






enjoy illinois			
EXPEDITION <i>Guide</i>			
2025			

ON THE NORTHWEST SIDE OF ILLINOIS IS A PLACE WITH ITS OWN STATE OF MIND. A LAND OF NATURAL BEAUTY, WIDE OPEN SPACES, AND QUAIN TOWNS. A PLACE IN TUNE WITH OUR NEED TO RECONNECT WITH NATURE, WHILE REMINDING US OF THE IMPORTANCE OF STAYING IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER. WELCOME TO THE LAND OF BALANCE.



VISITCARROLLCOUNTYIL.COM

CAMPING • FISHING • HIKING • SCENIC DRIVES

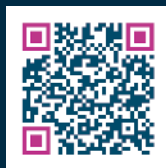


VISIT

LEE
COUNTY
ILLINOIS

For all of the best places to shop, play and get away for the day.
visitleecountyil.com

Discover
Dixon



SCAN
FOR ALL
THE INFO!

Something
here for
everyone.

discoverdixon.com • [@discoverdixon](https://twitter.com/discoverdixon)

JAM-PACKED
EVENT CALENDAR

TRENDY SHOPS &
AMAZING EATS

RONALD REAGAN
& LOCAL HISTORY

BEAUTIFUL PARKS
& MORE!



 WHITE PINES STATE PARK



 DIXON THEATER





 WIERENGA'S HERITAGE CANYON

Lose Yourself

IN NORTHWEST ILLINOIS

Ever dreamed of getting gloriously lost? Welcome to Northwest Illinois, 2,700 square miles of “ooh, what’s that?” and “let’s go there!” From the Mississippi’s mighty swagger to I-39’s eastern embrace, we’re a treasure map disguised as a region.

Imagine Bald Eagles playing hide-and-seek over the Hennepin Canal, or your toes tapping to surprise melodies at a hidden music fest. Our quilt of quirky towns, secret trails, and mouthwatering local flavors begs to be unraveled one delightful thread at a time.

Fancy a chat with history in a centuries-old barn? Or perhaps you’d rather whisper to the wildflowers in an undiscovered meadow? Here, every detour is a doorway to adventure.

Snuggle into a storybook cabin, wake up to farm-fresh eggs in a chatty B&B, or dream big in our inviting hotels. However you recharge, we’ve got your cozy covered.

So pack your curiosity (and maybe a compass – or don’t, where’s the fun in that?). In Northwest Illinois, the best memories are made when you’re just a little bit lost. Come find yourself in the wonderfully unexpected. After all, we’re the far-from-ordinary, near-enough getaway you never knew you needed.

Matthew Lenox
Executive Director

CONTACT

(800) 678-2108
visitnorthwestillinois.com
matthew@vnwil.com



The Splendor OF GETTING SIDETRACKED

Outdoor Adventure	6
History & Heritage	14
Culinary Adventures	22
County Map	28
Shopping	30
Carroll County	34
Lee County	36
Ogle County	38
Whiteside County	40
Lodging	42
Events	50

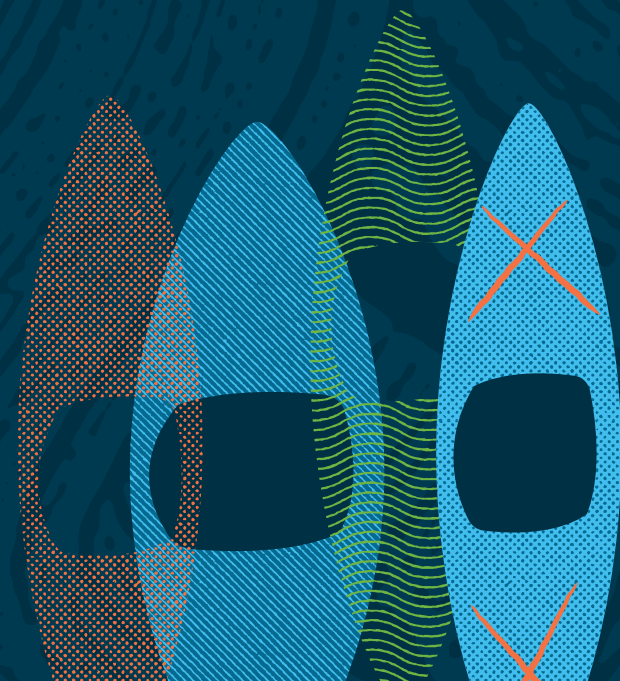
 COVER PHOTO: BLACK HAWK STATUE BY LORADO TAFT



An Uncharted

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Welcome to a Midwest gem offering tranquil landscapes and adventurous activities. We're a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, featuring highlights that include the Great River Road, Mississippi Palisades State Park, Franklin Creek State Natural Area, Byron Forest Preserve, and Castle Rock State Park. Adrenaline seekers can enjoy water sports, rock climbing, and skydiving with those who've jumped with more first-timers than any other in the Midwest. In the winter we offer cross-country skiing, miles of snowmobile trails, and some of the best bald eagle watching in the state.



Discover

UNTAMED BEAUTY IN NORTHWEST ILLINOIS

Come discover a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts with something for nature lovers, adventurers, and recreation seekers. Explore lush pathways, discover different species, and reconnect with nature in a wide variety of state parks, preserves, and forests. The Great River Road follows the mighty Mississippi along Illinois' western border and winds through our Carroll and Whiteside counties. As a visitor, you'll be enchanted by its meandering path along the river, offering a perfect blend of nature's beauty and recreational adventure. Rent a canoe and spend an hour or two on the Mississippi where Lewis and Clark began their famed expedition. You'll experience towering bluffs, rolling hills, river communities, farmlands, and sweeping views. Along the way, you might just discover that there's more to the road than just the river.

Here, you'll find a remarkable resurgence of prairies with two excellent preserves. Nachusa Grasslands in Franklin Grove holds immense importance and boasts a unique blend of prairie, wetlands, and savannas, teeming with diverse plants, birds, reptiles, insects, mammals, and fascinating geological wonders. It's even home to the largest population of American bison east of the Mississippi.

Just northwest of Franklin Grove, you can explore the natural splendors of Franklin Creek State Natural Area and enjoy its meandering creek, several natural springs, hardwood forests, and captivating bedrock outcroppings that enhance this 882-acre park. The mill spring in this pristine ecosystem powers a historic 1847 grist mill which is Lee County's largest and is also home to the education center for the State Natural Area. While here you can also uncover a diversified haven of flora and fauna within the 198-acre nature preserve.

In the middle of Savanna lies the beautiful Mississippi Palisades State Park, a secret gem for nature lovers and people who enjoy being outside. This haven has over 2,500 acres of incredible scenery, with rough cliffs, lush forests, and winding trails that offer a wide range of experiences for both proficient hikers and those who just want to take a walk. For those who want a challenge, The Sentinel Trail provides a rough adventure that lasts about 3 miles and takes hikers through tall rock formations, rewarding them with stunning views of the Mississippi River.



 GRIST MILL, FRANKLIN CREEK STATE NATURAL AREA



Embrace Our

COMMUNITY PARKS FOR WELLNESS & REJUVENATION

Imagine a peaceful morning stroll, family picnic, or sporting activity within a tranquil landscape. Our parks are a haven for the mind, body, and soul.

Centennial Park in Rock Falls offers playgrounds, shelters, baseball diamonds, a lake, fishing, paddle boat rentals, and access to the Hennepin Canal walking trail. This lovely park also hosts the annual Holiday Light Display drive every Christmas season from Thanksgiving near the end of December.

On the northern outskirts of Dixon lies one of the largest community parks in our region. Lowell Park sits on 200 acres along the Rock River and includes the Ruth Edwards Nature

Center, handicap-accessible boat launches with river access, fishing, hiking, a nature preserve, a 9-hole disc golf course, and playgrounds. Lowell Forest is a designated Illinois Nature Preserve, and the park is on the National Register of Historic Places. Until you have taken a stroll through this natural wonderland, you won't fully appreciate this wonderful gift presented to the City of Dixon in 1907 by the daughter of fallen Civil War General Charles Russell Lowell. It has endured the test of time as a spot where people may unwind and enjoy recreation to the fullest.

BYRON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

The Byron Forest Preserve District is sprawled among the rolling hills along the Rock River near the town of Byron. This serene expanse, spanning thousands of acres, invites you to explore nature's beauty year-round. Roam scenic trails across prairies and woodlands, unwind at picnic shelters, indulge in playground fun, or ride horseback. Golf enthusiasts can tee off at the beautiful golf course, while stargazers find solace at the Weiskopf Observatory after sundown.

Learn more at byronforestpreserve.com.



NEIGHBOR Notes

DEE HUDSON

Although not originally from the area, Dee quickly fell in love with Northwest Illinois, particularly central Lee County. It was there that she could best pursue her passion for nature. As a photographer documenting prairie landscapes, she discovered Nachusa Grasslands near Franklin Grove—a nature preserve encompassing over 4,100 acres of restored prairie, woodlands, and wetlands. More than 245 bird species breed, live, or migrate through Nachusa, which is also home to over 700 plant species, the endangered Blanding’s turtle, and a herd of bison. A stunning place, Nachusa allows visitors to experience what the Prairie State looked like hundreds of years ago. Many don’t know that prairies are one of the most threatened places in the world,” said Dee. “Whether it’s from farming or urban sprawl, there are very few places like this left and they need to be protected. It’s funny, I came here to take pictures and I ended up taking a job.” As the Grassland’s Administrative Assistant, Dee is heavily involved with many aspects of the preserve. But she is most proud of spreading the word about Nachusa and getting more people, especially children to experience it.



Picks & Tips

Whether you’re into the outdoors or not, Dee highly recommends visiting Nachusa. After being purchased and then protected by the Nature Conservancy in 1986, the area continues to

surprise and delight visitors through the sheer wonder of nature.

“I’ve been working here for 12 years, and in that relatively short period, I’ve experienced some wonderful nature moments. I was here the night the first bison arrived—a herd reintroduced to the preserve that now roams freely over 1,500 acres. I’ve had opportunities to see rare prairie birds like the grasshopper sparrow, bobolink, and dickcissel. As wetland areas were restored, I saw rare and endangered whooping cranes stop to use them during migration. Every week, there’s a new and surprising natural treat to enjoy. It’s amazing.”





Paddle Into

THE HEART OF NORTHWEST ILLINOIS

Here, the draw of water adventures beckons. Picture yourself gliding over tranquil waterways while surrounded by the symphony of nature. It doesn't matter if you're paddling a canoe through our calm currents, floating downriver on a tube, or mastering the agility of a kayak, our waterways allow you to enjoy the peace of nature at your own pace.

Our region's three major waterways are the Mississippi, Rock, and Hennepin Canal. Aside from the big three, other smaller rivers, creeks, and lakes can be found within our four counties. A voyage down the Wakarusa River (or creek, as some call it) in Mount Carroll will give any paddler a run for their money with the rapids created when the river is at an average or higher depth.

CANOEING & KAYAKING THROUGH WINDING WATERWAYS

For those with an adventurous spirit, canoeing and kayaking open a new world where the water is a highway to exploration. Here, paddlers enjoy the calming sound of rippling currents while gliding through lush greenery and seeing wildlife darting along the banks. Every stroke tells a story of discovery, making it more than just a physical trip, but an immersive sensory experience.

TUBING BRINGS LAZY RIVER BLISS

For those seeking a more leisurely aquatic escapade, tubing offers the perfect blend of relaxation and gentle adventure. Visitors recline on their inflatable tubes, letting the river carry them along, soaking in the sun's warmth and the refreshing embrace of the water. It's a carefree journey, where time slows down, and laughter floats amidst the gentle currents.

OUR OUTFITTERS ARE HERE TO HELP YOU GET ON THE WATER

Visitors are welcome to bring their own equipment, but if that's not possible, we have a number of outfitters who can provide you with almost anything you need.

The White Pelican, located in Oregon, is an outfitter that caters to all paddlers. Reservations are needed at least 1-2 hours in advance and can be done online. They offer self-guided trips down the scenic Rock River with your choice of watercraft. The Rock River is an easy-to-navigate, gentle river for people of all ages. Day and overnight trips are available. Rentals include individual or 2-person tubes, single and 2-person kayaks, 17' canoes, and stand-up paddleboards.

Rock Falls Kayak Rentals opened in 2023 and is located at the Hennepin Canal Route 40 boat launch. This outfitter has partnered with Rent Fun for self-service kayak rentals. Paddles and lifejackets are included. Once you are all set, it's a short walk to the Hennepin Canal for a day of smooth paddling. The water is calm and it's easy to turn around and travel back.



JARRETT PRAIRIE CENTER NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

- Interactive exhibits
- Observation deck
- Learning opportunities
- **FREE Admission**

815-234-8535 | 7993 North River Road | Byron, Illinois
www.byronforestpreserve.com

Est.  1992

PRAIRIEVIEW

-golf club-

(815) 234-4653 BYRON, IL prairieviewgolf.com

Sculpted
 On an
 Ancient Prairie



(815) 234-3473 BYRON, IL prairiefiregolf.com

Grip it. Rip it. Trace it!

POWERED BY
TOPTRACER RANGE.



NEIGHBOR Notes



PAUL GIERHART

Paul was born in Sterling but has lived in Rock Falls for over 30 years now. In addition to his work as an Advertising Manager at a manufacturing plant in Dixon, Paul took a job as a photographer for minor league baseball in 2006. It was also around this time that he became interested in photographing birds. Most people wouldn't think it, but Northwest Illinois has an amazing variety of birds due to the diverse landscape, multiple rivers, and its location as a flyover spot for many migrating birds. Here, it's not uncommon to spot herons, egrets, orioles, warblers, white pelicans, a number of species of ducks, and even bald eagles. "The rock outcroppings along the Rock River are perfect for hawks and bald eagles because they provide a great vantage point for their prey," said Paul. "Winter is especially a great time to see the eagles because the dam prevents the water from freezing so the eagles can still catch fish."

Picks & Tips

One of Paul's favorite places to bird watch is at the Oppold Marina in Sterling on Stouffer Road.

He also recommends the Rock Falls Wildlife Area and the Rock River Birding Trails. Paul also suggests downloading a bird app that plays bird songs as well. "Birds are very curious and if they hear another bird nearby, they'll want to come check it out," offered Paul. "Many of these apps also have pictures to help you identify a species and some can even identify the birds you see just by uploading a photo. It's great way to learn and have fun at the same time."





Adventures

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

FOR THE MORE ADVENTUROUS

Embark on a journey where adrenaline dances with excitement and heart-pounding adventures offer an electrifying cocktail of thrill, courage, and unforgettable experiences.

LET'S JUMP OUT OF A PERFECTLY GOOD AIRPLANE

Experiencing the thrill of skydiving is on many a bucket list. If you're ready to add it to yours, there's no better place to do it than at Chicagoland Skydiving Center in Rochelle. Not only are their instructors among the finest in Illinois, they've helped more first-timers than any other center in the Midwest. The purpose-built 20,000-square-foot facility includes a hangar with a padded packing floor, team/bunk rooms, classrooms, the Rock Sky Market gear store, a rigging loft, laundry facilities, and private shower rooms. This venue also provides an RV park, a camping area, three landing areas, a sand volleyball court, a bonfire pit, and a full-service on-site restaurant and bar.

REACH NEW HEIGHTS, ROCK CLIMB THE MISSISSIPPI PALISADES

Rock climbing is a mix of strategy, strength, and courage. Mississippi Palisades in Savanna boasts an array of cliffs and rock faces that beckon adventurers to test their limits. Here, climbers feel the rush as each new grip and foothold leads to stunning peak vistas, both physically and spiritually rewarding. Climbing opportunities are offered in the Sentinel Area, Twin Sisters, and Indian Head. Climbers must bring their own equipment and go directly to the bluff. No check-ins are necessary but permanent anchors are not allowed. Also, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources does not maintain the park's rocks, cliffs, or other natural features and is not responsible for climber safety and climbing protection on cliffs.



A Journey



THROUGH TIMELESS HERITAGE

Here, stories of yesteryear echo through rolling landscapes and towns steeped in history. Our Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties stand together as guardians of a collective past, inviting you to explore their intertwined heritage showcased on historic pathways like the Lincoln Highway and the storied Old Galena Trail & Coach Road. Museums also play a vital role in preserving our heritage. The Reagan-inspired Northwest Territory Historic Center is a truly remarkable landmark. The Byron Heritage Farm Museum is a fantastic place to explore and learn about our rich agricultural heritage and rural life. Throughout the year, various events such as the Fulton Dutch Days Festival proudly highlight our region's one-of-a-kind heritage.

Events

THAT DEFINE OUR PAST & CULTURE

History whispers through our communities' streets and echoes in the vibrant events celebrating our rich heritage. From captivating reenactments to cultural festivals steeped in tradition, every cultural event becomes a living chapter in the captivating narrative of our history.

Prepare for a lively fusion of traditions and entertainment embodying these sister cities' hearts and souls. From the moment Fiesta Days kicks off, the streets burst with colors, echoing the region's vibrant spirit. Every September, Sterling and Rock Falls come alive with the beating rhythm of Fiesta Days. This jubilant celebration, spanning both towns, unites communities in a whirlwind of music, culture, and a colorful parade.

Experience a slice of the Netherlands in downtown Fulton. Every May, the Dutch Days Festival paints this charming town with every aspect of its heritage. Prepare to be immersed in Dutch culture from the moment you arrive. Discover the town adorned with wooden shoes and tulips and the iconic Dutch windmill standing tall as its beacon of heritage. The annual scrubbing of the streets during the parade alone makes it a perfect day.



DIXON'S ORIGINAL COMMUNITY CENTER

Rental rooms for almost every occasion.

History Museum (FREE admission)

Ample parking & handicapped accessible.

BOOK YOUR EVENT
815-284-2741



513 West 2nd St. · Dixon, IL
lovelandcommunityhouse.org

Loveland Community House



DUTCH DAYS, FULTON



WHITE PINES RANCH

A Dnde Ranch for The Kid In All Of Us!

- Summer Camp
- Outdoor Education
- Weekend Retreats for Scouts, Youth Groups and Families
- Horseback Riding

Family Owned & Operated Since 1958

www.WhitePinesRanch.com
3581 W. Pines Rd., Oregon, IL 61061
815.732.7923 * Fax: 815.732.7924



Welcome

TO A TIME TRAVELER'S HAVEN

Museums are like time machines, letting us explore our rich history. Enter these hallowed halls and journey through time, where every object tells a story and represents our legacy. Living history museums transport visitors to the past and allow us to touch, taste, and feel history through dedicated reenactors. A day spent exploring these information vaults provides a glimpse into history and a chance to untangle the links that bind us all, deepening our respect for our roots and the rich tapestry of human experiences.

Immerse yourself in diverse exhibits at the Northwest Territory Historic Center in Dixon and examine topics such as Native American history, early American farming, bison, and more. Discover the past in unique rooms dedicated to Presidents Lincoln and Reagan, a restored school gym, and an auditorium. Don't miss the toothpick exhibits, Veterans History Project, and the museum theater.

Step back to 1843 at Byron Heritage Farm Museum in Byron. Here, the whole family gets to experience farm life as the original owner Charlie Wilbur did. Take self-guided tours, delve into maple syrup and honey production, and churn your own butter. A journey into the heart of early country living awaits.

All aboard at Rochelle Railroad Park in Rochelle located at the junction of two major railroads. This unique covered open deck platform is open 24/7. Witness the spectacle of up to 80 trains daily at this prime spot. Explore the gift shop, relish a picnic in scenic areas, and explore railroad history. The park is an unforgettable experience for train enthusiasts.





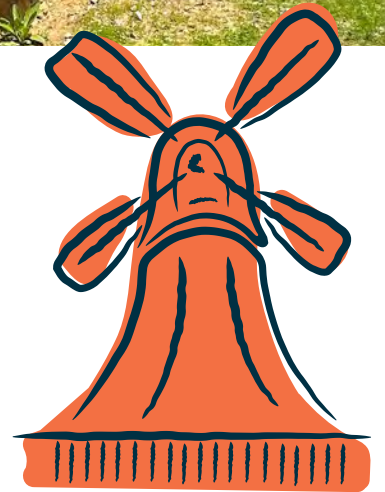
Step into a living history book at Wierenga's Heritage Canyon. Located in Fulton, this 12-acre site offers a mesmerizing journey through time. Wander along paths adorned with 1800s-style homes, businesses, and a beautiful white-steeped church. Seasonally, the essence of pioneer life is witnessed with reenactments demonstrating the craftsmanship of the past. Explore the Canyon—where the past whispers through the wind.

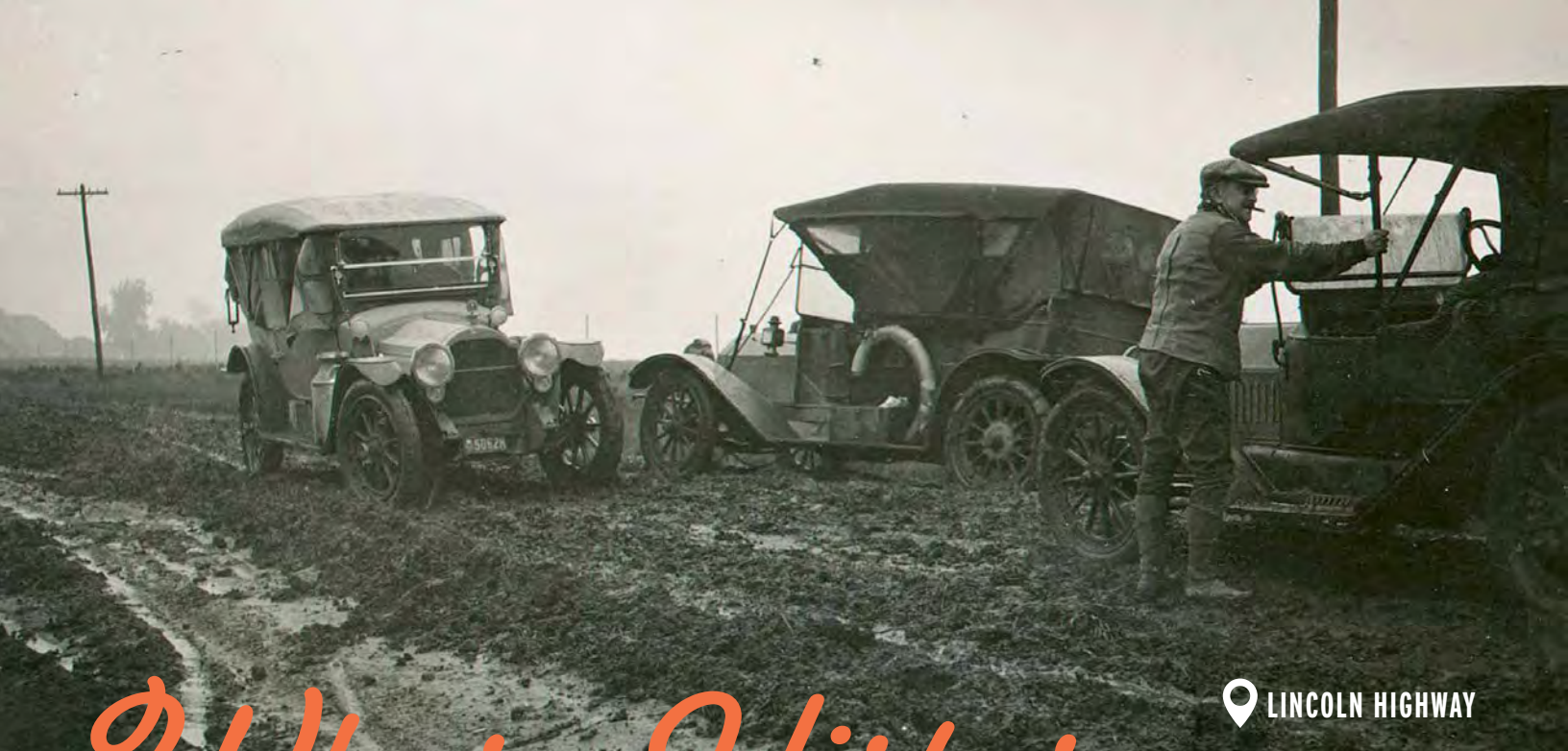
Also in Fulton is the iconic Windmill Cultural Center and the majestic De Immigrant Windmill. Picture-perfect and steeped in history, these landmarks embody the heart of this charming town. The Windmill Cultural Center is a testament to the area's rich Dutch heritage, offering a delightful journey into the past. Directly across the street and standing proudly on the Mississippi River is the De Immigrant Windmill—a towering 100-foot-tall structure that proudly watches over the landscape, whispering tales of the pioneering spirit that built this community.



Climb its steps, feel the breeze, and witness the inner workings of this engineering marvel. From its lofty heights, soak in panoramic views that stretch far and wide, inviting you to embrace the beauty and history of Fulton.

Unlock the elegance of the past at the Dillon Home in Sterling. This 1858 Italianate architecture-style home is filled with original treasures virtually untouched by time. It is a treasure trove of history and architectural splendor. Delve into the opulence of a bygone era as you stroll through its ornate rooms adorned with period furnishings and timeless charm. Experience the grandeur of Sterling's history by stepping back in time and immersing yourself in the refined allure of Victorian living.





 LINCOLN HIGHWAY

Where History

MEETS THE ROADS

As a visitor entering the heart of Northwest Illinois, prepare to be swept away on a journey through time along two iconic roadways: the famed Lincoln Highway and the storied Old Galena Trail & Coach Road. These historic routes aren't as much a means to get from point A to Point B as they are gateways to the past, inviting you to traverse the landscapes and stories that have shaped our rich heritage. The Lincoln Highway, America's first paved transcontinental highway, beckons with whispers of pioneering spirit and progress. At the same time, the Old Galena Trail & Coach Road, which once echoed with the footsteps of miners and traders, reveals tales of early exploration and commerce.

THE HISTORIC MARVELS OF LINCOLN HIGHWAY

The Lincoln Highway, a renowned road that embodies more than a hundred years of American history and exploration, is situated amid our scenic landscapes. Established in 1913, this historic road marks the first transcontinental thoroughfare for automobiles, stretching an impressive 179 miles across Northern Illinois. Set out on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure along this historic route in our region dotted with cultural treasures and natural marvels.

At the western edge of our region's expanse of the Lincoln Highway lies the town of Fulton. Discover the towering Dutch windmill, a 100-foot-tall testament to the road's history, housing invaluable tales of the pioneering era. Immerse yourself in the rich Dutch heritage that infuses this quaint town, inviting you to delve deeper into its cultural essence.

In the middle of the route, you'll experience a slice of American history at Ronald Reagan's Boyhood Home and Visitors Center in Dixon. See the loose brick in the fireplace's hearth where the future president used to hide tiny treasures as a boy. Just a few blocks away is the Northwest Territory Historic Center. This former school now contains a museum store, art gallery, and historical exhibits.

Just east of Dixon in Franklin Grove, you can visit the official headquarters of the Lincoln Highway Association and uncover the fascinating inception, rich narrative, and evolution of this historic route.

Lowden State Park sits on the eastern side of our stretch of the Lincoln Highway and is home to the awe-inspiring "Eternal Indian" Black Hawk statue. Marvel at this colossal 48-foot sculpture set against panoramic views. It's a breathtaking fusion of artistry and natural splendor that promises an unforgettable experience.



IMAGINE THE LIVES OF ALL WHO TRAVELED THE OLD GALENA TRAIL & COACH ROAD

The Galena Trail & Coach Road is a scenic motor trail extending from Peoria to Galena following state, county, and unpaved township roads. The Trail features cultural, scenic, historical, and conservation points of interest over a course that winds through Carroll, Lee, and Ogle counties. Embark on a journey that unravels the very fabric of history that bears witness to the resolute journeys of thousands between 1825 and 1855. This trail, once a conduit for aspirations of agricultural and mineral wealth in Illinois, now stands as a testament to a bygone era, welcoming modern adventurers seeking a glimpse into the past.



In the 19th century, this trail was more than just a passage and bore the weight of dreams carried by immigrants from various corners of the country. Each twist and turn along this historic route whispers tales of untold hardships and unbridled determination. Marked with directional signs, you can trace the historic alignments of the 1825 Galena Trail and its successor, the 1833 Peoria-Galena Coach Road, the first state road in northern Illinois. Both alignments followed ancient Native American trails and were used by early American miners to link the Lead Mine Region of Illinois and Wisconsin with Peoria and southern Illinois.

The Old Galena Trail & Coach Road witnessed the convergence of diverse cultures, shaping the landscape of early settlements from Dixon to Lanark and many small points in between. Yet, with the promise of opportunity came the stark realities of danger. Life along the trail was fraught with peril. Disease, accidents, and occasional confrontations punctuated the journey, casting shadows on the dreams of many. Disease, in particular, claimed lives in heartbreaking numbers, a stark reminder of the fragility of life in that era.

JOHN DEERE HISTORIC SITE

The largest influence on agriculture in the Midwest is on display at the John Deere Historic Site, located approximately 6 miles north of Dixon in Grand Detour. The site includes John Deere's home, built in 1836, a working blacksmith shop, an interactive museum set above the excavated ground where his original blacksmith shop stood, and a gift shop. John Deere hailed from Rutland, Vermont, and was a thriving blacksmith. He traveled to this idyllic location between the Rock River's east and west banks with fellow Vermonters in 1836 because of the collapse of the New England economy. He soon became aware of the inefficiency of cast-iron plows in the area's rich, sticky soil. Deere created a highly polished steel plow crafted from a broken saw blade; from there, the plow business was born. The site is open from April through October and has no admission fee.

8334 S Clinton St, Dixon, IL 61021



 JOHN DEERE HISTORIC SITE



The place where agricultural history was made...

Is here:

THE JOHN DEERE HISTORIC SITE

Stand in the spot where John Deere created the first commercially successful steel plow and relive the experience of his original blacksmith shop. Discover where John Deere history began – and changed the world of agriculture forever.

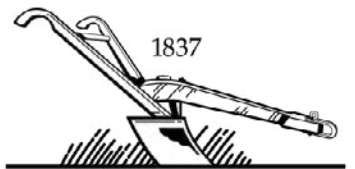


Download the Visit John Deere mobile guide to enhance your experience.

OPEN SEASONALLY:
APRIL – OCTOBER

FREE ADMISSION

Sunday: 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Wednesday – Saturday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.



JOHN DEERE HISTORIC SITE

Grand Detour, Illinois

VisitJohnDeere.com

(815) 652-4551 | 8334 S. Clinton St. | Grand Detour (Dixon), IL 61021

NEIGHBOR Notes

TOM WADSWORTH

Tom was born and raised in Dixon and still lives here to this day. He is a speaker, writer, and consultant whose background includes 10 years in pulpit ministry, 10 years in radio broadcasting, and 30 years in writing, including 20 years as a magazine editor. Although he has many interests, one of his greatest passions is local history. From early Native American populations and settlers traveling west to Civil War Generals and American Presidents, Northwest Illinois' historical significance is as intriguing as its natural beauty. "When people think of this region, being the birthplace of Ronald Reagan is what most people are aware of," says Tom. "But a lot of people don't know that our 12th President, Zachary Taylor, spent some time here as well as the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis. Abraham Lincoln also spent time here during the Blackhawk War. In fact, Dixon is home to the only statue of Lincoln in military uniform."



Picks & Tips

Tom enjoys many places in Northwest Illinois, but Lowell Park is one of his favorites. Nestled along the Rock River in Dixon, Lowell Park is a 200-acre woodland area with beautiful scenic drives, hiking trails, a dedicated natural area, picnic shelters, a nature center, playgrounds, boat access, and great fishing spots. "This park has something for everyone," mentioned Tom. "The other interesting thing about Lowell Park is that Ronald Reagan spent his summers here as a lifeguard and actually saved 77 swimmers from drowning. During his time as President he would often share a photo of the Rock River to visitors of the Oval Office and tell them how much he enjoyed his time as a lifeguard there."





Fabulous Food

FROM FANTASTIC FAMILIES

Northwest Illinois is home to an incredible variety of restaurants. And the one thing that makes this area so special is how many are family-owned. We're excited to highlight the noteworthy culinary and entertaining experiences at Basil Tree Ristorante, Blackhawk Steak Pit, and Poopy's Pub & Grub. These unique places have won over locals' and visitor's hearts and taste buds, providing one-of-a-kind memories that highlight the region's delicious flavors and welcoming atmosphere.



BASIL TREE RISTORANTE

BASIL TREE RISTORANTE

Family owned and operated, Basil Tree Ristorante in Dixon has been satisfying guests with a special blend of old-world Italian charm and a modern touch since January of 2009. Whether it's classic Italian dishes, steaks, seafood, or their signature Basil Tree chicken or veal, their goal is to serve the absolute freshest food to everyone. Basil Tree is the perfect destination for a night out, whether that be an intimate dinner for two or a large group celebration.

BLACKHAWK STEAK PIT

Blackhawk Steak Pit in Oregon has been satisfying guests with incredible meals since 1978. Near the Rock River and the famed statue of Blackhawk on the hillside just across the way, an evening here is an experience for all the senses. Blackhawk Steak Pit specializes in high quality steaks that are hand cut daily and grilled to order on their open charcoal grill. They also have amazing seafood, a wide selection of wine and beer, and a generously stocked salad bar.



POOPY'S PUB & GRUB

POOPY'S PUB & GRUB

Located in Savanna, Poopy's isn't just a tavern and restaurant, it's an experience. Although it's known as a hangout for bikers, people of all kinds are welcome for the food, friendship, and fun. From live music and events to merch, to an onsite tattoo and piercing shop, an afternoon or evening at Poopy's will surely be worth the trip... whether you show up on two wheels or four.

KRUMPETS RESTAURANT & BAKERY

Krumpets Restaurant & Bakery in Fulton has been delighting locals and visitors alike with its handcrafted baked goods, hearty breakfasts, and flavorful lunch options for over 15 years. Whether stopping in for a leisurely meal, grabbing a pastry to-go, or enjoying the cozy charm of the space, Krumpets is a must-visit for anyone exploring the area.

Alehouse • Whiskey Bar • Wine Bar • Martini Bar



THE RUSTY FOX

1 E 3RD ST, STERLING, IL

815-RUS-T-FOX



- ✓ 125+ CRAFT BEERS
- ✓ 450+ WINES
- ✓ 800+ WHISKIES
- ✓ COLD BEER TO GO
- ✓ CARRY OUT LIQUOR
- ✓ LIVE MUSIC, COMEDY, OPEN MICS



VOTED TOP 10 PUBS IN ILLINOIS! WORTH THE DRIVE!

Whiskey Store • Craft Beer Store • Wine Shoppe

FUN WITHIN RANGE

Just a short drive south of Rockford, **PrairieFire Golf & Grill** in Byron offers an exciting way to experience golf. Set behind the clubhouse at PrairieView Golf Club, PrairieFire is a year-round driving range facility featuring Toptracer Range® technology—the same ball tracing technology seen on many PGA tournament TV broadcasts. “Golfers can play and compete year-round, day or night. PrairieFire is also a great place to be introduced to the game because of the entertainment value,” said Scott deOliveira, General Manager of PrairieView and PrairieFire.

Golf at PrairieFire combines live golf shots on the driving range with a variety of Toptracer® virtual games, which are entertaining for people of all ages and abilities.

The eight outdoor hitting bays have heaters, a fire table, TVs, and lounge furniture. The interior of PrairieFire has a modern, earthy feel with a custom-made coppertop bar and additional lounge areas. “PrairieFire is a great place for everything from a date night to small gatherings of family and friends,” said deOliveira. “We also see a lot of birthday parties and small company events at PrairieFire.”

PrairieFire has become well known for its food and drink selections as well. The menu includes sharable items such as sliders, traditional apps, and signature items such as loaded PrairieFire fires and Bison Bites. The bar features an extensive selection of beer, wine, and spirits. “When coming to play with friends and family, we felt the food and drinks should complement the activity and atmosphere,” said deOliveira.

To learn more about PrairieFire or reserve a bay online, visit prairiefiregolf.com.





Don't
Let the
Pigeon
Drive
the
Bus!



words and pictures by no willems

May 6th-10th



May 30th-June 15th



June 20th-July 6th



July 11th-27th



August 1st-17th



August 22nd-31st

EDUCATION PROGRAMMING | CONCERTS | COMMUNITY EVENTS | FAMILY FUN

8215 BLACK OAK ROAD MOUNT CARROLL, ILLINOIS (815) 244 - 2035 TIMBERLAKEPLAYHOUSE.ORG

This is the Moment!



Selmi's

For the seasons of your life

1206 Dixon Avenue, Rock Falls
815-626-3830

Selmi.com

SELMI'S GREENHOUSE & FAMILY FARM

Selmi's Greenhouse and Family Farm is a fourth-generation family-owned business with deep roots in the Sauk Valley and NW Illinois areas. Starting in the 1930s, Selmi's has grown and diversified over the decades. While the business initially focused on selling produce wholesale, it eventually expanded into greenhouses, agritourism, orchards, and more.

Throughout the year, Selmi's offers a wide variety of products and experiences. In the spring, the greenhouses bloom with daily offerings of homegrown flowers, plants, veggies, and hanging baskets. As summer approaches, the farm reopens, unveiling its famous Bi-Color Super Sweet Corn, tomatoes, and more. These seasonal changes always ensure something new and exciting to experience at Selmi's.

Selmi's truly shines in the fall season. Visitors can enjoy homegrown Fall flowers and 15 varieties of apples, including everyone's favorite, Honeycrisp. Apple cider donuts, pumpkins, decorative items, a corn maze, and other entertainment make it a must-stop every Fall. A significant development at Selmi's is the ongoing expansion of their apple orchard. Now visitors are able to enjoy a U-Pick experience at their 5,000-tree apple orchard. In 2025 they plan to have their own apple cider press up and running, allowing the public a bird's eye view into the cider-making process!



NEIGHBOR Notes

JENNIFER KOERTNER

Born and raised in Minnesota, Jen went on to join the army in the late 80s. While stationed in Germany, she fell in love with their breads and pastries, as well as the mom-and-pop-style bakeries they came out of. After finishing her tour of duty, she moved to Sycamore, where her mom was at the time, and worked in a few different industries, even starting a couple of businesses herself. Yet, in all that time, she couldn't seem to find the same quality of baked goods here as she did overseas. "Around 2013, I was running my own cleaning business, and a client just happened to give me a book on baking and some utensils for Christmas," recalls Jen. "I started playing around with various recipes, and things just clicked.

I began selling at farmer's markets and eventually opened my own place." Jen's Artisan Breads has two locations now. The one where she started in Mt. Morris has a cozy, laid-back vibe, while her newest in Oregon has more of a hip, gallery feel. Both are great places to enjoy some bread, baked goods, charcuterie, and other delicious specialties.



Picks & Tips

The four-county area that makes up Northwest Illinois is dotted with a wide variety of dining and drinking establishments, pleasing

all sorts of palates. Many of which, like Jen's, are embracing the farm-to-table ethos. Dishes and drinks made with local ingredients can be found all around the region. "We use cheeses, meats, and even honey from local suppliers," says Jen. "When you're here, also be sure to stop at one of our many farmer's markets or grab a libation at one of our local breweries or distilleries. You're sure to experience something you won't find anywhere else."



NAMED "BEST SMALL TOWN FOR ADVENTURE" BY USATODAY

3 YEARS
IN A ROW!

EAT

PLAY

SHOP

STAY



EXPLORESAVANNA.COM



SAVANNA, ILLINOIS



EXPLORE SAVANNA



REAL
RAILROAD ACTION

ROCHELLE RAILROAD PARK,
GIFT SHOP & MUSEUM
124 N. 9TH ST.
ROCHELLE, ILLINOIS

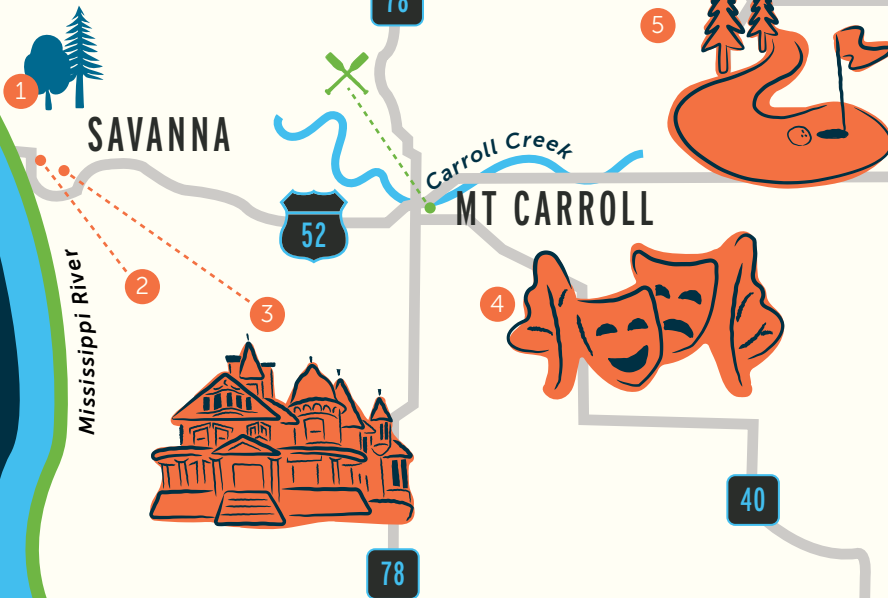
ROCHELLERAILROADPARK.ORG



EXPEDITION Map



Carroll



Whiteside



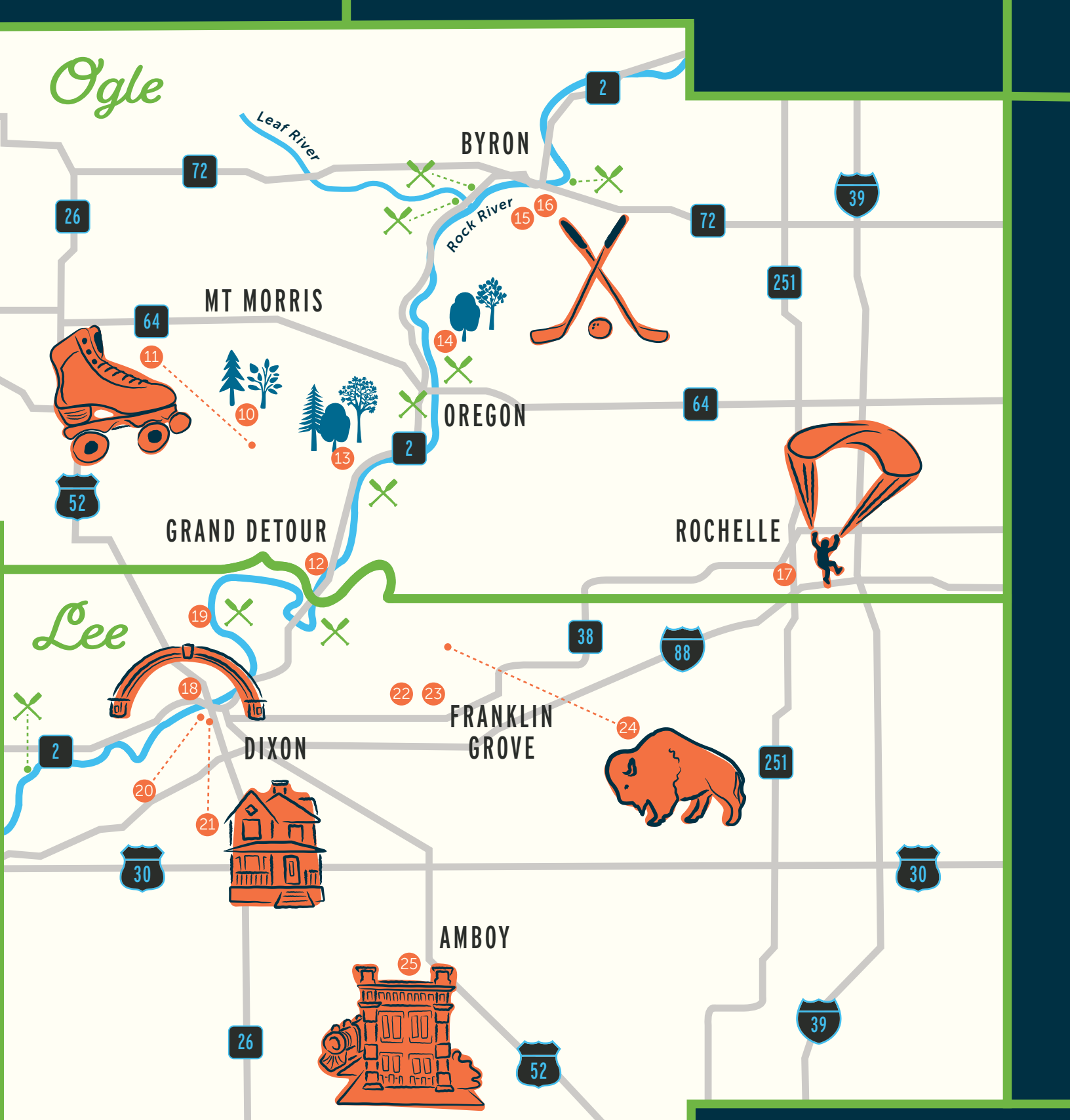
CARROLL COUNTY

- 1 Mississippi Palisades State Park
- 2 Savanna Museum & Cultural Center
- 3 Havencrest Castle
- 4 Timber Lake Playhouse
- 5 Trailside Mini Golf

WHITESIDE COUNTY

- 6 De Immigrant Windmill
- 7 Morrison Rockwood State Park
- 8 Dillon Home Museum
- 9 Midway Drive-In Theater

Kayak/Boat Launches



OGLE COUNTY

- 10 White Pines Forest State Park
- 11 The Rink at Pine Creek
- 12 John Deere Historic Site
- 13 Castle Rock State Park
- 14 Lowden State Park
- 15 Byron Forest Preserve & Jarrett Prairie Center
- 16 PrairieFire Golf & Grill
- 17 Chicago Skydiving Center

LEE COUNTY

- 18 Dixon Arch
- 19 Lowell Park
- 20 Northwest Territory Historic Museum
- 21 Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home
- 22 Franklin Creek Grist Mill
- 23 Franklin Creek State Natural Area
- 24 Nachusa Grasslands
- 25 Amboy Depot Museum



Boutiques to Antiques

LET THE HUNT BEGIN

We offer diverse shopping experiences where you can discover hand-crafted treasures from local artisans, explore art galleries highlighting our region's talent, and unearth historical gems in a wide variety of antique stores. Our shopkeepers embody genuine hospitality, ensuring a personal and memorable experience. We invite you to explore our rich tapestry of art, history, and culture through a shopping experience that embodies our soulful essence.

Galleries

MAKE QUITE THE ART SCENE

A vibrant art scene unfolds like a colorful tapestry at The Next Picture Show, a non-profit located in an historic 1854 building in downtown Dixon. Completely restored in 2004, the space still retains its beautiful wood floors, tin ceilings, and distinct architectural details. In the main gallery, artists from distant corners showcase their masterpieces, while the space also doubles as a hub for cultural gatherings, intimate concerts, and spirited art receptions on opening nights. The lower level provides more exhibition space for special showings, art classes, and workshops.

Be sure to visit The Loft on Main in Morrison. This cozy gallery, complete with original store shelving and fixtures, and a charming loft, is a regional arts destination providing a venue for local artists to create, promote, and sell original art and to foster art education through lessons and programs. Special events fill the year including Third Thursday Coffee and Treats, drop-in craft sessions for children and families, fundraisers, studio visits, and social events.

The Coliseum Museum of Art, Antiques & Americana (CMAAA) in charming Oregon is housed within the captivating walls

of a 1923 Art Deco building. After 18 months of careful restoration, the CMAAA reemerged in 2023, reclaiming its role as the epicenter of artistic and communal vitality with classes, long-term and short-term art shows, sales for artists working in all kinds of media, recitals, receptions, and much more. Beyond mere displays, the CMAAA pulsates with life, weaving together the threads of history, art, and community, ensuring that every visit celebrates creativity and a journey through the soulful narrative of Oregon's cultural heritage.

Discover a vibrant community of innovators and craftspeople at Woodlawn Arts Academy in Sterling. This cultural hub offers art classes, workshops and hosts performances. From preschoolers to seasoned artists, Woodlawn has tailored programs for all and strives to live by its motto, "Where the Arts are for everyone!!" Year-round daytime and evening instruction is offered in visual arts, music, dance, theatre, woodworking, and culinary arts, plus education programs encompassing its preschool program, STEM, and literary arts programming. As a non-profit, Woodlawn ensures that the beauty of the arts thrives, enriching the cultural tapestry of our region.



 THE LOFT ON MAIN

We Specialize

IN SPECIALTY SHOPPING

Forget bland malls and indulge in the allure of our many one-of-a-kind shops and hidden gems. Here, you'll find a treasure trove of unique stores that beckon with their distinct offerings. Boutiques showcase racks adorned with carefully selected garments, from chic dresses and versatile tops to jewelry with handcrafted pieces. Discover bookstores that are sanctuaries of literary exploration, from beloved classics to rare finds and contemporary bestsellers. For home enthusiasts, find handcrafted wood furniture, handmade signs, and captivating home decor.

Get ready to fall in love with Mud & Moo Boutique's finds. This delightful boutique in Rock Falls offers modern and stylish women's clothing, stunning purses, exquisite jewelry, the trendiest shoes, premium bath and body essentials, seductive scents, captivating candles, and darling baby things. Step inside this refuge of one-of-a-kind finds, including anything "moo-related," that promise to enrich your shopping experience.

Rack City Thrift Shoppe in Dixon is the perfect place to find lived and loved clothing and accessories. With

an everchanging array of merchandise, no two visits are the same. Come discover something special for yourself or a unique gift for a special someone.

In Mt. Carroll, The Fika Boutique offers visitors a wide variety of clothing, accessories, and specialty gift items that can't be found anywhere else. At The Fika Boutique, you never know what you might find, which is exactly why you should find your way here.



📍 ROCK CITY THRIFT SHOPPE



📍 STERLING THEATER

STERLING MAIN STREET

You really can find it all in Sterling. Great restaurants, shops, nightlife, murals, entertainment, and events are all within a short distance of each other.

But creating an inspired and inviting environment doesn't just happen by accident. As a member of the larger **Illinois Main Street** and **Main Street America** networks, the business owners and community leaders of Sterling have committed themselves to developing and maintaining a vibrant, attractive, and thriving downtown. A beautiful place where history meets modernity.

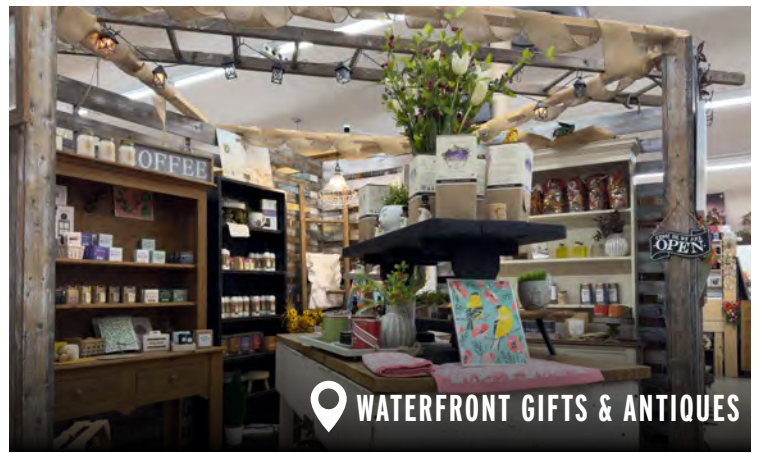
So come grab a coffee drink at **Air Play Espresso & Bakery**, find something unique at **The Shoppes at Grandon Plaza**, have a bite to eat at **3Twelve Burger Bar**, catch a show at **Starlight's Theater & Lounge**, or enjoy one of our many events that are held year-round.

There's something for everyone in Sterling. Explore. Experience. Enjoy.

Learn more at sterlingmainstreet.org



📍 SHOWPLACE ANTIQUES & TREASURES



📍 WATERFRONT GIFTS & ANTIQUES



📍 SWEET REVIVAL

Uncover

HISTORICAL TREASURES THROUGH ANTIQUING ADVENTURES

Northwest Illinois offers a fascinating journey through time for antique and history fans. Explore, collect, and discover timeless stories in picturesque cities and landscapes. Welcome to an antique paradise where every find has a story.

Set in a beautifully preserved Civil War-era church, Sweet Revival Antiques & Coffee Shop in Kings provides an incredible array of antiques, collectibles, vintage finds, and gifts. But Sweet Revival isn't just about the past. Here, you can also enjoy some of the finest coffee drinks and chocolates in the area.

Nestled in Dixon, there is a great place for antique hunters. At Waterfront Gifts & Antiques, a treasure trove of home decor, primitives, and reimagined relics awaits. Delight in the allure of retro and shabby chic finds alongside an

impressive array of vinyl records. With fresh additions each week and an offer to hunt down your sought-after items, this spot promises to elevate your collection.

Enjoy the vintage charm of Sterling at Showplace Antiques & Treasures. Located in the heart of downtown, this building boasts four floors brimming with an eclectic array of antiques. From rustic primitives to nostalgic kitchenware, captivating beer signs, and Christmas delights, every space has a different story to tell. Immerse yourself in the allure of handmade crafts from skilled vendors, making every visit a journey through time and creativity. Explore the past and find your next cherished piece in this titan of an antique store.



Carroll County

MT. CARROLL • SHANNON • LANARK • SAVANNA • MILLEDGEVILLE

Steep cliffs, dense woodlands, free-roaming wildlife, nesting eagles, wild turkeys, and numerous species of shorebirds and waterfowl combine to create a paradise for nature lovers and those who just wish to get away from it all.





A distinct feature of Carroll County is the Great River Trail, which provides miles of scenic biking and hiking opportunities. At the same time, just to its west, the Mississippi and its backwaters offer incredible places to boat or fish. The county is rich in native wildlife and plants, with nearly 3,000 types of plants and 600 species of vertebrates. In addition, dozens of species of birds pass through the area during spring and fall migrations. The wildlife you'll find here depends on the season and where you visit, but here is a short list of what you might encounter: Waterfowl and shorebirds, pileated woodpeckers, wild turkey, eagles, hawks, buzzards/turkey vultures, deer, coyotes, gray and red fox, weasels, woodchucks, badgers, beavers, muskrats, lizards, snakes, salamanders, frogs, toads, turtles, and many species of fish. Also, this county's western edge is The Great River Road National Scenic Byway. This historic treasure winds 557 miles through six states, but some of its most incredible beauty exists right here, where it meanders 35 miles along the Mississippi. Stop off at Mississippi Palisades State Park and enjoy a commanding view of the river, valley, and forests below.

The Ingersoll Wetlands Learning Center, just south of Savanna, is ideal for observing waterfowl, migratory birds, and other wetland wildlife. The Center also offers educational opportunities and great wildlife displays.

Excellent dining, shopping, and a professional summer stock theater are just some of the things you'll find along the brick-lined streets of Mount Carroll. Other local villages, including historic Savanna, boast unique shops offering antiques and collectibles and, in season, farmers markets featuring homegrown produce and vine-fresh melons. Visitors can also revel in a slate of Carroll County's many special events throughout the year, ranging from Mount Carroll's Mayfest to Lanark's Old Settler's Days.

CITY OF SAVANNA

Are you dreaming of visiting a **historic river town getaway**? We have the perfect place for you. Savanna is a vibrant place nestled between the Mississippi River and the Bluffs of the Driftless Area in Carroll County. Settled in 1828 by explorers from Galena, Savanna is one of the oldest towns in Illinois. Once a bustling hub for river commerce and railroads, Savanna's roots stretch back to the early days of American expansion. Today, it offers a perfect blend of historic charm and modern adventure.

Whether you're high above the Mississippi, or right down in the water you'll find *big adventure* in the small town of Savanna, Illinois. Named #1 in USA Today's 2021, 2022, and 2023 "**Best Small Town for Adventure**," Savanna is ready for you to explore. If massive cliffs, stunning views, and the peacefulness of nature are your thing, it's hard to beat the 15 miles of trails at the Mississippi Palisades State Park. Take a step back in time as you stroll along the historic Main Street, bike along the Great River Bike Trail, or drive through the picturesque rolling hills of the Driftless Area via the Great River Road, a designated National Scenic Byway.

As a historic river town, be sure to seize the opportunity to witness breathtaking sunsets over one of the most celebrated rivers in the world, The Mississippi River. Whether you prefer a rustic cabin with views of the Mississippi River, a full-service hotel equipped with modern amenities, or a pet-friendly lodge, you're sure to find a great place to stay. Whether you're here for a romantic getaway, a family vacation, or a solo retreat, the charm and beauty of this historic river town will leave you wanting to come back time and time again.

Savanna is rich in history and natural resources, but its best asset is, **by far, the people**. They are a welcoming, friendly, and diverse community. With history and adventure around every corner, Savanna is yours to explore.

Learn more at exploresavanna.com.



Lee County



DIXON • AMBOY • ASHTON • FRANKLIN GROVE

Lee County offers friendly communities, historic sites, and wide-open spaces. In the small towns of this unique region, visitors will discover annual festivals such as Amboy Depot Days and the Dixon Petunia Festival. Dixon is also the boyhood home of President Ronald Reagan, the original National Headquarters of the Lincoln Highway Association, art galleries, and railroading history.



The Rock River makes Lee County an outdoor lover's paradise. It also helps that it has five campgrounds, the Amboy Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, Green River State Wildlife Area, Franklin Creek State Natural Area, and Nachusa Grasslands with Illinois' first conservation bison herd.

But Lee County is also rich in history. A young Abraham Lincoln served at Fort Dixon during the Black Hawk War of 1832. Dixon is also the boyhood hometown of President Ronald Reagan. There are several places where you can trace the roots of our 40th president, such as the Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home at 816 S. Hennepin Ave. where you can see where the 40th president grew up. The site tells the story of his boyhood experiences and remarkable accomplishments. Out in the yard, a life-sized bronze statue pays tribute to Dixon's most celebrated resident.

The Northwest Territory Historic Center at 205 W. 5th St., where Reagan attended grade school, is home to more Reagan memorabilia, a small theater, and a library and research center. At Dixon Heritage Crossing, a pedestrian-friendly outdoor plaza in downtown Dixon, you'll find "Begins the Trial," a life-size bronze sculpture of a young Ronald Reagan. Heritage Crossing also has a pavilion, performance spaces, places to sit, places to walk, and places to enjoy the view of the Rock River. From there, a short walk up Hennepin Avenue will lead you to many of the buildings and institutions that shaped his life in Dixon.

DISCOVER DIXON

Dixon is a vibrant city on the Rock River with a rich history shaped by Abraham Lincoln, John Deere, Ronald Reagan, and Charles Walgreen.

Home to **Lowell Park**, a 200-acre park on the river with access to boating, hiking, biking, playgrounds, cookout areas, and a beautiful view overlooking a vast tree-filled landscape. In 2024, the park added a new ADA-accessible canoe and kayak launch.

The Dixon area is a destination full of natural wonders waiting for you to discover. **White Pines State Park**, **Lowden State Park**, **Castle Rock State Park**, and **Franklin Creek State Natural Park** are all nearby.

Dixon offers plenty of activities, whether you are coming for a day, a weekend, or a week. Its bike and walking trails in town expand yearly. Experience the Boyhood Home of Ronald Reagan, Lincoln's military expedition during the Blackhawk War, and discover John Deere's inventions at his home. Be sure to visit one of our many venues contributing to our thriving downtown, vibrant community, unique history, and natural surroundings.

Have a relaxing weekend in Dixon and discover what's in our "backyard"!

Learn more at discoverdixon.com.





Ogle County

📍 GRAND DETOUR

OREGON • ROCHELLE • MT MORRIS • BYRON • GRAND DETOUR • POLO

Sandstone bluffs, old-growth forests, serene state parks, rippling waters, railroad history, and the iconic Black Hawk Statue define Ogle County, where the wonders of the natural world blend beautifully with magnificent man-made attractions and special events.



Ogle County is home to the region's most recognizable landmark – sculptor Lorado Taft's famous 50-foot tribute to Native Americans, commonly called the Black Hawk Statue. This 536,770-pound work of art, originating from an 8-inch sketch, gazes across the Rock River from its eastern bank, perched 125 feet above the waterway. At its dedication in 1911, Taft noted that the statue, which he called The Eternal Indian, had grown from the ground. And what a ground it is. Ogle County is home to many of the region's quintessential attractions, including the Byron Forest Preserve, a scenic stop for nature lovers offering miles of trails and prairie landscapes, and the Jarrett Prairie Center for engaging exhibits on local ecology. Visitors can enjoy recreational activities from hiking and birdwatching to stargazing at the Weiskopf Observatory. White Pines Forest State Park is where virgin stands of pine, log cabins, lodge dining, live theater, and natural beauty abound. Here, the scent of towering pines permeates, where guests find solace on moss-covered hiking trails, in cozy one-room cabins, and around crackling campfires at night. Visitors discover nature preserves, parks, go-cart rides, golf and mini-golf, canoeing and kayaking, specialty shops, and historic sites just minutes from White Pines. One of the most popular is the John Deere Historic Site in nearby Grand Detour, where the famous inventor built his family home in 1836 and revolutionized farming.

Throughout our small towns and villages, Ogle County celebrates its heritage with frequent family-friendly events ranging from Rochelle's Railroad Days and Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival to Oregon's Autumn on Parade and Candlelight Christmas Walk. While in Rochelle, visit the Flagg Township Historical Society and Museum, which holds an extensive collection of antiques and genealogical information. One of the more important artifacts is the 1915 Partin-Palmer automobile built in Rochelle, the only one known in existence.

ROCHELLE RAILROAD PARK

Rochelle Railroad Park is a "must-see" for railroading fans, young and young at heart. With dozens of trains passing by daily, it's an ideal spot for train-watching. A raised platform allows viewers to experience and photograph two Class One rail lines crossing at the diamond, where the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe lines intersect. Tune your radio to 106.9 FM and listen to radio transmissions from dispatchers to locomotive engineers.

The gift shop sells clothing, model trains, toys, gifts, and so much more. It also offers snacks, drinks, ice cream, and plenty of historical displays and memorabilia. It is open Wednesday through Saturday, year-round. Winter hours are 11 a.m.-4 pm, and Summer hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Learn more at rochellerrailroadpark.org.





Whiteside County



MORRISON • STERLING • ROCK FALLS • FULTON

Whether you're getting lost in a corn maze, visiting a restored village from yesteryear, or marveling at a massive barge maneuvering its way through a Mississippi River lock, you'll never be at a loss for things to do and see in Whiteside County.



ROCK FALLS

STAY. PLAY. EXPLORE. Rock Falls has many opportunities for visitors to indulge in art, nature, recreation, and events.

RB&W District Park, located along the beautiful banks of the Rock River, allows you to experience our 13 unique and thought-provoking sculptures. New sculptures arrive every August during our annual Art in the Park Outdoor Art Gallery & Sculpture Walk. The Sculpture Walk is on the Otocast app which can be downloaded on any smartphone or device. The app allows visitors to learn about the artists and hear each artist speak about their sculpture.

The Rock River offers fantastic fishing and boating. Drive along The Rock Falls Birding Trail and see various birds and eagles. The Hennepin Canal is a treasured spot for kayakers and canoers to enjoy the beautiful scenery. There are kayak rentals at the Route 40 Hennepin Canal boat launch. The path along the Canal is perfect for joggers, walkers, and bicyclists of all ages. Didn't bring your bike? That is no problem. They have bikes to rent at the RB&W District Park.

Rock Falls Tourism hosts many events throughout the year, including Flock to the Rock, Art in the Park Outdoor Art Gallery & Sculpture Walk, Taco Throwdown Festival, Lumberjack Show & Beard Contest, and Bellson Music Fest. There are also many other community-sponsored events.

Book a night's stay at one of their comfortable hotels – The Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Country Inn & Suites, Days Inn, Super 8, and the All Season's Motel off Interstate 88.

Learn more at visitrockfalls.com.



In Tampico, visitors can tour where President Ronald Reagan was born in 1911 above the town bakery. In Fulton, experience the early-American village of Heritage Canyon, where special events and historical reenactors hearken back to life in the 1800s. Also in Fulton is the De Immigrant Windmill. Manufactured in the Netherlands and delivered to Fulton, this massive 100 ft. tall fully functional windmill showcases the craftsmanship and ingenuity of the Dutch millwrights and masons who constructed it. At Albany Indian Mounds State Historic Site in Albany, you'll be fascinated by one of the state's largest prehistoric Hopewell Mound groupings, where interpretive exhibits explore a Native American culture that existed more than 2,000 years ago. The site is free and offers hiking, biking, cross-country ski trails, and picnicking areas.

Throughout the year, Whiteside County hosts an endless array of entertaining special events, including the Prophetstown Pow Wow, Rock Falls Summer Splash, Fulton Fall Festival, and Dillon Home Museum Victorian Christmas Walk. We're also home to Lake Carlton, which is pegged as the state's premier spot for muskie fishing. The Hennepin Canal, which stretches through the county, is one of northwestern Illinois' most historic waterways. Originally known as the Illinois and Mississippi Canal, it was conceived in 1834 as a project that would reduce the distance between Chicago and Rock Island by 41 miles. The peak of the canal's success was in 1927, when 30,000 tons of freight moved down its waters. After that, it saw a steady decline in use as railroads and trucks took over the freight industry. Today, the canal is home to 78 miles of canoeing and kayaking opportunities and is snaked by parks and a beautiful walking path. The waterway is perfect for beginners as it is very calm, there are no obstructions, and wildlife is abundant. A boat landing south of Rock Falls off Route 40 provides access to a kayak rental provider and many take-out places along the way.



Rest Your

LINCOLN WAY STAY

WANDERLUST

In Northwest Illinois, you'll find that the accommodations are just as unique as the things you'll see and do here. Our bed & breakfasts are rich in character, offering a quaint ambiance and personalized experiences with your hosts, while our vacation rentals blend coziness and privacy, letting you savor the essence of our region at your own pace. For a more casual stay where nature's embrace awaits, picture yourself nestled amidst serene woodlands in one of our many campgrounds or rustic cabins. If luxury and convenience are more your style, our acclaimed hotels provide top-notch amenities and exceptional service, elevating your getaway to an extraordinary experience.



OUR BED & BREAKFASTS WILL TAKE YOU BACK IN TIME

Lincoln Way Stay in Franklin Grove has evolved into something much more than a place to rest your head at night. The Carriage House Loft, Suite, and Gardens is your own private getaway full of luxury and beloved signatures of the Lincoln Way five-star experience. Together with Nomia Meadows Farm, Lincoln Way, and all of the community of the Rock River Valley, they invite you to stay, explore, and leave your cares behind.

In Mount Carroll, The Inn at Molly's combines rural charm with contemporary amenities and style in a beautifully restored 1865 historic building. Spend the day exploring the historic buildings and architecture of Mount Carroll, antiques, and the beautiful pastoral landscape of the driftless area. Then, come home to cocktails and a delicious meal downstairs at Molly's.

VACATION & RESORT RENTALS HAVE ROOM FOR A CROWD

Our region has a wealth of vacation rentals ranging from casual to luxury accommodations. Mill Spring Cottage in Franklin Grove is situated within the 900-acre Franklin Creek State Natural Area and offers two bedrooms, a loft, two baths, and a fully equipped kitchen making it the perfect place for a family or friend's escape. Enjoy easy access to hiking, fishing, bird watching, and more in this scenic setting. Nearby, the 4,000-acre Nachusa Grasslands is home to roaming wild bison, adding to the natural charm. Your stay also includes access to an acre of surrounding land within the State Natural Area.

The East of Yellowstone Lodge & Retreat near rural Dixon is a very secluded lodge and campground offering a private stay for family and friends. The 10,000 sq ft Luxury Western

Lodge has two game rooms, 4 lounges, a well-appointed gourmet kitchen and formal dining room, and can sleep up to 39 in seven bedrooms and seven bathrooms. Additional rustic cabins dot the property and guests can enjoy their own private nature area with over four miles of trails on 43 acres, complete with a year round creek and abundant wildlife.

WHEN AMENITIES KNOW NO BOUNDS

Hotels and motels provide comfort, convenience, security, and other services tailored to your needs. The Comfort Inn & Suites in Rochelle welcomes you to peace and quiet with 95 rooms, including suites with full kitchens and jacuzzis. Guests can enjoy a complimentary hot breakfast, WiFi, and use of the business center. There's a restaurant and bar on-site and an event facility for weddings, meetings, and conferences. It also has a full-service fitness facility and indoor pool.

Located on the Rock River in Oregon, The Paddle Wheel Inn offers balcony suites with panoramic views of the river and the iconic Blackhawk Statue. Cruise aboard an authentic paddle-wheel boat while enjoying a relaxing lunch or moonlit dinner. This venue boasts a continental breakfast, spa, sauna, meeting and banquet facilities, and is home to Maxson Restaurant. Looking for a tasty steak? The Paddlewheel Inn sits next to the Blackhawk Steak Pit, a dining tradition in Ogle County.

In Rock Falls just off the I-88 exit, there are several hotels to choose from. The Holiday Inn Express & Suites sits on the banks of the Rock River with guest rooms that offer a blend of style and space, complete with all the essentials like Wi-Fi, a 42" flat-screen TV, microwave, refrigerator, and an enhanced bath setup. Plus, many rooms feature a private balcony with a stunning river view. For business travelers, rooms offer spacious work areas with an ergonomic chair.

The Fairfield Inn and the TruHilton have broken ground and will be opening in 2025 in Dixon just off of I-88 exit 54.



📍 WHITE PINES STATE PARK

Kick Back

IN ONE OF OUR COZY CABINS

Located in White Pines State Park near Mt. Morris, White Pines Lodge resembles a pioneer village with authentic log cabins and gas fireplaces. The 13 one-room cabins, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s, have open-beamed ceilings, while six additional quad cabins are built in groups of four under one roof, each offering a private entrance and bath with interconnecting doors, making them ideal for large families. Finally, they offer two romantic suite cabins with king-size canopy beds and soaking tubs. During the lodging season, March through late December, guests can access the Lodge's beautiful restaurant and gift shop.

Relax in the rustic setting of cabins located on ten wooded acres just minutes from Lake Carroll. Hickory Hideaway in Shannon lets visitors enjoy cabins with private baths and some with gas fireplaces and whirlpool tubs. There are optional extras like a full-body massage, unique chocolate treats from nearby chocolatiers, or even breakfast in bed from their caterers. Its cabins and grounds are immaculate, even in the winter months. The owners are experienced and gracious hosts who guide visitors to places to see, dine, and drink in Carroll County.



GETTING BACK TO NATURE IS THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE

Camping brings unparalleled joy, whether in a tent or a cozy camper. The serenity of waking up to birdsong, the crackle of a campfire, or the star-studded night sky fosters a deep connection with nature in our region. Savanna's Mississippi Palisades State Park offers a glimpse into the tales of the ancient Mississippi River. It has 241 Class A and B sites in shaded and open areas and 110 sites with electrical setup from May through October. Visitors here enjoy fishing, hiking, boating, and rock climbing.

Lowden State Park Campground, located in Oregon, guarantees a restful getaway surrounded by natural beauty. Here, the Blackhawk Statue stands sentinel as you sleep under the stars. There are 80 Class A campsites, including

electricity, a shower building, and a sanitary dumping station for trailers. Another option is the campground cabin with two bunk beds, a full-sized bed, and electricity from May through October. For the authentic wilderness experience, there are eight Class D primitive hike-in-only campsites. All visitors are welcome to enjoy four miles of good foot trails.

Camping in Morrison-Rockwood State Park Campground near Morrison will surely delight all who love the great outdoors. 92 sites are available in heavily wooded areas of the park and within its boundaries is Lake Carlton, which provides boating and one of the best fishing spots in Illinois. A 3.5-mile nature trail is marked for hikers and offers many scenic views of the lake as it winds through the park. This trail is particularly beautiful in spring when the wildflowers are in bloom. Equestrians may use a 14-mile trail through the park that has a watering well and an overnight campsite with shelter.

NEIGHBOR Notes



MARIA KRULL

When Maria's husband took an early retirement, the plan was to move west from their suburban Chicago home and settle into a relaxed and laidback lifestyle. Little did they know, they were about to embark on an entirely new adventure. "My husband met the owner of the Hotel Glenview in Mount Carroll," said Maria. "It turns out they were looking to sell. The place needed updating, but with my husband being a handyman and me having interior design experience, we said what the heck and bought the place in 2017." After a lot of hard work, the beautifully refurbished hotel was reopened as the Bridgewater Inn later that year. But their hotel is just one of many great places to stay during your visit to Northwest Illinois. "There are a number of unique places like ours as well as national chains, B&Bs, rental cabins, and camping spots," she mentioned. "No matter where you stay, it's just more peaceful here. Guests often tell us that this was the first time they really slept. I'm glad we can provide that for them."

Picks & Tips

When not working, Maria likes to get out and explore the region's many specialty shops and antique stores, almost always returning with a new trinket to display at the Inn. She also likes to enjoy the outdoors. "When you come from a busy and populated area as I did, you don't often give yourself the freedom to slow down, experience solitude, and reset," said Maria. "Visitors here also forget how amazing the night sky can be, free of light pollution." But it's not all quiet time for Maria. She also enjoys going to shows at the Rhythm Section Amphitheater where they feature amazing local groups and national touring acts. "We had Nelly here last year," Maria noted. "Talk about seeing stars."



Time to Escape!

THE CABINS
PINE CREEK

A hidden gem nestled in the rolling hills of northern Illinois surrounded by white pines, waterfalls and natural stone. Plan your escape today.

- Open year-round
- Located outside White Pines State Park
- Multiple bedrooms/ bathrooms
- Full kitchens
- Private fire rings/grills

6559 W Pines Rd.
Oregon, IL 61061
Ph: 815-881-1180
www.pinecreekescape.com

THE RINK
AT
PINE
CREEK

COME CHECK OUT OUR NEW EXTERIOR!

OVER 20 GAMES AND TONS OF PRIZES!

OPEN EVERY WEEKEND!
FRIDAY 7-10 PM
SATURDAY 1-4PM & 7-11PM
SUNDAY 1-4PM (OCTOBER-JUNE)

WE ARE THE AREA'S #1 PARTY DESTINATION!
BOOK A PARTY TODAY! IN-SESSION AND PRIVATE PARTIES AVAILABLE.
LOCATED ON W PINES ROAD ACROSS FROM WHITE PINES STATE PARK.

SKATINGFUN.COM | 815-946-9988

PINE CREEK ESCAPE

Located directly across the road from the well-preserved White Pines Forest State Park near Oregon, Pine Creek Escape truly lives up to the escape part of its name. Sitting high on a scenic limestone bluff overlooking Pine Creek, this property is surrounded by pine trees with plenty of space for outdoor activities. You'll find four beautiful cabins that sleep anywhere from 6 to 12 people. Each cabin has its own unique setup and full kitchens with china, silverware,

pots, and pans, including private outdoor areas with lawn furniture, fire rings, and BBQ grills. All cabins also come with gas fireplaces and large entertaining areas inside.

The owners and staff at Pine Creek Escape aim to create spaces where you can connect, discover new things, and achieve balance in your daily life. The owners also operate The Rink at Pine Creek, located next to the cabins. It's Northern Illinois' largest roller rink with top 40 music, a snack bar, and an arcade. Your stay will be fun for the whole family.



Unwind at White Pines



- Just 2 hours from Chicago in peaceful White Pines State Park
- Cozy Cabins close to Home-style dining
- Gift Shoppe & Playhouse Dinner Theater
- Hiking Trails leading to meandering streams
- Perfect for a family gathering or corporate retreat



6712 West Pines Road • Mt. Morris, IL 61054 | 815-655-2400 | visitwhitepines.com

WHITE PINES LODGE

White Pines Lodge is excited to be open once again providing great meals, entertainment, and cozy accommodations.

If you haven't been to Mount Morris, you now have a new reason to plan a trip there. One of life's joys is finding a hidden gem like this. The 1930s-era Lodge is nestled deep in the forest of **White Pines State Park**. The restaurant is known far and wide for its delicious home-style cuisine, generous portions, and friendly staff. Guests can enjoy breakfast, lunch, and dinner in this treasured landmark. Whether you're stopping by for a family outing, a wedding reception, a business retreat, a Christmas party, or an intimate night out for two, this well-known restaurant takes pride in ensuring that every guest has an experience to remember. The restaurant is also host to the **Pines Dinner Theater**, a live experience that has been providing musical and comedic entertainment for over thirty years. Adjacent to the landmark restaurant is a charming gift shop filled with nostalgic gift items and souvenirs.

Authentic, cozy log cabins provide overnight lodging just a stone's throw from the lodge. Natural beauty abounds with miles of hiking trails that crisscross over bubbling streams and along moss-covered limestone bluffs. This lovely destination is ideal for romantic escapes, family outings, corporate retreats, wedding receptions, and weekend getaways. Be sure to visit at Christmastime, when you can take a horse-drawn wagon ride, visit with Santa, buy a freshly cut Christmas tree, and more.

Discover White Pines Lodge, where you'll find time to relax and unwind in this peaceful forest. Call **815-655-2400** or go to visitwhitepines.com for details.







A Private Recreational Camp Resort
 509 Lamoille Rd. Sublette, IL | 815-849-5209
www.woodhavenassociation.com





So Much to See. So Much to Do.

Hiking Trails. Woodlands. Nature. Lakes. WiFi. Pools. Crafts. Movies. Fitness Center. Prairie. Deer. Pavilions. Arcade. Mini Golf. Day Camp. Tennis. Basketball. Live Music. Theme Activities. Fireworks. Painting Parties. Open Markets. Social Events. Volleyball. Shuffleboard. Teen Dances. Car Show. Paddleboats. Sledding. Farmers Markets. Night Hikes. Campfires. Fishing. Tournaments. Pickleball. Acoustic Nights. Wine & Cheese Social. Road Rally. Golf Outing. 5K/3K. Haunted House. Canoeing. Anything That Floats. Horseshoes. Petting Zoo. Wagon Rides. Aqua Zumba. Playgrounds. Karaoke. Family Fun Night. Coffee Hour. Clubs. DJs. Scavenger Hunts. Kayaking. Tug of War. Food Fairs. Picnics.

WOODHAVEN LAKES

Nestled in rural Lee County, you'll find a hidden treasure. Woodhaven Lakes is a private, gated camp resort where becoming a member means becoming family.

A perfect retreat from city life: you'll find 15 miles of trails, 7 lakes, 2 pools, a swimming beach, a nature center, a bait shop, mini golf, and more! A full calendar of events ensures plenty of fun for the whole family. Or, strike out on your own adventure – drop a line in the lake, take a dip in the pool, make a campfire meal, or enjoy the wildlife.

While there is so much to do, there is also plenty to see: an eagle swooping down to the lake, deer frolicking with their fawns, and beautiful native grasses, plants, and flowers. Towering pine trees line the entrance to welcome you to your home away from home.

Whether you're looking for peace and serenity, its many amenities, a weekend destination, or a summer retreat, they've got you covered. As an owner, you can come and go as you please – spend the night or the whole week. When you are at Woodhaven, there is no need to leave for essentials because they have a well-stocked general store, restaurant, gas station, and hardware store.

Learn more at woodhavenlakes.com or call 815-849-5476 to schedule a tour today.



A photograph of a male musician performing on stage. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and a pink tie. He is holding an acoustic guitar and has his right arm raised in the air. A vintage-style microphone is on a stand in front of him. The background is dimly lit with some stage equipment visible.

Go Northwest

FOR GREAT EVENTS

Northwest Illinois is a region brimming with a vibrant array of events throughout the year, each providing an opportunity to immerse yourself in local culture, traditions, and communal spirit. From birdwatching in February to numerous things to do in the summer to scarecrow festivities in October and holiday happenings in November and December. Every month offers unique experiences that unite locals and visitors alike. Whatever event you choose, disappointment will not be an emotion you experience. These events are just the tip of the iceberg. So be sure to check out the event calendar on our website for the most up-to-date information possible.

FEBRUARY



FLOCK TO THE ROCK | FEBRUARY 8

This free, family-friendly event is a must for nature enthusiasts and bird lovers. Start the day at the Lower Dam in Rock Falls, where you'll have the chance to witness the majestic Bald Eagles soaring above the Rock River. Don't forget to bring your binoculars and cameras to capture these stunning birds in their winter habitat. The festivities continue at the Rock Falls American Legion, featuring engaging presentations. Explore nature-related vendors and enjoy a bite to eat. Winter in Rock Falls is the perfect time to see migrating Bald Eagles gathered along the open waters near the dams—don't miss this unique celebration of wildlife and culture.

MAY



DUTCH DAYS FESTIVAL | MAY 2-4

Come enjoy the classic Dutch dinner as well as mouthwatering pastries and other various regional delights. Explore the arts and crafts show featuring over 100 talented artisans. Need a wooden shoe fix? Make sure to check out the Klompen dancers in their traditional wooden shoes. And if you're looking to get a pair for yourself, custom-made ones are also available. The excitement begins when the Burgomaster and Town Crier inspect the streets for cleanliness and the street sweepers come through with water and brooms to prepare the street for the parade. Enjoy the authentic Dutch costumes, bands, floats, and other entertainment during the parade. Tradition and love are everywhere at Fulton's Dutch Days Festival.

JUNE



DUPAGE PLOUGHBOYS VERSUS THE OREGON GANYMEDES | JUNE 14

The Oregon Ganymedes is a vintage baseball team based in Oregon. On June 14, the Oregon Ganymedes will take on the DuPage Ploughboys. The two teams will head down the road a few miles this summer to play on the grounds of the John Deere Historic Site in Grand Detour. This league plays by 1858 rules, wears wool uniforms, has no mitts, and is consistently polite. It is a free, family-friendly event. Bring your lawn chairs or blankets and enjoy a hot dog and lemonade. You'll be glad you did.

JULY



PETUNIA FESTIVAL | JULY 2-6

For over 50 years, Dixon's Petunia Festival has been the highlight of summer and will take place this year from July 2-6. Enjoy five days of fun, featuring a carnival on Lincoln Statue Drive, live music on two stages along the Dixon Riverfront, and the annual Nuts About Art outdoor festival at John Dixon Park on July 5. Watch the grand parade on Sunday afternoon as it winds through town, starting at St. Mary's Catholic School and ending at Dixon High School. Conclude the weekend with a spectacular fireworks show at 9:30 p.m. over the Rock River on Sunday. Don't miss this vibrant celebration filled with entertainment and community spirit.

AUGUST



AMBOY DEPOT DAYS | AUGUST 21-24

Amboy Depot Days celebrates the town's rich railroad history over four days, August 21-24, with live music, art shows, local cuisine, and vintage train displays. Visit the Depot Museum and one-room schoolhouse to learn what makes Amboy tick. The car, truck, and motorcycle show fills the streets of Amboy on Sunday. One of the most popular draws is the festival's famous 50/50 raffle. The drawing is held on Sunday during the Depot Days Weekend. Since 2014, winnings have topped \$100,000 almost every year. Will you be the one to take home the big cash prize? Don't miss this nostalgic summer celebration.



ART IN THE PARK | AUGUST 23

Mark your calendar for August 23 and immerse yourself in the Art in the Park extravaganza. At Rock Falls' RB&W Sculpture Walk and Outdoor Art Gallery, nature and art blend seamlessly. It's a canvas for artists nationwide to display their work. This festival grows every year, celebrating the community's artistic spirit. Since its inception in 2018, the event has become an annual celebration of art, culture, and vibrant hues along the riverfront park. Imagine encountering 13 stunning sculptures that breathe life into the surroundings. Witness the unveiling of nine new sculptures, carefully curated through jury selection, adorning the park just a day before the event. You can also engage with the visionary artists behind these magnificent works, gaining insight into their inspiration and creative process.

SEPTEMBER



TASTE OF FIESTA | SEPTEMBER 6

Enjoy the delicious flavors and lively rhythms of the 13th annual Taste of Fiesta on September 6. Be part of the largest Hispanic festival in our region at RB&W District Park in Rock Falls. Enjoy delicious food from various vendors, discover local businesses and nonprofits, and experience a vibrant display of artists capturing live moments. With a wide range of entertainment options, this event guarantees a memorable experience for all attendees. From lively folkloric dancers to engaging kids' crafts, a petting zoo, bucket rides, face painting, and live bands, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

OCTOBER



AUTUMN ON PARADE FESTIVAL | OCTOBER 4-5

Bring the entire family on an Oregon adventure, combining local culture, natural beauty, and culinary delights. On October 4-5 this year, the annual Autumn on Parade festival, a cherished tradition, offers local, handcrafted, and homemade treasures from over 80 vendors circling the historic courthouse square. Kids can explore the Fun Zone with Miller's Petting Zoo and food delights from non-profits and local businesses are sure to satisfy any craving. Enjoy the Auto Classic and Antique Tractor Show at Oregon Park East with food vendors on Saturday or delve into history at the Chana School. In the evening, the Entertainment HotSpot features a beer garden. Sunday starts with a one-mile 'Fun Run' and a 5K race, followed by the grand Harvest Time Parade, making it a family-friendly event with something for everyone.



STRONGHOLD OLDE ENGLISH FAIRE | OCTOBER 4-5

The Stronghold Olde English Faire is a fascinating event that honors medieval culture and fun. It occurs at Stronghold Castle in Oregon, which is a camp and retreat venue for the rest of the year. It is a captivating event with jousting tournaments, live music, theater shows, handcrafted goods, and delicious food. Visitors can immerse themselves in the ambiance of the Renaissance period while exploring various themed activities and interactive displays. It's a spectacular event transporting attendees to a bygone era, creating memorable experiences for all who visit.



MOUNT CARROLL PUMPKIN FEST | OCTOBER 25

Downtown Mount Carroll comes alive with autumn charm during its annual Mount Carroll Pumpkin Fest on October 25. Start your day at the Farmer's Market, bustling with local vendors, food trucks, and live music. Bring the whole family for free activities, including the Kids & Critters Costume Parade in the morning, pumpkin painting, mini gourd racing, and even a pumpkin catapult. Other highlights include face painting, a barrel train ride, Touch-A-Truck experiences, and the crowd-favorite Ping Pong Ball Drop. Celebrate fall at this community favorite and enjoy a festive day full of fun, laughter, and pumpkin-inspired creativity.



SCARECROW FESTIVAL | OCTOBER 18

Crisp air, vibrant leaves, and the enchanting Scarecrow Festival await you this October 18 in Dixon. Make it a family fun day celebrating creativity and community. Six city blocks come alive with whimsical scarecrow displays, live music echoing through the autumn breeze, and local artisans showcasing their crafts. This festive celebration has something for everyone, from scarecrow competitions to a pumpkin derby, and vendor booths brimming with fall delights.



Northwest Illinois transforms into a holiday wonderland from late November through December, offering festive events that capture the season's magic. Highlights include dazzling holiday light displays like those at Rock Fall's Centennial Park and charming Christmas walks in communities like Dixon, Oregon, and Mount Carroll. Visitors can enjoy horse-drawn carriage rides, tree lightings, local shopping experiences, and live entertainment during the Hometown Holidays and the Savanna Festival of Trees. With activities ranging from s'mores by the fire to encounters with Santa, the region promises a memorable holiday experience for families and friends alike.



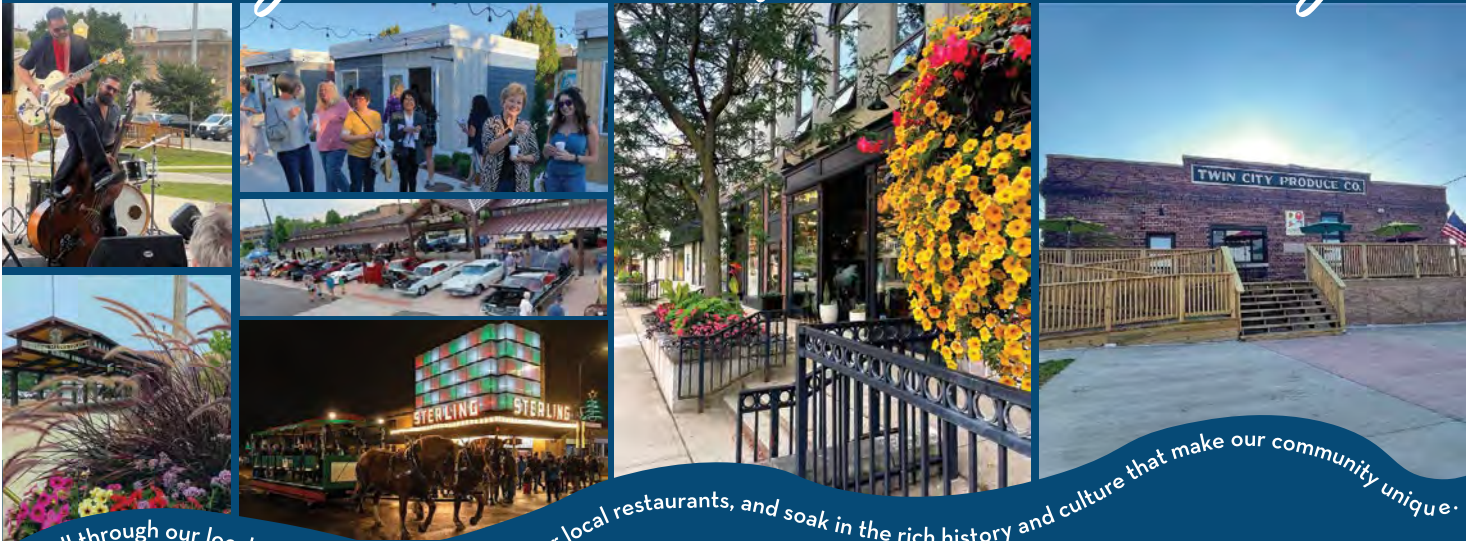
Year Round

ENTERTAINMENT EVENT VENUES

Northwest Illinois has a diverse collection of entertainment scenes. Our region offers various events, from lively music concerts to captivating theater performances. **The Dixon** is a historic theatre in Dixon steeped in history and culture. This venue showcases remarkable architecture that preserves the charm of its era. Hosting performances from live music and theater productions to film screenings, The Dixon captivates visitors with its diverse cultural offerings. **Timber Lake Playhouse** in Mt. Carroll is a hidden gem. This professional summer theater boasts top-notch productions, from Broadway hits to original works. Nestled in scenic surroundings, it's a go-to for theater enthusiasts. Discover outstanding performances, workshops, and an enchanting ambiance that captivates every visitor.

Enjoy the rhythm of live music echoing through our many outdoor venues, where nature becomes a part of the performance — especially at the **Rhythm Section Amphitheater** in Mt. Carroll. The amphitheater stage offers optimal sound with the best secluded outdoor scenery. Its silo bar and viewing decks are specially designed for enhanced listening experiences.

Indulge in the charm of Downtown Sterling!



Stroll through our local shops, savor the flavors of our local restaurants, and soak in the rich history and culture that make our community unique.

Car Show + Cruise Nights • Sip & Shops • Live Music + Pop Up Events • Craft Beer Festival

Year-Round Farmers Market • Holiday Fun



WWW.STERLINGMAINSTREET.ORG

STERLING
MAIN STREET
Inspired. Involved.



MISSISSIPPI RIVERFRONT • HERITAGE CANYON • MARINA • HISTORIC DOWNTOWN



A COMMUNITY BUILT ON
heritage and history

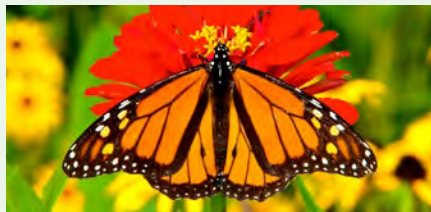
www.CityOfFulton.us

info@cityoffulton.us

815.589.2616



Visit Fulton, Illinois



**SPECIAL THANKS TO PAUL R. GIERHART
FOR HIS PHOTO CONTRIBUTIONS
THROUGHOUT THE GUIDE**

PAUL R. GIERHART: PHOTOGRAPHER

pgierhart@hotmail.com



@GierhartPhoto-Graphics
@PaulGierhart



@gierhartpaul

Stay. Play. Explore.

Outdoor Fun • Art • Dining • Shopping • Events



Find it all in Rock Falls

www.visitrockfalls.com   [visitrockfalls](https://www.instagram.com/visitrockfalls)

