, sandwiches and soups.

Dozens of first-class restaurants complete the city's line up of top foodie spots. **Here is a sampling:**

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106 N. Main St. • Edwardsville  
(618) 307-4830

There's nothing like good old comfort food to satisfy hunger pains. But the chef at Cleveland-Heath adds a touch of gourmet flavor to the menu. Famous for its Crispy Pork Belly and Deviled Eggs starters, the menu extends to shareable sides, soups and salads, sandwiches and dinner entrees. Locally sourced ingredients bring the farm to the table.

## 1818 CHOPHOUSE

210 S. Buchanan St.  
Edwardsville • (618) 307-9300

Enjoy a comfortable atmosphere alongside the finest house butchered steaks and chops and fresh seafood with an emphasis on vibrant seasonal produce that creates a culinary euphoria. Start your meal with the 1818 Signature Angus Beef Carpaccio and Chophouse French Onion Soup followed by a Beef Tenderloin Salad. Still hungry? Try the Slow Roasted Prime Rib Sandwich, Filet or Porterhouse Pork Chop.

## BELLA MILANO

1063 S. State Highway 157  
Edwardsville • (618) 659-2100

Celebrate all things Italian at this family owned and operated restaurant in the heart of the city's shopping district. Dine on Bella favorites like bruschetta, toasted ravioli, a secret recipe Milano salad and handmade brick oven pizzas. And there's more! Try the Beef Milano, Spaghetti Carbonara or Pasta Three Way. It's all created in-house using authentic Italian recipes. Top off your meal with desserts made in-house including Cannoli, Bananas Foster, Tiramisu, Sicilian Chocolate Cake and more.

## CHAVAS MEXICAN RESTAURANT

217 E. Vandalia St.  
Edwardsville • (618) 692-8192

Dine out on authentic Mexican dishes created from Chavas family recipes refined in Guadalajara, Mexico. The large portions and Mexican flavors pair perfectly with the house-crafted Margaritas. Start off with a guacamole dip with tortilla chips and follow it with enchiladas, tostadas, fajitas, tacos or a La Torta. Have a piece of fried cheesecake for dessert.

## DOC'S SMOKEHOUSE & CATERING

6108 Shoger Dr. • Suite D  
Edwardsville • (618) 656-6060

You know when you take your first bite of a wood smoked piece of meat? The way your tastebuds react and the sense of pleasure that fills your body? That's the way eating at Doc's Smokehouse makes you feel. The small barbecue joint focuses on the food – slow cooking each piece of meat and serving it with house made savory BBQ sauces and home-style sides. Sandwiches and entrees highlight the menu. Try the Pork Steak (order early or they may be sold out) or the Burnt Ends – slow smoked caramelized cubes of brisket – a house speciality. But be warned: Doc's is addictive.

## MIKE SHANNON'S GRILL

871 S. Arbor Vitae Dr.  
Edwardsville • (618) 655-9911

Experience upscale comfort food surrounded by vintage baseball memorabilia at this stylish grill and lounge perched on the edge of Plum Creek. The varied menu features starters like Goat Cheese Dip, burgers, sandwiches, beef, pork and seafood entrees. Pair your meal with Parmesan Dusted Fries, country slaw or bacon glazed Brussel Sprouts and more.

## TAQUERIA Z

109 E. Park St. • Edwardsville  
(618) 307-5018

Choose your taco style and fillings for a real Mexican treat at this hip restaurant in downtown Edwardsville. Pair your meal with a craft beer, Mexican soda, house margarita or original margarita. Be sure to check out the Sunday Brunch which includes breakfast burritos and Bloody Maria's.

## MOUSSALLI'S PRIME

7415 State Route 143 •  
Edwardsville • (618) 656-0281

This farm-to-table culinary destination offers the highest quality dining experience paired with the best ingredients available in the region. The wide range of menu items range from Certified Angus Beef steaks cut and trimmed to order, to fresh seafood, a raw bar and vegan and vegetarian options. Be sure to try the homemade Seafood Fettuccine, New Zealand Lamb Loin with Potato Gnocchi or the famous Prime Cheeseburger which features crispy Havarti cheese.

## SUGARFIRE SMOKEHOUSE - EDWARDSVILLE

2323 Plum St. • Edwardsville  
(618) 650-9150

The folks that brought Sugarfire BBQ to St. Louis have expanded into Edwardsville. Try the brisket, pulled pork ribs and signature sandwiches and sides. Main meats are made to order on Old Hickory smokers. Daily specials use local farm produce. Desserts include house-made cookies, pies and boozy milkshakes.

## TWISTED BISCUIT BRUNCH CO.

1071 S. State Route 157  
Edwardsville  
(618) 800-5011

Everyone loves a good brunch, right? And brunch doesn't have to be saved for weekends. Twisted Biscuit, a newly opened restaurant, serves brunch daily. Biscuits are, of course, the main feature, with all made in-house. There are bacon jam biscuits, cheddar biscuits and fig biscuits. Huge portions of breakfast/lunch entrees fill the menu from Eggs Benedict to omelets and burgers.

## WASABI SUSHI BAR

100 S. Buchanan St.  
Edwardsville • (618) 655-9880

Sushi lovers rejoice! Wasabi Sushi Bar offers a nearly infinite selection of sushi rolls and assortment of Japanese cuisine. Check out the full menu of sushi, nigiri, sashimi, soups, salads and traditional Japanese cuisine. Who's up for a Sushi Boat?



CULINARY ARTS HAVE MADE SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS A FOODIE DESTINATION. BE SURE TO ADD THESE RESTAURANT WEEK DATES TO YOUR CALENDAR!

■ **SAVOR RESTAURANT WEEK**  
Edwardsville – Glen Carbon  
Oct. 1-10, 2021

■ **ALTON RESTAURANT WEEK**  
Jan. 21 – 30, 2022

■ **COLLINSVILLE RESTAURANT WEEK**  
Feb. 25 – March 6, 2022



# CHEFS

By Melissa Meske

## TOP

### FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD.

Dining out is all about discovering exciting new restaurants and experimenting with flavors and foods. But it takes more than great ingredients to create a lasting experience. It takes the artistic and creative touch of a chef.

Meet some of the kitchen artists who have made the Great Rivers & Routes region a true culinary destination.

#### MEET ANDREA RINGHAUSEN

1880 Pizza & Pasta House, Jerseyville

"I guess I've always loved to cook, but more so, to challenge myself when it came to cooking," Andrea Ringhausen says as she shares her passion. "Like when I eat something at a restaurant and really love it, especially when vacationing, I am beyond determined to replicate the dish and give it my own spin. I often take notes about a dish."

"I grew up on the family farm, west of Kane, and I have very fond memories of Mom and Mamma cooking, baking, and canning," Ringhausen adds.

You might say cooking comes naturally to her – that it's in Ringhausen's DNA.

But it wasn't always a given that she would end up in the kitchen, whipping up delicious dishes and fine foods to share with others. Ringhausen spent 26 years as a high school special education teacher before her journey down this new path began. "Back in March 2016, I gave my five-year notice to retire from teaching. I didn't necessarily want to quit working, I was just ready to work at something different."

Now, she is not only the co-owner (with husband Phil) and lead chef at

Jerseyville's 1880 Pizza & Pasta House and its gift shop known as The 80 Loft; she also owns another popular place in town, Espresso Yourself Bakery. The bakery was her firstborn, you might say, opening in December 2016. It is now under the daily care of her daughter Natalie Titus and baker/decorator Sara Allgood and has been going strong ever since its doors opened.

The menu at 1880 Pizza & Pasta House features just what its name suggests. "We serve a variety of yummy pizzas, pasta, and salads. All our salads are hand-cut daily. Our pizza dough is scratch made, as are all our dressings and sauces. I'm particularly proud of our homemade Bolognese and Sweet Italian dressings," she says. "I've been creating the recipes for 1880 since day one, although I cannot take credit for our Cuban and Western pizzas. Those were totally my awesome kitchen staff's ideas."

Ringhausen absolutely delights in seeing people enjoying their food as they dine. "Like when you first taste something and that smile spreads across your face because it's *that good*."



“PEOPLE IN ALTON RESPECT GOOD CULINARY ARTS.”

- CHEF KENNY

#### MEET CHEF KENNY JASKIEWICZ

Great Rivers Tap & Grill, Alton

Math was Kenny Jaskiewicz first love. But during a college break when he took a job in the kitchen at an upscale St. Louis hotel restaurant, he discovered cooking.

"I found that cooking suited me better than what I was studying in college," Chef Kenny, as he is known, says. "I ended up following that and eventually became the executive chef in the kitchen at the hotel. At some point, I realized that cooking was what I liked doing and I did it relatively well," Kenny reminisces. "I thought, 'Let's go with this and see what happens.'"

This was in the early 1980's when cooking as a career wasn't highly regarded and the culinary scene hadn't taken off yet.

"For much of the middle class at that time, going out to eat really meant Mom had a night off from cooking," he says. It wasn't until the launch of Food Network and the sudden explosion of 'yuppies looking more towards Europe' for dining experiences that dining out became an adventure for Americans.

He became chef at Great Rivers Tap & Grill 14 years ago, but not before he worked his way up through the kitchens in St. Louis. He was attracted to Alton because it had a small town atmosphere in a big town setting.

As the chef in the restaurant attached to the Best Western Premier Hotel, Kenny says he was able to expand the menu.

"I made a lamb sausage that we put on the menu and I was afraid I would end up eating more than we sold," he says with a laugh. The sausage, served on a bed of egg noodles, became one of the more popular entrees.

He has also added handmade Pierogis to the menu as an appetizer, a nod to his Polish heritage. It has become a popular dish, outselling chicken wings.

Creativity is key for Kenny who also developed the restaurant's pizzas

using a sauce and cheese blend he refined. He puts his pizzas together on a sourdough crust he bakes daily. The dough originated from a starter he put together in the kitchen.

"We do a lot of different things here. Everything on the menu is me," he says. "I enjoy the creative aspect of cooking. And I like the immediacy of it too. I don't have to wait a month to see what happens."

#### MEET RYAN GENTELIN

Gentelin's on Broadway, Alton

Ask Ryan Gentelin why he became a chef and restaurant owner and he simply smiles.

"My family is 100 percent Sicilian. I grew up working in the kitchen with my grandmas," he says. "Cooking is the only field I've ever been interested in."

As the owner and executive chef of Gentelin's on Broadway in downtown Alton, he has carved out a niche in the city's culinary scene, creating three-course meals that highlight fresh cuts of fish and meat.

"I like to keep things simple," Gentelin says. "Our dishes are fresh and have contrasting flavors, texture and simple presentations. That's what I like to do."

Born and raised in Alton, Gentelin began working in kitchen's as a teenager. His first job was as a dishwasher at the former River Walk Restaurant in downtown Alton. He never looked back from there. Trained as a chef at the American Culinary Federation in classical French cuisine, Gentelin began working in St. Louis area country clubs and worked his way up to executive sous chef at Belle Rive Country Club.

In October of 2006, he had the opportunity to purchase the building where Gentelin's currently stands and open his own restaurant. The restaurant opened Dec. 6, 2006 and

Gentelin said the last 15 years have been 'a lot of hard work but amazing'. He developed a menu that highlights a different recipe every week.

"We specialize in fresh cuts of fish and meat," Gentelin says. "I go to farmers markets every Saturday and get local produce that I incorporate into the dishes. I support local and I explore local." Popular menu items include a Peppered Rib Eye Steak, and Filet Mignon with blue cheese potato gratin, and sautéed baby spinach. The menu also includes a ½ roasted duck, pan seared scallops and lobster, grilled chicken pasta, a pan seared pork chop and more.

Gentelin likes to visit area restaurants to see what they are making and talk to the chefs about food and cooking. He gets inspiration from those conversations and from cook books he reads regularly. He describes his cooking style as an 'infused cuisine' with influences from France, America and the Southwest.

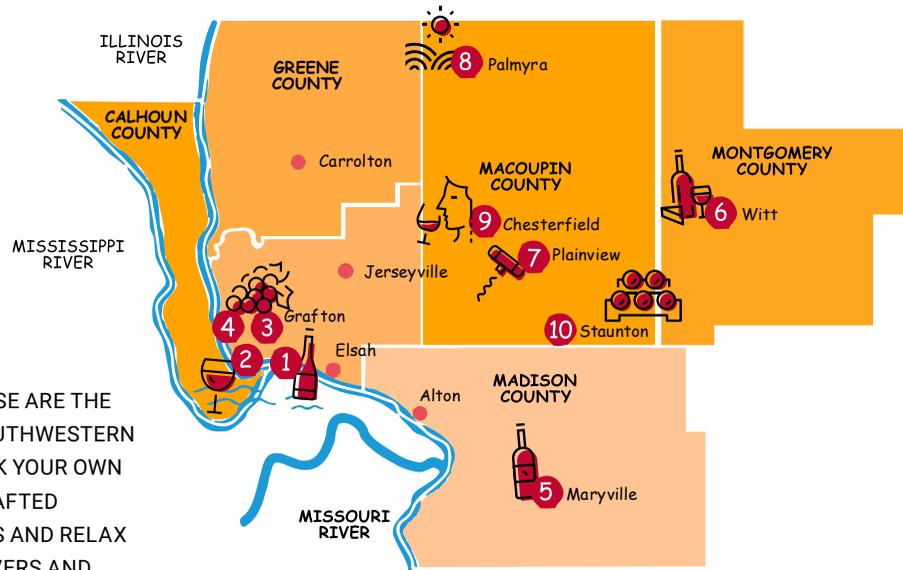
What keeps Gentelin passionate about his role as chef is the people he meets during the daily operation of the restaurant.

"It's the employees and the clientele," he says. "It's all about them and it's great."



# WINERY DRIVING TOUR

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Sip a glass of award-winning wine on a patio overlooking the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers at this full production winery. Wine is a way of life at the Grafton Winery and it shows in the different wines. There are fruit wines, semi-sweet, dry whites, and dry reds available by the bottle or glass.

**2 GRAFTON WINERY THE VINEYARDS**  
21028 Eckert Orchard Rd. • Grafton (618) 786-3001

Tours, tastings and the views are all part of the charm of this laid back Grafton Winery production facility. Enjoy outdoor seating around a firepit with the vineyards visible across a small lake. Bring a picnic and taste your way through award-winning wines.

**3 THE WINERY AT AERIE'S RESORT**  
600 Timber Ridge Dr. • Grafton (618) 786-7477

Enjoy a glass of this private label wine along with a panoramic view known as "The Best View in the Midwest". The winery sits atop the river bluffs in Grafton affording one-of-a-kind views. The winery also serves up artisan flatbreads, small plates for sharing and more.

**4 MARY MICHELLE WINERY**  
13653 Lodge Blvd. • Grafton • (618) 786-2331

Award-winning Mary Michelle and Illinois Cellar wines, produced in nearby Carrollton, are featured at the winery located inside the Pere Marquette Lodge & Conference Center. The wines are served exclusively at the Lodge and winery.

**5 BELLA VISTA WINERY**  
6633 E. Main St. • Maryville (618) 365-6280

Located on the outskirts of Maryville, Bella Vista enjoys a bucolic country setting where its high-quality wines are produced and bottled in the cellar. The wines themselves feature lush, fruit aromas and rich oaky flavors. An on-site restaurant provides meals designed to pair with their wines.

**6 HALF WITT WINERY**  
240 N. Hirst St. • Witt (217) 594-7151

Since 2012, the owners of this rural winery have been creating award winning wines. Their reds, Rieslings and rosés have won over 30 medals in Illinois and Indiana competitions.

**7 PLAINVIEW VINEYARD AND WINERY**  
10456 2<sup>nd</sup> Rd. • Plainview • (217) 883-8221

Eighteen varieties of grapes are grown at Plainview Vineyard and are used to create the various wines on hand. Fruit wines are also created using fresh seasonal fruits.

**8 VIXEN HILL WINERY**  
7331 Palmyra Rd. • Palmyra (217) 691-4331

Enjoy hand-crafted, well-balanced dry, semi-sweet and sweet wines at this winery which has been growing grapes and producing wine since 1999. A menu of sandwiches, pizza and snacks is also available for a hungry road tripper. Live music available Sunday afternoons.

**9 WILD PICKINS WINERY**  
14223 Illinois Route 111 • Chesterfield (618) 753-3833

Sip a glass of Zippidy Blue, Perfect Pear, Bobbin' Apple or other fruit wine at this rural Macoupin County winery. Nestled among the woodlands of the region, the winery also serves up a full food menu and cool wine slushies.

**10 THE WINERY AT SHALE LAKE**  
1499 Washington Ave. • Staunton (618) 637-2470

There is a heated wine garden to keep away the fall and winter chills at this winery which is open weekends throughout the year. The winery tasting room is tucked away in a barn and the wine garden overlooks the 14-acre vineyard. The winery produces sweet reds, semi-dry reds, blush, semi-sweet white and Norton wines.



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# THE BUCK STOPS HERE

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LIKELY THERE IS  
A HUNTING SEASON  
FOR IT IN SOUTHWEST  
ILLINOIS.



From southern Madison County, through rural Jersey, Calhoun, Greene, Macoupin and Montgomery counties, hunting season takes hold in the fall and winter months.

"Deer hunting in Calhoun County is better than most other places," Jonah White, owner of White Tales Lodge in Michael says. White has taken a former grade school and converted it into a hunting lodge which he rents out. In addition to the Lodge, White has added a meat processing plant alongside to assist hunters with processing their game.

"Last year we processed 165 deer," White notes. "Having the plant gives people easy access to processing and it also gives them a reason to hunt more than just trophy bucks."

Harpole's Heartland Lodge in rural Greene and Pike counties offers hunting packages every year. Guided hunts are available for white tail deer, pheasant, quail and turkey. The lodge is a premier hunting outfitter and accommodates gun and archery hunts.

## HERE IS A COMPLETE LIST OF FALL/WINTER HUNTING SEASONS IN THE REGION:

**DOVE** – 90 day season. This is a split season which starts on Sept. 1 and runs approximately 75 days. It reopens the day after Christmas and runs the remainder of the 90 days.

**CROW** – Oct. 28 – Feb. 28

**PHEASANT, QUAIL AND PARTRIDGE** – First Saturday in November through mid January.

**RABBIT** – First Saturday in November through Feb. 15

**TURKEY – Fall Archery:** Oct. 1 – early January. Closed during firearm deer seasons

■ **Fall Gun:** Nine days in early October typically beginning the Saturday of the second complete two-day weekend in the month.

## DEER

■ **Archery:** Oct. 1 through the first Sunday after Jan. 13. Closed during firearm deer season

■ **First Firearm Season:** Nov. 19, 20 & 21

■ **Second Firearm Season:** Dec. 2, 3, 4, & 5

■ **Muzzleloader-Only Deer Season:** Dec. 10, 11, & 12

According to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, thousands of deer are harvested annually in southwestern Illinois.

## PUBLIC HUNTING AREAS INCLUDE:

- Beaver Dam State Park, *Carlinville*
- Batchtown State Fish & Wildlife Area, *Grafton*
- Bohm Woods Nature Preserve, *Edwardsville*
- Calhoun Point, *Grafton*
- Coffeen Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area, *Coffeen*
- Copperhead Hollow State Wildlife Management Area, *Fieldon*
- Fuller Lake State Wildlife Management Area, *Grafton*
- Glades – 12 Mile Island State Wildlife Management Area, *Grafton*
- Horseshoe Lake State Park, *Collinsville*
- Pere Marquette State Park, *Grafton*
- Red's Landing State Wildlife Management Area, *Grafton*
- RipRap Landing State Wildlife Management Area, *Grafton*
- Zoeller State Natural Area, *East St. Louis*



# HERE COME THE *Holidays*

By Melissa Meske

OVER THE RIVER AND ALONG THE ROUTES, SLEIGH BELLS RING AND THE SNOW IS GLISTENING. A beautiful sight, the holiday lights, the local landscape transforms into a winter wonderland. This is the place where dreams of a white Christmas really can come true as the magical spirit of the season comes alive.

One way to capture that spirit this season is to take in the sights and sounds of the seventh annual **Downtown Country Christmas Festival** and second annual **Bright Nights** celebration in **Jerseyville**.

The Festival will take over recently developed City Center Park on Nov. 27. It will feature a variety of family-friendly activities, food, hayrides and visits with Santa Claus. The new location includes the lots and greenspace at Pear and Jefferson Streets near Jerseyville's Stadium Theater.

Visitors can shop and dine at the downtown merchant and food venues along State Street. You can also fulfill your holiday gift lists by visiting the Jersey County Catholic Youth Ministry's annual craft show that kicks off festivities that morning at Holy Ghost Catholic School's Father William Hembrow Center.

"Jerseyville is a family community, and with the holiday season, that's why we get together. To celebrate family, to celebrate community," says Michael Ward, Jerseyville's tourism coordinator. "We are excited to utilize our City Center downtown district as a destination place for community gatherings. This also provides our local businesses with the opportunity to give back to those who have helped support them all year long."

Bright Nights also returns for a second year to keep the holiday spirit alive all season long. First lighting up the evening on Nov. 27, incredible sparkles of color will burst upon the chill of the night skies through Christmas night Dec. 25.

This 28-day celebration includes a host of downtown window displays along with the historic Jersey County Courthouse grounds, and thousands of lights strung through the city's Dolan and Rotary Parks. "The goal is to have over 100,000 lights in Dolan Park alone," says Ward. "Another feature at Dolan Park is a 22-foot Christmas tree synchronized to music and a unique agricultural machinery display of lights shining from our ball fields. We will also have the official City tree at City Center Park."

Registered Bright Nights residential homes will also be mapped to help visitors take in more of the community's unified spirit this season. "We are again providing family fun from the comfort of your car," Ward adds, "but also a return to ample opportunities for gathering."

Drive just about a half-hour from Jerseyville and you can continue a seasonal celebration of community spirit in lights with a visit to **Bethalto Christmas Village**.

Also opening on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 27 at Bethalto Central Park, visitors are welcome between 5 and 8 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through Dec. 19.

Featuring talks with Santa and Mrs. Claus each weekend, you can take in the mesmerizing lighted glass cottages along the park's walk paths and enjoy the display of thousands of lights that line the trees of the adjoining Bethalto Arboretum. Bethalto Spirit co-organizer Jane Ahasay notes, "It is such a unique way to celebrate the holidays. There's a

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live nativity, a variety of children's activities, a hot chocolate stand and a 'S'mores station, holiday music playing throughout, and even more. We've even had marriage proposals happen right here."

"It's like you're on the set of a Hallmark holiday movie when you come and visit. And there are a ton of photo opportunities, such as with Santa at the gazebo, among the beautiful tree displays, or by the lighted cottages. Photographers are always welcome," fellow co-organizer Gary Ahasay adds. Multiple vendors are on-site to help fulfill your holiday gift lists as well.

"This is just a great community-driven piece each year for the holidays. With over 150 trees lit up in the Arboretum and all the activities at Central Park, everything is free except for vendor purchases. We welcome you to celebrate every weekend this season with lights," she adds.

For more than 25 years, this same volunteer group has also hosted the annual **Bethalto Spirit Victorian Christmas Walk** on the second Sunday in December from 4 to 7 p.m. On Dec. 12 this year, this free event provides a look back to yesteryears, when life moved a bit slower. Strolling through Bethalto's downtown area, refreshment booths dot your walking path along with the chance to enjoy carolers, carriage rides, and period-costumed characters.

The annual **Alton** celebration, **Christmas Wonderland**, is hosted by a local volunteer group known as the Grandpa Gang. With this year's event, Grandpa Dick Alford says, "We're looking to this year's Christmas Wonderland to again be the one that everyone has come to expect and enjoy over the years."

Featuring more than 4 million strung lights throughout Alton's Rock Spring Park at 2116 College Avenue, Christmas Wonderland is open nightly from 5 to 9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 26 through Monday, Dec. 27.

"The Enchanted Forest, our annual Christmas Tree Decorating Contest featuring area organizations, they'll be back," Alford says about this year's plans. "The Santa Claus House, with Santa himself greeting visitors, will also be back. The same amount or more

lights, and all of our displays will go up, perhaps even a couple of new ones."

The City of **Collinsville** will again host its annual **Light Up Parade** on Dec. 4. Parks and Recreation Director Kimberly Caughran shares the premise behind the parade: "Community groups participate by making floats and awards are given out to the most beautifully decorated." The public is invited to view the parade along Main Street.

**Collinsville** will also be hosting a **Winter Wonderland at Willoughby Farm** throughout December. "The farm will be decorated with lights and our guests are welcome to come out and enjoy the farm at night lit by dazzling twinkle lights," says Caughran.

Some other spectacular spots in the Great Rivers & Routes region for taking in the sparkle, sights, and spirit of the holiday season include visits to **A Carlinville Christmas**, strolling through downtown **Stanton's Holiday Walk and Tree Lighting**, or taking a December weekend ride more than 300 feet in the air on the **Grafton SkyTour** for scenic views of the City of Grafton decked out for the holidays. And your winter holiday celebration might seem incomplete without a visit to the **WonderLight's Christmas** hosted at **World Wide Technology Raceway in Madison** Nov. 12 through Jan. 2. **Light up the holiday tree in Downtown Wood River** on Nov. 26.



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# LEGENDARY Sweetness

By Melissa Meske

IT'S SWEET  
TOOTH SEASON IN  
SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS.

HOLD ON A  
MINUTE – WHAT?

November and December usher in the holiday season but it's also the time when area bakeries go in to high gear and launch seasonal goodies sure to delight anyone with a yen for sweets.

So, it is Sweet Tooth Season and you would be hard-pressed to find a sweeter reason to enjoy the holidays than in the Great Rivers & Routes region of southwest Illinois.

Make a trip along the Mother Road of Route 66 and discover a 100-year-old bakery and restaurant that shines year round.

The **Jubelt's Bakery & Restaurant** family knows that it is with the ongoing support of loyal customers from the surrounding area as well as from travelers around the globe that they will soon celebrate their 100th anniversary.

Its legend began in May 1922 in nearby Mount Olive when three brothers – Paul, Fred, and Albert Jubelt – bought an existing bakery. Multiple locations came and went over the years that followed. Paul's son John opened the first Litchfield location after returning home from Korea in 1952.

Thirty years later, John and wife Iris, along with their son Lance, opened the doors on its current **Litchfield** location in 1982 at 303 N. Old Route 66, along the path of that also legendary Route 66 as it makes its way through town. John and Lance have since passed, with John and Iris's daughter returning from Chicago in 2008 to take over the helm.

Jean Jubelt is the third-generation owner of this legendary bakery that also hosts a full restaurant menu along with espressos, ice cream, and other specialty treats. A drive-thru, online ordering, and curbside pickup are all also available.

As for their sweet treats, well, there's just too many to list, but the jumbo red velvet cupcakes with cream cheese icing are definitely worth noting, as are their season-themed cookies.

"Our tea cookies in holiday colors are our biggest sellers during the Christmas season," says Jubelt. "We have other specially decorated cookies as well, along

with our holiday stollens. Most of our recipes we've been making for well over 50 to 75 years now."

"Also popular from our restaurant side, and particularly at Thanksgiving time, are our holiday dinners, customized for however many people will be dining, that you can take home and enjoy," she adds.

Another legend with a loyal following is **Duke Bakery**. Turning 70 years old in 2021, Duke Bakery first began its sweet story back in 1951. They now have two locations, its origin at 819 Henry Street, **Alton**, and a second sweet spot in **Granite City**, at 3202 Nameoki Road.

Founded by Christ and Helen Doucleff, Duke Bakery is a full-line retail bakery specializing in wedding cakes, specialty cakes, donuts, pastries, pies, breads, buns, and cookies.

In 1972, the business passed to the next generation, brothers Michael and Karl Doucleff. In 1996, upon Karl's retirement, Michael's daughter Amy came on board as the third generation to take the helm. Amy's husband Ben Hollis joined the business in 1999, and in 2006, the couple opened its location in Granite City.

"Cookies are probably our number one seller during the holidays," says Amy. "We have holiday-themed options, including everything from Santa, reindeer, and Christmas trees to even Grinch-themed ones. We also have special holiday pastries, such as the Christmas tree-shaped stollen that is a popular choice to sweeten Christmas morning."

"We find it so heartwarming that we remain a huge part of family traditions throughout the region, and even beyond. People come back home for the holidays and fulfill their sweet needs here. But it's not just during the holidays that they do that. We feel so honored to be a continued part of families' milestones from year to year, and after all these years – birthdays, weddings, graduations, and more – as



well as their holiday traditions. We are indeed thankful," Amy adds.

Compared to these two legendary sweet spots, **BigBoy's Donuts** in **Jerseyville** is a relative newbie. Owners Brian and Becki Matthews opened their shop not quite three years ago, on Valentine's Day 2019. And while they might be "newbies," they are quickly developing a sweet following and their own unique legend.

BigBoy's Donuts, 933 S. State St., Jerseyville, focuses on its customers and what it is they ask for or want. "We're trying something new all the time with what we offer," Becki notes. "If a customer asks us to do something, and it's something we think we can do, we'll give it a try."

And while they do not offer wedding and other specialty cake services, they do offer unique creations such as their famous birthday number donuts, where someone's age in years is formed into a large doughnut and decorated in a theme of the customer's choosing, often accompanied by individual doughnuts that follow the chosen theme.

They also offer customized baked goods from their shelves for the different seasons. They feature eight different muffin flavor varieties and

have cinnamon rolls topped with glaze or icing that are the size of a paper plate. Their daily morning offerings of biscuits and gravy have quickly become a big hit as well.

For BigBoy's Donuts, their uniqueness might come, however, from their giving back to the community. Becki explains: "We are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except for major holidays. We do lock our doors for a few hours at night, but our bakers are here. If someone is on their way to work at 3 a.m. and wants something for their commute and they give us a knock, our bakers will let them purchase from whatever is ready for the day.

"We also donate any doughnuts that are left at the end of the day to places in the community such as group homes, nursing homes, the hospital, police and fire departments, funeral homes, and local businesses. We never sell day-old anything. Everything is prepared fresh, from scratch, every day," Becki adds.

And although their legend might just be at its beginning, BigBoy's Donuts recently landed a noteworthy spot as one of the Top 10 Donut Shops in Illinois, ranking at #7 on the list published on the "Only in Your State" website.

MORE *sweet treats* TO SAVOR



- **222 Artisan Bakery & Café**  
222 N. Main St. • Edwardsville 62025
- **A Little Taste of Heaven Bakery**  
2709 N. Center St. • Maryville 62062
- **Blackbird Bakery & Café**  
123 E. Main St. • Staunton 62088
- **Cake It On Corner Cakery**  
100 E. State St. • Nokomis 62075
- **Clifton Country Inn & Bake Shop**  
3015 W. Delmar Ave. • Godfrey 62035
- **Cookie Express**  
121 Alton Square • Alton 62002
- **Cookie Factory Bakery & Café**  
202 Alton Square • Alton 62002
- **The Cup**  
1057 Century Dr. • Edwardsville 62025
- **Donut Express**  
113 E. Bethalto Dr. • Bethalto 62010
- **Dunkin'**  
819 Edwardsville Rd. • Troy 62294
- **Espresso Yourself Bakery**  
410 W. Carpenter • Jerseyville 62052
- **Good Knight Cupcakes and Cookies**  
1490 B E. Edwardsville Rd. Wood River 62095
- **Hawthorn Tree**  
242 East Side Square • Carlinville 62626
- **Kruta Bakery**  
300 St. Louis Rd. • Collinsville 62234
- **LuciAnna's Pastries**  
607 E. Broadway • Alton 62002
- **Mister Donut**  
2720 Grovelin St. • Godfrey 62035
- **My Just Desserts**  
31 E. Broadway • Alton 62002
- **The Rolling Pin**  
29 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street • Wood River 62095
- **Silly Grandma's Sweet Creations**  
2709 N. Center St. • Maryville 62062
- **Strange Donuts**  
2323 Plum St. • Edwardsville 62025
- **Ugly Mugs Coffeehouse**  
125 W. State St. • Nokomis 62075
- **Wood River Donut Shop**  
102 W. Edwardsville Rd. Wood River 62095
- **Yummy Donut Palace**  
410 Beltline Road • Collinsville 62234
- **Yummy Donut Palace**  
443 S. Buchanan St. Edwardsville 62025

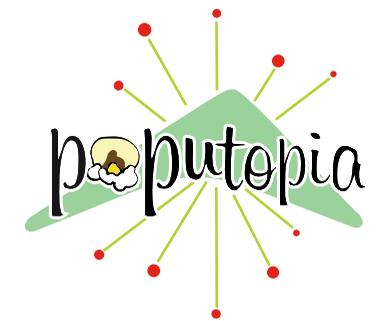


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# MUSEUM trail

By Danette Watt

ILLINOIS HAS A RICH HISTORY, BEGINNING LONG BEFORE ITS ENTRY INTO THE UNION AS THE 21ST STATE IN 1818.

The lives of ordinary and extraordinary people who lived on the prairies and along the Mississippi River are chronicled in historical museums which dot the landscape in southwest Illinois.

Create your own history museum scavenger hunt in the Great Rivers & Routes region. Learn about the Mother Road and labor organizers. Underground Railroad and man-eating birds. Here are some ideas for a museum-focused road trip.

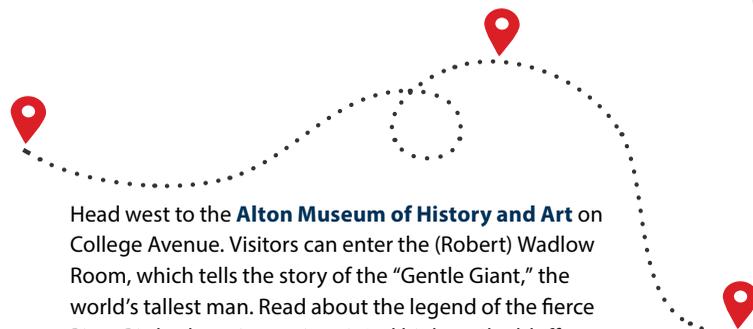


A great place to begin is the **Litchfield Museum and Route 66 Welcome Center**, located on, you guessed it, the Mother Road of Route 66. The open road beckons the adventurous, and artist Bob Waldmire was no exception. Exhibit highlights include his maps and drawings of the route that spans eight states and three time zones, as well as Rte. 66 memorabilia significant to the Litchfield area. Other exhibits include area industries Brown Shoe, Litchfield Creamery and the Litchfield Mill. Also known as the Planet Mill, it was the largest steam mill in the world. The museum has antique vehicles and an extensive section on area veterans. **(217) 324-3510**.

From Litchfield, make your way southwest to Gillespie and the **Illinois Coal Museum** on IL Rte. 16. The brainchild of Dave Tucker, the museum opened in 2019. Here, the story of coal and its past, present and future in Illinois is told through exhibits with hundreds of artifacts. Start your tour with a walk through a tunnel that simulates a coal mine, moving from the past to the present of mining. There's a section just for kids, and exhibits on subsidence, unions (and Mary "Mother Jones" Harris) and mine disasters, including the 1947 Centralia Mine disaster. **Text 833.228.8603** to schedule a visit. **Save the date:** Celebration of Labor, Sept. 4; 5k; street fair; museum tours.

Travel south on Illinois Route 159 to the two-level **Collinsville Museum**, which began with the acquisition of the Collins family trunk. Did you know Collinsville was once a leader in cowbells? Blum Mfg. Co. was located here from the 1870s-1950s. The town was also a center for manufacturing women's clothing until as recently as the 1980s. Antique cameras, memorabilia of World Wars I and II and the Miner's Theater are on display, and local athletes who made it to the big leagues. Read about the world's largest catsup bottle and horseradish, the root that makes Collinsville famous. **(618) 344-1834**.

From Collinsville, head north to Glen Carbon, where you'll find the **Glen Carbon Heritage Museum** and **The Yanda Log Cabin**. Both buildings have received historical recognition. The museum started as a schoolhouse in 1914 and still has the original hardwood floors and tin ceilings. Exhibits include how a classroom looked 100 years ago, a doll collection, period clothing and other artifacts and memorabilia of the community. Audio and video interviews and interactive exhibits help to enrich visitors' museum experience. **(618) 288-7271**.



Head west to the **Alton Museum of History and Art** on College Avenue. Visitors can enter the (Robert) Wadlow Room, which tells the story of the "Gentle Giant," the world's tallest man. Read about the legend of the fierce Piasa Bird, whose image is painted high on the bluffs above the Mississippi. The Pioneer Room has exhibits on Lewis & Clark, Black pioneers, and Alton's Civil War history. There is an admission fee of \$5 for adults, with discounts for children, seniors and groups. **(618) 462-2763**.

Another stop is the **Grafton Historical Museum and Visitor Center**. Grafton is a riverfront town, located at the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. Here, visitors can see exhibits on boatmaking and commercial fishing, and a period room from the 1900s. There's a display of the Illinois Powder Manufacturing Co., maker of Gold Medal Explosives. A photograph of the "Dinky," a converted city passenger bus that ran on a railroad track from Alton to Grafton, is also on display. Ed Amburg, a member of the Historical Society, was influential in getting the museum built. He was an avid collector of arrowheads; there is a display of them donated by his estate. **618-786-7000**.



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## Singular Sensation

CHRIS LORTON • GEORGE'S LOCAL BREW • JERSEYVILLE

NASHVILLE, TN MEET JERSEYVILLE, IL

Although the two cities are hundreds of miles apart and don't seem to have much in common, country's Music Capital of the World served as inspiration for a Jerseyville business owner.

"My wife and I went to Nashville for the first time a few years ago. We were sitting in Tootsies, a famous bar there, and we looked at each other said 'this is what we ought to do in Jerseyville,'" Chris Lorton, owner of George's Local Brew, remembers. "We went from bar to bar on Broadway Street in Nashville and looked at the way they were all designed. We realized State Street in Jerseyville was set up the same way with all of its old buildings."

### THE REST IS, OF COURSE, HISTORY.

The Lorton's returned to their hometown of Jerseyville and opened George's Local Brew, housed in the former Eagles Club, a historic brick building on Jerseyville's State Street.

"The building was for sale for a while and I made an offer knowing it would be rejected," Lorton says, a smile dancing across his face. "To my surprise they accepted the offer."

The building sat empty for six months before Lorton, a contractor by trade, began creating his Nashville vision. The shot-gun layout was ideal for the long bar with a stage at the rear of the building. He installed a sound system and lighting to enhance the stage and opened the bar/restaurant in January 2017.

"Nashville meets Jerseyville at George's," Lorton jokes. "We even have Nashville based entertainers play here from time to time."

The restaurant is now known for its food – fresh, locally sourced steaks are served nightly. There are also a wide array of burgers, sandwiches, appetizers and pizzas available.

"We knew we had to have good food when we opened," Lorton said. "We wanted to have good burgers and sandwiches but keep it simple.

But really I've been amazed that we are now known for our food. I thought people would come for the music and they do like the music but mostly they come for the food."

Lorton credits wife Brenda for creating a menu that highlights top-notch ingredients with attention to quality. She supervises the menu and kitchen.

"When we first got married I was amazed at what a great cook she was," Lorton says. "I became used to eating very good food and thought everyone ate like that."

It was the kitchen staff that encouraged the Lortons to begin serving steaks. They wanted to showcase fresh cut meats and local produce.

"We cut the meat ourselves so it's always fresh and never frozen. Our motto is "Every Night is Steak Night"," Lorton said.

George's Local Brew is family-oriented with his wife and four children taking part in running the business.

"Either I am at the door or Brenda, or our son George and we greet and seat people ourselves," he says. "People like that. You have to continually let people know that we appreciate them. Without them, there is no business."

In fact, that's one reason the restaurant has the name "George's Local Brew". The name George is a family name passed down over the years and the word 'Local' highlights the fact that local food, produce and people are part of the restaurant.

The Lorton's have deep roots in the region. And the name 'George' is part of the family history. Robert Lorton, a soldier in the Revolutionary

War serving under General George Washington, was severely injured in battle and although discharged from the service, received pay based on his rank. That pay came in the form of land. Robert Lorton received land in present day Kentucky. He later sold it and moved his wife and nine children to Greene County, IL in 1820. They were among the first settlers in the area. The land became known as Lorton's Prairie and is still farmed by the Lortons today.

Chris Lorton was raised in Hardin, in neighboring Calhoun County. He was one of five children. His brother Jeff Lorton owns the popular Aerie's Resort in Grafton. Chris Lorton moved to Jerseyville where he began putting his mark on area businesses. As a general contractor, he began purchasing empty businesses and rehabbing them. Bringing empty, historic buildings back to life became a passion.

"When I was a kid I had a lot of crazy ideas and I swore I wouldn't work in construction," he says. He graduated

from Eastern Illinois University and began coaching and teaching in southwest Illinois. After seven years, he quit teaching and became a contractor. He bought a bar on Illinois Route 109 and turned it into a hot spot. He eventually bought buildings in downtown Jerseyville and renovated one into the Lorton Hotel. The hotel, complete with a neon sign on the roof, burned down in 1998.

He became involved with historical renovations alongside his brother Matt and began buying down and out buildings no one wanted.'

"What you think will happen and what really happens are two different things," Lorton notes. "This has been hard work but I'm passionate about it and it's a joy for sure. The thing I enjoy is the people. Everyone has their own daily trials and tribulations today. And if our diners can take an hour and come eat here and have some enjoyment then that gives me satisfaction. I like seeing people smile when they come here."



**CELEBRATING A BIRTHDAY? At George's Local Brew they take birthday's to a whole new level. Anyone who visit George's on their birthday for lunch or dinner has the chance to Spin the Wheel for a prize. Prizes range from a diamond ring to gift certificates to local businesses, free food and even a ride on the Grafton SkyTour.**





# elegant eagles



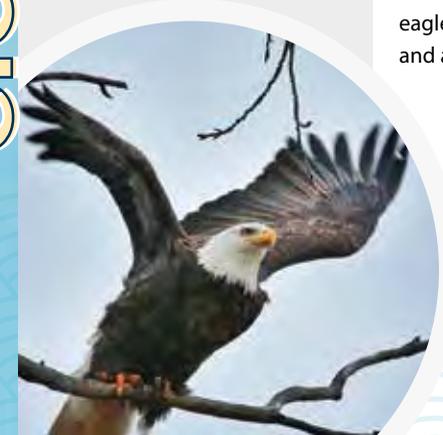
THE BRISK, CHILLY AIR OF DECEMBER SERVES AS AN OPEN INVITATION TO THE BIRDS OF WINTER. IT TELLS THEM ITS TIME TO LEAVE THE FRIGID WATERS AND RESTRICTED DINING OPTIONS OF THEIR NORTHERN U.S. HOMES AND HEAD TO SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS FOR THE RELATIVELY WARM OPEN WATERS AND TANTALIZING DINING OPTIONS AVAILABLE IN THE REGION.

Hundreds of American Bald Eagles and thousands of Trumpeter Swans travel the birding equivalent of a superhighway and spend the winter months along the open waters of the Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri rivers. Nearby lakes and ponds also serve as winter getaways for the elegant eagles and graceful swans. They make their homes near the also traveling ducks and geese who have discovered the delights of spending a few months in the area.

It's not only the birds that enjoy the winter months in southwest Illinois. People flock to the region to take part in eagle activities that appeal to families, couples and singles alike.

Download a mobile passport highlighting eagle watching hotspots and earn the chance to win a summer getaway. Meet an American Bald Eagle in person. Find some of the best eagle watching hotspots in the region. Immerse yourself in a getaway geared towards the birds of winter and reconnect with nature and local habitats.

So pack up the binoculars, winter coats, hats and gloves and make a winter migration of your own to the Great Rivers & Routes region of southwest Illinois for unparalleled eagle watching opportunities and adventures.



## EAGLE ICE FESTIVAL JAN. 8

The fun begins at the annual Alton Audubon Eagle Ice Festival on Saturday, Jan. 8. Meet a live American Bald Eagle at the Alton Visitor Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. during a free meet-and-greet event.

Outdoor firepits and ice carvings will also be included in the downtown Alton-based activities held throughout the day.

There is also a guided 45-minute Eagle Shuttle Tour showcasing the top spots to view eagles. The tour will begin and end at the Audubon Center on Jan. 8. Tour tickets are \$10 and available online. Click on the Marketplace tab at [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com) to purchase tickets.

Be sure to visit the Audubon Center at Riverlands in West Alton for family-friendly eagle season activities and a live raptor meet and greet. Visit the life-sized eagle's nest and try to spot an eagle through the center's scopes placed by the floor to ceiling windows.

For more details on the Alton Audubon Eagle Fest, visit the events tab at [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com)

## FESTIVAL TIP

Tap in to a new eagle season inspired craft beer. Old Bakery Beer Company in Alton plans to release a one-of-a-kind beer in honor of the region's American Bald Eagles.



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Learn more about each location with video links provided on the passport. The videos were created by Pere Marquette State Park site interpreters and provide helpful eagle watching tips.



**GREAT RIVERS & ROUTES**  
OF SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS

# EAGLE WATCHING HOT SPOTS

- A HARDIN** On Route 100, cross the Joe Page Bridge in Hardin. There are great riverfront restaurants, perfect for viewing eagles while you dine.
- B PERE MARQUETTE STATE PARK** The park is home to eagles, which can be seen along the Illinois River banks or spotted from scenic lookout points within the park.
- C TWO RIVERS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AT GILBERT LAKE** One half mile upriver from the Brussels Ferry is Gilbert Lake. The trees out in the field often have eagles perched there. A three-mile hiking trail connects with Pere Marquette State Park.
- D TWO RIVERS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AT SWAN LAKE** Ride across the Brussels Ferry into Calhoun County and follow the signs to Swan Lake. The Visitor's Center has scopes for viewing eagles.
- E BRUSSELS FERRY** Eagles are active near the Brussels Ferry, where they enjoy perching in the tall cottonwood trees lining the river banks.
- F GRAFTON RIVERFRONT** Head down to Front Street for a stretch of the legs. Walk the riverfront to view eagles perched in the trees and soaring over the river.
- G ELSAH** Take time to stroll through the village, watching for eagles soaring over the river.

- H TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE CENTER** Just a short drive off the Great River Road, this wildlife rehab center offers up close views of bald eagles every day of the week.
- I PIASA HARBOR** Get a close up view of the eagles and the river at this harbor that's situated between Grafton and Alton.
- J CLIFTON TERRACE** This area is a great spot to pull off the road and pull out your binoculars. A parking area right along the riverfront offers great views of eagles.
- K RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY & THE AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS** Designated as a National Audubon Society Important Birding Area, eagles can be seen in the Ellis Bay refuge. Use the indoor spotting scopes and learn about the migration.
- L NATIONAL GREAT RIVERS MUSEUM/MELVIN PRICE LOCKS & DAM** Watch eagles fishing for an easy catch at the Locks & Dam. The National Great Rivers Museum offers indoor spotting scopes for viewing.
- M NATIONAL GREAT RIVERS RESEARCH & EDUCATION CENTER** Watch for eagles from the rooftop of the NGRREC building, which sits right on the Mississippi River bank.

- N LEWIS & CLARK STATE HISTORIC SITE** Eagles like to fly near this historic site because it's close to the confluence of two of the longest rivers in the country.
- O EDWARD "TED" AND PAT JONES CONFLUENCE POINT STATE PARK** Birding opportunities are plentiful where the Mississippi and Missouri rivers join.
- P CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE** Check out eagles in their natural winter habitat.
- Q HORSESHOE LAKE STATE PARK** Eagles enjoy congregating at this natural lake that covers 2,400 acres. Take a walk around the lake and count the number of eagles using the lake for their winter homes.
- R BEAVER DAM STATE PARK** Watch for eagles around the trees and open waters of this park located just seven miles southwest of Carlinville.

- S LAKE LOU YAEGER** Take a winter walk around the park and look for eagles. Located just outside Litchfield, the 300 acre park surrounds a 1,200 acre lake. A 45-mile shoreline provides plenty of room to find the prime spot to see wintering eagles.
-  **ALTON VISITOR CENTER** Join us as we kick off the eagle watching season Saturday, Jan. 8 at the Alton Audubon Eagle Ice Festival. Stop in Jan. 8 and Jan. 22 at the Alton Visitor Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to see a live bald eagle.
-  **Trumpeter Swans** winter at these locations along the Mississippi River. These are the places to be to view the nation's largest waterfowl.
-  **Look closely for eagle nests** that have been built by our feathered friends.



## GUIDED EAGLE WATCHING TOURS

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NATION'S ICONIC BIRD AND ENJOY A JOURNEY THROUGH THE WINTER LANDSCAPE OF SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS DURING GUIDED EAGLE WATCHING TOURS AVAILABLE IN ALTON AND GRAFTON.

Nearly every Saturday in January, hop on a shuttle in Alton and enjoy a 45-minute eagle watching tour. With the exception of Jan. 8, all tours start and end at the Alton Visitor Center. Tickets are \$10 per person and available at [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com). Please visit the Marketplace tab on the website to purchase tickets.

### ALTON EAGLE SHUTTLE TOUR DATES INCLUDE:

Jan. 8, 15, 22, & 29. Tours are available at 10 a.m.; 11 a.m.; Noon; and 1 p.m.

**GRAFTON EAGLE SHUTTLE TOURS:** Two-hour eagle watching tours are available Saturdays in January beginning Jan. 8. The tours begin and end at the Grafton Visitor Center. Tickets are \$23 per person and available online at [RiversandRoutes.com](http://RiversandRoutes.com). Click on the Marketplace tab to purchase the tickets. Tour times are 8 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

**Pere Marquette State Park** will offer free guided bald eagle programs and tours starting in late December and running through early March. Reservations are required for the tours.

All tours begin at the Pere Marquette State Park Visitor Center at 8:30 a.m. There will be a video presentation and program followed by an observational drive to view overwintering eagles. Tours typically conclude at 4 p.m. Those participating in the tours drive their own vehicles, following a park ranger. Reservations open for the tours on Nov. 15. Call (618) 786-3323 ext. 1 for reservations or email [Kayla.Alexander@illinois.gov](mailto:Kayla.Alexander@illinois.gov).

### PERE MARQUETTE STATE PARK EAGLE WATCHING TOURS:

- Dec. 27 & 28
- Jan. 7, 14, 21, 25, 27, 28 & 29
- Feb. 2, 3, 4, 26 & 26
- March 3



## MEET LIBERTY

Every Saturday in January, Liberty, a rescued American Bald Eagle from World Bird Sanctuary in St. Louis, will be on hand for free live eagle meet and greets. Liberty will be at the Alton Visitor Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 8 to kick off eagle season.

### ADDITIONAL EAGLE MEET AND GREETINGS WILL BE HELD:

- **JAN. 15:** Grafton Visitor Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **JAN. 22:** Alton Visitor Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **JAN. 29:** Grafton Visitor Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
*(All are free and open to the public)*



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**MADDIE-1:** Maddie is a young groundhog and permanent resident at Treehouse Wildlife Center in Dow. Groundhogs are inquisitive by nature, which may get them into trouble in their interactions with humans.



**MADDIE-2:** As an adult, groundhogs can grow to be about 18 inches long and weigh about 10 pounds



**SAM WHITE & MADDIE:** Sam White holds Maddie. White works at Treehouse as a wildlife rehabilitator.

# TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE CENTER

By Danette Watt

MADDIE SCAMPERED ATOP A DESK IN THE EDUCATION ROOM AT THE TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE CENTER. SHE CLIMBED ON THE PHONE, SET AN INTERCOM BUZZING, AND KNOCKED ITEMS OFF A SHELF.

Maddie is a young groundhog, less than a year old, and one of two resident groundhogs at the Wildlife Center. She was taken in after an unlicensed rehabber was unable to keep her. The other resident groundhog is Murray. She came to Treehouse 10 years ago as an adult and has a neurological problem.

Many people see groundhogs as a nuisance. They burrow in yards and eat out of gardens. But they have their place in the ecosystem. Their digging aerates the soil, and they scare away moles.

"We typically get four groundhogs a year, but we've had 12 in 2021, most as babies," said Sam White. White recently graduated with degrees in zoology and education. He's worked with Treehouse and the St. Louis Zoo off and on for the past five years. (Alternatively: White is one of the wildlife rehabilitators at Treehouse.)

White said some of the groundhogs had been hit with shovels. "They dig under foundations, so people are probably hitting them to get them out from under there."

Groundhogs can have quite a personality. They are very inquisitive and friendly. The females are "pretty sweet," as are the males, until they become adolescents. "Then they can develop a mean side," White said.

Human-groundhog interactions don't have to be negative. Whether groundhogs are happy or feeling defensive, they make the same chuffing sound. People often assume it's a threatening noise and that's when trouble between the two species can start. As people try to chase the groundhog away, the animal may attack in self-defense.

Since groundhogs are members of the rodent family, their teeth never stop growing. Maddie and Murray get a variety of new branches to chew on every day. The bark gives them nutrients; they are also fed a special lab diet with plenty of vitamins and minerals. This is supplemented with vegetables and fruit. Maddie is especially partial to brussel sprouts.

"The people who had her before were feeding her oatmeal cookies," said White. Treehouse keeps the animals they are rehabilitating on a diet natural to them. "We don't want to give them something they won't be able to readily find in the wild. They'll die of starvation searching for it."

## DOES MURRAY SEE HER SHADOW?

Groundhogs around the nation are under pressure every February to predict how much longer winter will last. Murray is no different.

"Murray is well-behaved and likes going out, so she has gone to the Visitor's Center in Alton for Groundhog's Day over the years," said White. But because of her age, she'll continue for just another year or two before Maddie takes over.

## RESCUE, REHABILITATION, RELEASE

Treehouse has been rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing birds and animals since co-founders Adele T. Moore and Richard H. Evans, DVM, first had the idea in 1972. A normal year sees Treehouse rehabilitating 62 patients. They've accepted 700 birds and animals so far this year and are currently rehabilitating 300.

Once they've been rehabilitated, the bird or animal is released back into the wild. This isn't always possible, such as when a bird never fully recovers from an injury, or an animal gets too used to being around people. In those cases, they become permanent residents at Treehouse. There are 62 birds and animals living at Treehouse, including hawks, foxes, a bobcat and bald eagles.

Treehouse staff love to share their passion for animals with the public. They offer on-site programs and tours; have outreach programs with ambassador animals, and host events.

Visit their website for information on their programs, including the upcoming Owl Fest. [www.treehousewildlifecenter.com](http://www.treehousewildlifecenter.com)

**OWL FEST** Channel your inner Harry Potter October 23 and 24 at the 2021 **Owl Fest**. This free, family friendly event is a combination of **fall festival and open house**. Take a peek at the Treehouse Wildlife Center's hospital, see who's staying in the flight enclosure and learn how the staff rehabs injured animals. Crafts, food, live music, vendors and more!

**GROUND-HOGS...**

- live about 15 years in captivity; around 6 years in the wild.
- grow to about 18 inches long.
- weigh around 10 pounds as an adult.
- are much softer than they look.

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# WINTER FUN

OH THE FUN YOU CAN HAVE IN SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS DURING THE COLD WINTER MONTHS!



Lace up the skates and head to the indoor ice rink at **The Loading Dock** in Grafton. Perched on the banks of the Mississippi River, the ice rink is housed in the historic boatworks building. Twirl around on the ice and then relax at the fire pits and enjoy s'mores and hot or cold drinks. The ice rink is open Fridays through Sundays. All day skate passes and season passes are available. The Loading Dock Ice Rink season runs from Nov. 20 through Feb. 27.

Let the little ones channel their imaginations at the **Edwardsville Children's Museum**. They can put on an apron and cook up something delicious in the wood fired pizza oven in the Peel-sponsored section. Or let them create a masterpiece

in the art studio, experience what it's like to care for animals in the two-story vet clinic exhibit, or tinker, design and innovate in a workshop. The museum is open Mondays and Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Thursdays through Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Admission \$7 per person ages 1+.

While in Edwardsville, stop in at **Edison's Entertainment Complex** and enjoy bowling, laser tag and arcade games. Feed the family from a regular and kids menu featuring wings, nachos, pizza and more.

Spend a few hours exploring Collinsville's **Willoughby Heritage Farm**. This 1940's farm includes a look inside a farmhouse, barns and out buildings along with visits with resident farm animals.

Imagine the yourself flying along the treetops with the wind whipping your face on **Grafton Zipline Adventures**. The zipline operates year-round (it closes when there is ice present on the lines). Enjoy the winter views of the bluffs and nearby rivers from the treetops above Grafton.

Plan to spend the night while exploring the winter landscapes of the Great Rivers & Routes region. **Aerie's Resort** in Grafton is offering an Eagle Overnight Package which includes:

- Two night stay and dinner for two with a beautiful view. Stay overnight at The Terrace and enjoy a three-course meal at the nearby Winery at Aeries Resort. The meal will feature a salad, entrée with choice of Fettuccine with pesto and veggies or Chicken Piccata. Dessert is a red velvet cake with cream cheese icing. Follow your stay with a guided eagle tour provided by Aerie's. Cost of this package is \$277 plus tax. Available Monday – Thursday.
- One night stay and dinner for two. Stay at The Terrace and enjoy a three course meal at The Winery at Aerie's Resort. Following check out take a guided eagle tour provided by Aerie's. Available Monday – Thursday.

**Best Western Premier** in Alton also offers an annual overnight eagle package with special pricing and eagle swag.

## TRAVEL TIP:

While in town, be sure to visit the locally owned and operated shops and restaurants.

# YOUR SCENIC DESTINATION ON THE RIVER!



## 2021 RIVERSIDE FLEA MARKET

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June 26 & 27	July 24 & 25
Aug 28 & 29	Sept 25 & 26
Oct 23 & 24	9 am - 5 pm

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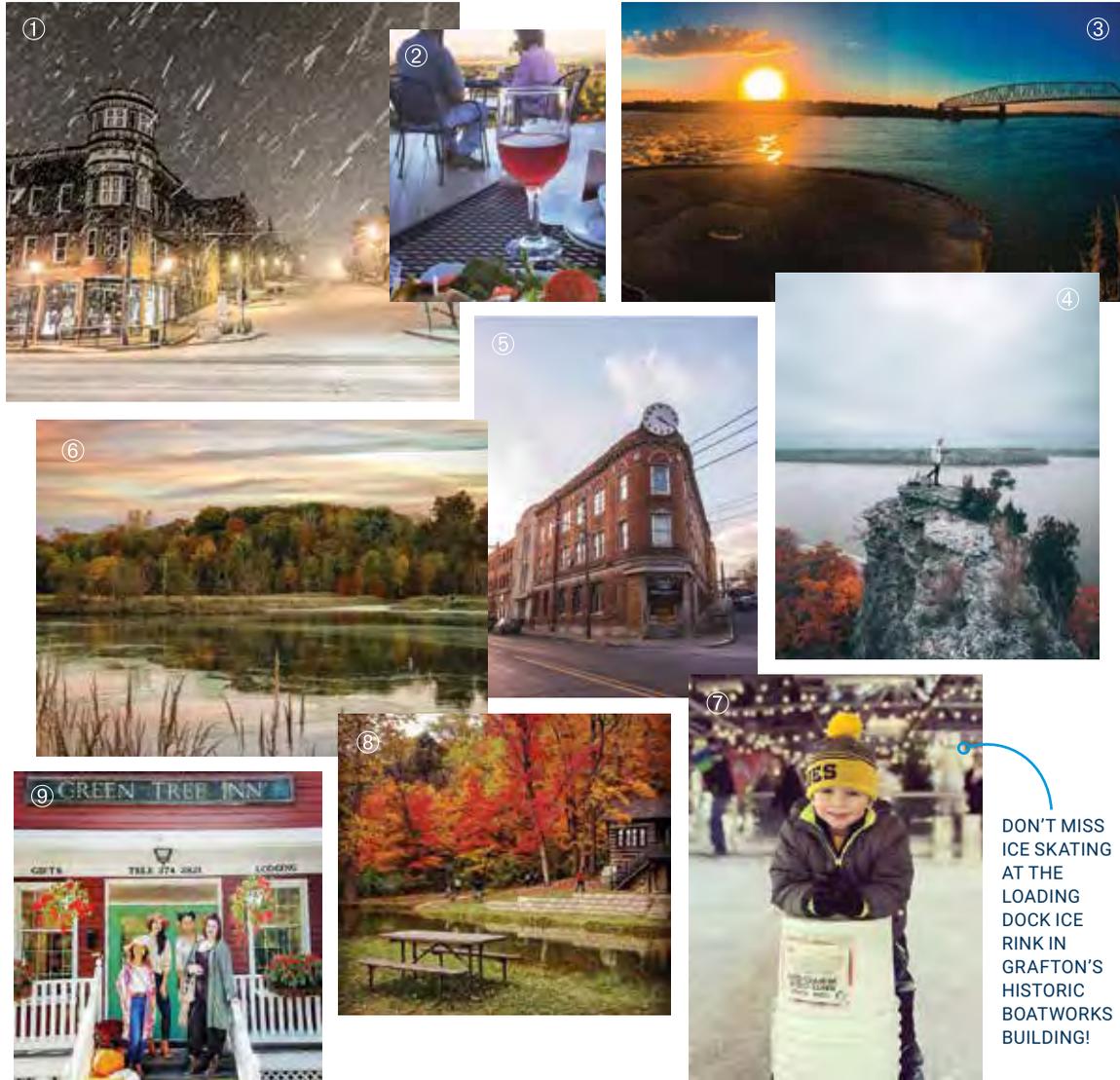
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CLOSING THOUGHTS...

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- 1. Snowy Third Street, Alton – Jason Brooks
- 2. Aerie's Resort, Grafton – Aeriell Tewell
- 3. Chain of Rocks Bridge, Mitchell – Amber Lowry
- 4. Mississippi River Views, Elsah – Austin Piwinski

- 5. Wedge Bank, Alton – @amandahabian
- 6. Watershed Nature Center, Edwardsville – Kitty Lawrence
- 7. The Loading Dock Ice Rink, Grafton - @awood8503
- 8. Pere Marquette State Park, Grafton - @apronwonders
- 9. Green Tree Inn, Elsah - @soullesswon\_33

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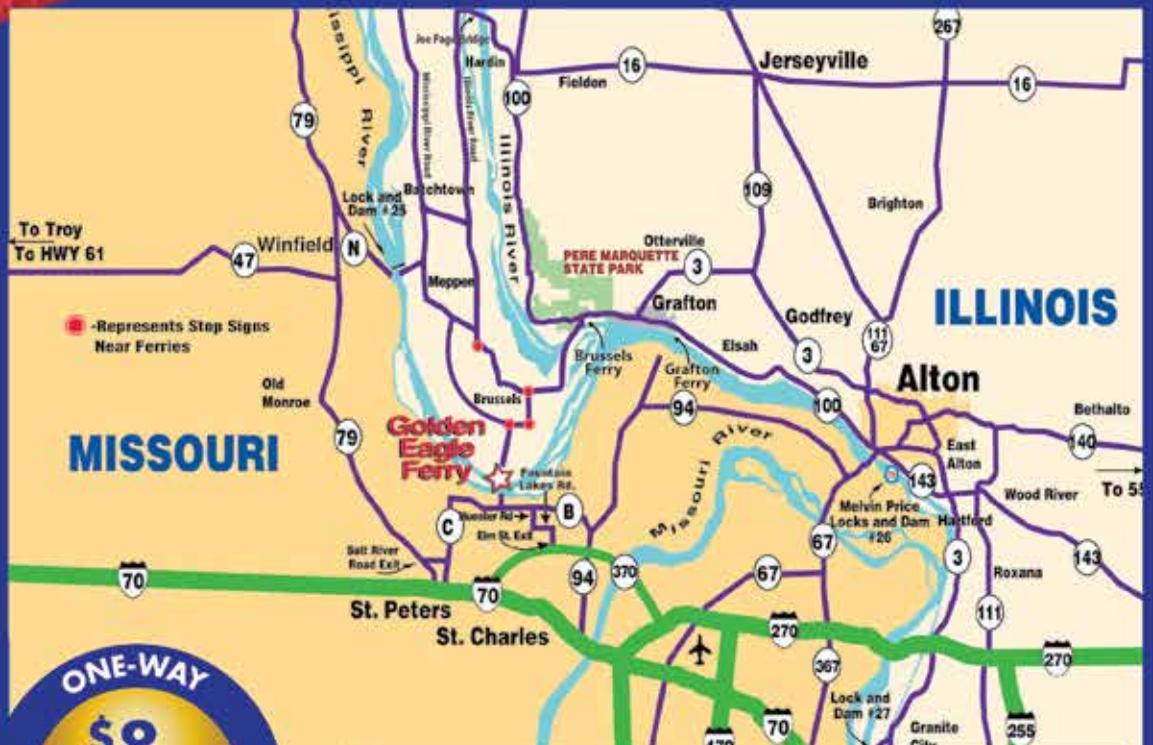
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