

Currents

Charting a Course for the River Bend

2011

The National Great
Rivers Research
and
Education Center



Currents

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MONICA J. BRISTOW
Growth Association
President



I hope you enjoy this publication as much as we did preparing it. This is our opportunity to highlight some of the businesses, people and places that make the RiverBend the great place that it is.

As both the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organization for the communities of the RiverBend, we take great pride in the area's outstanding educational system, quality workforce, recreational and tourism attractions and most importantly our sense of community.

We work closely with state, regional, county and local officials to develop new employment opportunities. We continue to promote development opportunities in the RiverBend through our RiverBendProspector.com website, build partnerships in our community that strengthen our workforce and educational system and help small to mid-sized businesses compete in both the local and global marketplace.

We are fortunate to have so many businesses with long histories that support the community. The Growth Association constantly strives to develop programs and events that will help our businesses and our community in general.

Thank you for your interest in the RiverBend, a community with so much to offer that we are proud to share it with visitors and future residents!

Sincerely,

Monica J. Bristow, President



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Currents

Charting a Course for the River Bend



Dining

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Photo By JAMES B. RITTER

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Business Expo

Boosting business, creating networks

By GABRIELLE GREER

The River Bend Growth Association strives to promote businesses in the local area while also creating business networking.

Each Spring, the RBGA staff and volunteers plan to host member vendors for its annual Business Expo.

"We want to show the community that you don't have to go across the river to have a nice dinner or shop," RBGA President Monica Bristow said. "There are great businesses right here in the RiverBend, and sometimes people overlook those places."

The mission of the River Bend Growth Association is to provide leadership required to attract, promote and support new and existing enterprise growth throughout the River Bend community. The RBGA was founded in 1985 by a group of business leaders who were concerned about the economic wellbeing of the area.

"The Business Expo is a great way for our members to display their products and services for the community and other businesses to see," Bristow said. "We're very fortunate to have the businesses we have here."

Participants in the event included banks, apartment complexes, day care centers, assisted living centers, chiropractic services, and local restaurants. Vendors displayed their wares, gave samples and even free massages.

Not only did vendors have the opportunity to network, but they could use each other as a sort of "springboard" in promoting each

other's businesses.

"We will definitely do this each year," Bristow said. "The River Bend Growth Association constantly strives to help member businesses grow, and I think that the vendors benefited greatly from being a part of this."

The River Bend Growth Association serves as a voice for the community. The goals of the RBGA include business reten-

tion, expansion and recruitment; limited promotion of tourism and the coordination of resources to assist with quality education programs, all of which are ingredients of a healthy community.



"The association focuses on the economic, legislative and educational aspects of the community," Bristow said. "We want to help our members and create awareness for the wonderful businesses right here in the River Bend."

The Association is a thriving public-private partnership where local governments join with local businesses, educators and labor leaders to improve the quality of life for all area citizens through community and economic development.

The activities of the Growth Association are supported by dues paid by its governmental, union, education and business members, and by money raised through sponsorship of a number of local events, including an annual golf tournament and annual dinner. There are approximately 600 dues-paying local businesses and individual members of the association. Membership is available to all who desire to participate.

The Association is a thriving public-private partnership where local governments join with local businesses, educators and labor leaders to improve the quality of life for all area citizens through community and economic development.

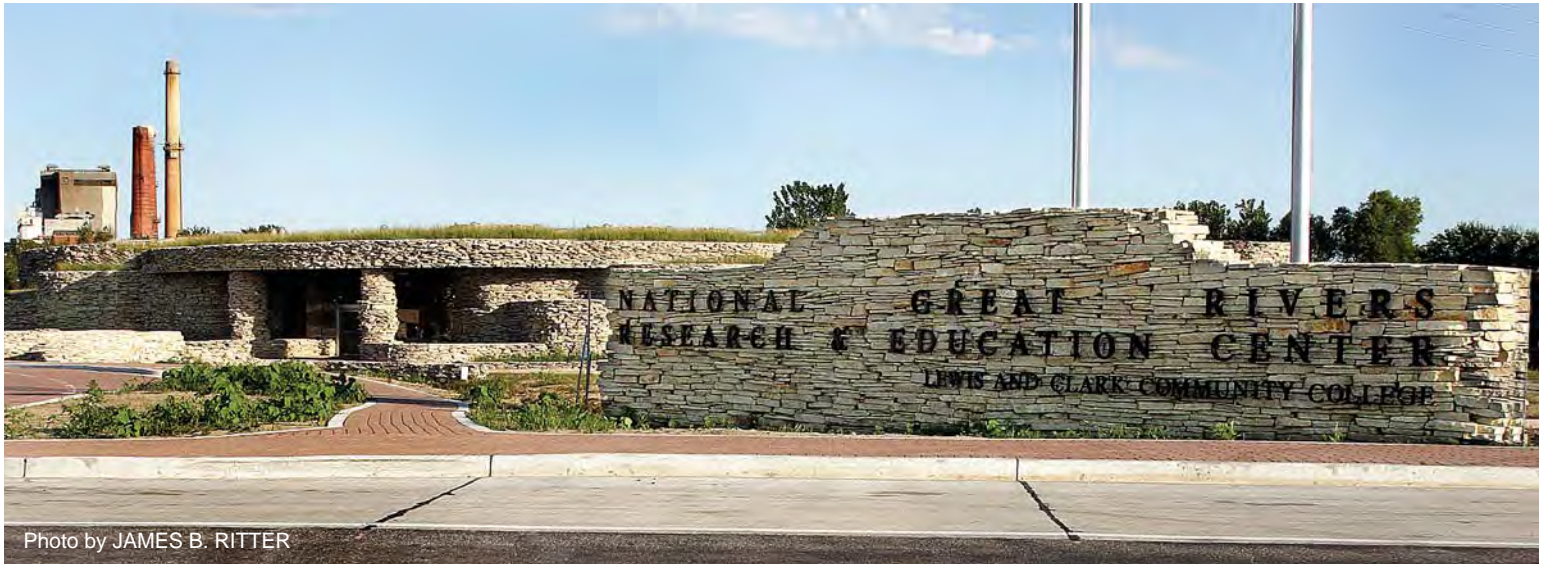


Photo by JAMES B. RITTER

Conducting research, educating minds and reducing the footprints left behind

By GABRIELLE GREER

ALTON - Whether it's Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" or a trip to the Arch, one can hardly live in the area without seeing or being reminded about the Mississippi River.

The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center has embarked on a journey as vast as the rivers themselves, while shedding some natural light.

NGRREC's new Confluence Field Station in Alton can be described as a state-of-the-art, eco-friendly research facility with vegetated roofs and beautiful hand-placed stones native to the region. Construction began in 2008 on the center's new field station, located near the National Great Rivers Museum along River Heritage Parkway (Illinois Route 143) and adjacent to the Melvin Price Locks and Dam 26.

The Field Station is strategically positioned where the powerful Missouri, Mississippi and Illinois rivers and their tributaries meet to create a watershed of immense proportions. The structure serves as a model of green construction with little environmental impact, integrated renewable energy systems and internal recycling systems.

"The Field Station is a unique place for many different reasons," said Dane Beiser, facilities manager. "First, we are striving for LEED platinum certification, a mark that is not easily obtainable. Every aspect of this building, from the architectural design to building materials, to waste management, was carefully deliberated and decided upon with the LEED guidelines in mind. Secondly, we feel that our building will

intrigue not only those interested in the science and research fields but also those interested in green building design and even those just interested in the long term viability of our river system from an economic and social standpoint. For these reasons and more, our Field Station will serve as an important center for many people with varying backgrounds to come and enjoy, but most importantly learn."

A key element of the station will be its six mesocosms located just outside the wet lab. These mesocosms are large concrete channels that, once completed, will contain flowing water and plankton pumped directly from the Mississippi. In these artificial environments, as one example of the work that can be done, researchers are able to conduct controlled experiments by changing the water velocity and other environmental conditions. The results can be used to predict effects on wildlife populations in the river and to develop fish conservation strategies.

Energy to run the facility is generated by numerous renewable resources, which will eventually include wind and hydrokinetic turbines. The roads and parking areas drain into bio-swales and utilize pavers that allow drainage through the pavement rather than over the top and into stormwater systems. The building also boasts more than 60 solar tubes, which provide natural light into the building and reduce the need for additional electrical power that would be needed for traditional lighting.

The staff of the center conducts research and education programs to increase understanding of big rivers, their watersheds, flood plains, and the interactions between

the rivers and their human, terrestrial and aquatic communities. Researchers gather data, conduct experiments and disseminate their discoveries through peer-reviewed publications and presentations at symposia and conferences. The scientists at the Center focus on ecosystem restoration, floodplain and watershed management, and achieving sustainability for rivers and their environments.

The Field Station includes various features that are both scientifically and environmentally savvy. Among the various features of the new Field Station, some of the most interesting are the labs: the Wet Lab and the Dry Lab.

The wet lab offers scientists the ability to draw water directly from the river for controlled experiments. John Chick, an aquatic ecologist, member of the Illinois Natural History Survey and NGRREC, sees this area as his domain.

"It is here that water will be taken directly from the Mississippi River straight into our Field Station," Chick said with excitement. "This will allow us to observe, record and conduct experiments on aquatic organism that otherwise would not be possible."

Chick's field of aquatics research focuses on the main stem of rivers, their tributaries, and aquatic and wetland habitat throughout the floodplain and watershed. This research is integrated with terrestrial and human research components in conducting basic and applied ecological research aimed at refining conceptual models of how river ecosystems function, while developing a comprehensive research program addressing the impacts of watershed land use practices

and development on the aquatic ecosystem. "Our expertise is long-term monitoring," Chick said. "There are three issues of significance affecting larger rivers that we focus on. The first is alteration in hydrologic patterns and connectivity between the river and its floodplain. The second is increased sediment and nutrient inputs associated with land use changes in the watershed. And the third is the spread of invasive species."

The Dry Lab is where Lyle Guyon, a terrestrial ecologist, reigns. It is here that plants, animals, soils, and other components of the terrestrial ecosystem are studied to increase our understanding of the floodplains and watersheds feeding the major river systems. For example, it is in this lab that trends in forest compositional changes are examined, and the impacts of invasive species on native communities and ecosystems are studied.

Guyon explained that NGRREC's terrestrial ecology research and monitoring program help clarify the impact the rivers have on humans and other species, and vice versa.

"We are trying to understand how people have altered the ecology of the river-floodplain ecosystem over time, and get a handle on the long-term impact this is having on issues such as biodiversity and ecosystem function," Guyon said. "We are currently geared toward ecological restoration of the floodplain ecosystem. The amount of time and effort required to successfully restore big river ecosystems is a key concern. We can't predict how rivers will respond to everything, but by monitoring plant and wildlife species, including invasive species, we can make a difference on our rivers in a very significant way."

Marcia Lochmann finds a home in the Center's environmental education classroom. She said she believes that the Field Station will be a wonderful arena to share

the value of science and research as they relate to large river watersheds and sustainable systems. Since 2002, the Center has reached more than 10,000 students with hands-on programs that foster environmental stewardship - specifically, local water resources. The Field Station houses top-of-the-line classrooms that can hold up to 30 students.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to reach people of all ages and interests," Lochmann said. "Here we want to create awareness and remind people why the river is important to them. Audiences of all ages and disciplines can appreciate the significance of the research done at the Field Station, because ultimately it affects each one of us. Many people in our area are unaware that our drinking water comes from the Mississippi River, and that much of the food they eat and power they use is transported by it. This facility will help inform various audiences how each of us can have a positive or negative impact on the river's long-term sustainability. Once you connect in a personal way, people are reminded why they love the river. It's about helping people understand the often simple steps it takes to reduce our energy consumption and our environmental footprints along the way."

Programs such as Stream Team, the annual Water Festival, Stream Discovery, RiverVision Leadership and Upper Mississippi River Education Symposium provide opportunities for children from first through 12th grades. Also, a prestigious 10-week summer internship program addresses issues such as public policy and aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems surrounding the Great Rivers' confluence area. The program's environmental education brings in students from as far as Kenya.

"The Mississippi drains up to 41 percent of the country," Beiser said. "That's over 70

percent of agricultural exports of the continental United States. We want people to be able to come into the center to learn and realize how important it is to sustain our river systems. With our center's ability to educate while also being eco-friendly, we hope to send a message through our actions."

It is through this "actions speak louder than words" tactic that the center has continued to perform its duties by educating the public through various programs. One of the most recognized programs is the Illinois RiverWatch program, a vision originally established in 1995 that since has expanded to the statewide level, with hundreds of committed citizen volunteers and organizations working to protect the rivers and streams of Illinois. The program consists of trained volunteers who conduct biological stream monitoring, collect stream habitat data, clean up stream corridors and engage in various additional stream protection activities.

"I think it's pretty amazing watching the Center and the programs we have here," Guyon said. "Being here with the ability to open up to the public and growing and expanding the knowledge of the river is phenomenal."

The close proximity of three rivers of this magnitude offers an ideal location for the study of big rivers that has attracted scientists from China to California. Strategies for managing rivers and their watersheds has global implications, especially as nations strive to protect and sustain river systems amid exploding populations and increasing scarcity of freshwater resources.

The NGRREC staff hopes the Field Station will continue to reach out to those in the surrounding area, as well as those in other parts of the world who also share the same mission to protect, preserve and educate citizens about the importance of waters.





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Grapes for Growth

A casual sipping of fine wine and nibbling of delicious food to get local businesses up to speed, as well as noticed.

Grapes for the wine, growth for the business



Monica Bristow of The River Bend Growth Association and Paul Ventimiglia of Tony's Restaurant worked together to plan the first Grapes for Growth event.

By GABRIELLE GREER

While some organizations propose boring meetings to get entrepreneurs motivated, the River Bend Growth Association promotes casual sipping of fine wine and nibbling of delicious food to get local businesses up to speed, as well as noticed.

The RBCGA recently held its inaugural wine-tasting event at the Holiday Inn of Alton.

"The Grapes for Growth event really brought in a different audience," Bristow said. "It was more of casual social event, rather than a business networking event.

"The Grapes for Growth was fun," she said. "We sampled food and wine from wonderful restaurants; it really brought a new atmosphere to our economic development fund-raiser."

This delicious wine- and food-tasting extravaganza was open to the public. Guests could have samples of each of the wines, specialty beers and food from a wide selection of restaurants in the RiverBend area, including: Castelli's at 255, Franco's at Holiday Inn, Gentelin's on Broadway, Spirits Lounge, My Just Desserts and Tony's Restaurant.

With a wine list of more than 100 types, attendees had a wide array to choose from. Bristow went on to explain the essence of the Grapes for Growth was to promote local restaurants in a way that would be both social and effective.

"This was a great opportunity for people to realize the great choices in the RiverBend," Bristow said. "You can have a great night on the town, with great food and wine right here in the RiverBend."

Grapes for Growth was a success that highlighted local businesses while also giving the citizens a drink straight from the vine.



The Telegraph/JIM BOWLING

The Federal Steel and Erection Company is based at 206 East Alton Avenue in East Alton. The business provides full-service steel design, fabrication, and erection services for local industry, general contractors and plants. Pictured are the Federal Steel and Erection Company office and fabrication personnel.

Federal Steel and Erection thrives in East Alton

By DAN BRANNAN

Mark Darr has guided Federal Steel and Erection Co. in East Alton into times of prosperity after taking over the business in 1989.

Today, Darr couldn't be more satisfied with his business at 206 E. Alton Ave. in East Alton. The business employs more than 100 people.

"I worked at Federal Steel when I purchased it," he said. "I started working there in 1988 as a field project manager and an estimator. Before that, I was an ironworker in the field. I purchased the business in 1989 from Clark Holding Company."

Darr had a vision that the steel company could have better times, so he worked to find a niche and purpose for the organization, and it has worked.

"Things have gone wonderful-

ly," he said about the progress made over the last 20 years. "We have gone from 17 employees to over 100. We have increased our facility from 35,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet. I have a very dedicated employee base in the team I have put together. I credit them with a lot of our success."

The owner-president of Federal Steel described his business as basically a full-service steel contractor.

"We detail, provide the blueprints and fabricate all the steel in the shop and transport it to the site and install it, so we are basically a full-service contractor," Darr said.

Federal Steel and Supply Co. was founded in 1948 by Arthur Isringhausen next to the former Laclede Steel plant near the Mississippi River in Alton. Federal moved to its present location in East Alton in 1953. Mesker Clark purchased Federal Steel and

Supply Co. in 1984. Mesker Clark owned and operated Federal Steel and Supply until they dissolved in 1989.

In 1989, Darr formed a corporation named Federal Steel and Erection Co., purchased Federal Steel and Supply Co.'s assets and began operating at its present location.

FSE today uses modern equipment and is American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC) certified in steel fabrication, steel erection and welding procedures. FSE is a full-service steel contractor serving industrial owners, commercial builders and contractors. The company designs, details, fabricates and installs structural and miscellaneous steel.

In 2009, the fabrication facility of Federal Steel was retooled with state-of-the-art equipment that cuts, drills holes, copes, lays out and blasts steel shapes,

plates and weldments according to the drawings and designs created in the Detailing Department.

FSE works with a variety of local contractors and owners, including ConocoPhillips, U.S. Steel, Solutia, Gateway Energy and several others throughout the region. ConocoPhillips has provided a considerable amount of business for the company in recent years with its ongoing expansion of the Wood River Refinery.

"Conoco Phillips has been very supportive of local contractors and industry," Darr said. "We have a great service to offer all our customers. Our jobs are planned and carried out to create the safest work environment possible. We give our employees wonderful tools to work with, the most modern equipment and extensive support to exceed our customer expectations."

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Every day is a winding road

By GABRIELLE GREER

For the Daniel Boone in all of us, we wish to experience nature at new levels. In the RiverBend, bikers discover much more than just happy trails.

Through the years, tourists and RiverBend natives have been drawn to the river to get a sense of the future, remember the past, and feel the shock and awe of the Mighty Mississippi. The Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau sees the bike trails as direct pathways to connecting with nature.



"I've been on some of the trails," CVB President Brett Stawar said. "They are very picturesque, paralleling the river. With its limestone bluffs and scenery of the Mississippi, it's definitely a nice attraction that brings people from the immediate area and from miles around."

Located on Illinois Route 100, also known as the Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway, the Sam Vadalabene Bike Trail stretches for 20 miles from Alton to Pere Marquette State Park in Grafton.

Stawar explained that because of easy access to the trails, anyone can rent a bike and hit the trail, no matter their level of expertise.

"There are ways to rent bikes instead of bringing your own," Stawar said. "There are shops in Alton and Grafton that rent bikes at a reasonable price. This makes it easy to ride and enjoy the trip, whether it's our shortest trail or our longest 20-mile trail."

The 20-mile Vadalabene Trail is the most popular in the RiverBend. Stawar said that all you have to do is park your vehicle at Piasa Park to begin your journey traveling through Clifton Terrace, the historic village of Elsah and Grafton. Stawar believes it's easy to enjoy the beauty of the Mississippi and the many historical monuments the towns and villages on the banks of the river showcase. The trail also is popular for jogging, walking and rollerblading.

"I believe that the best thing about being on the trails is the feeling of connecting with the outdoors," Stawar said. "Our trails are connected to cities. People can discover and explore the rivers and museums. They can stop off at Clifton Terrace, ride past the limestone bluffs and see the historical monuments, such as the great Piasa Bird in Alton. Some people even start at the Arch on the St. Louis riverfront and travel up to Elsah or Grafton. There are many things to discover and explore on our trails."

Located on Illinois Route 100, also known as the Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway, the Sam Vadalabene Bike Trail stretches for 20 miles from Alton to Pere Marquette State Park in Grafton.



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The Telegraph/JIM BOWLING

Dwight Werts is the owner of Werts Welding and Tank Service Inc. headquartered at 400 North Old Saint Louis Road in Wood River. The 53 year-old business sells and services semi-tank trailers.

Werts Welding goes the extra mile

By GABRIELLE GREER

What started out as a humble one-man welding shop in 1957 has grown into a thriving business that has received awards and recognition from the RiverBend community and the far reaches of the globe.

Werts Welding serves as one of the largest premier tank trailer equipment distributors in the world. Parts are available from up to 30 major manufacturers. Along with its headquarters in Wood River, Werts Welding has centers in San Antonio, Birmingham, Atlanta, Tampa and Des Moines. There are several locations scattered throughout the United States, Mexico and Canada. International shipping also is possible. In fact, Werts Welding is the sole distributor to the United

States and Canada for a product imported from France.

"This started off as a one-man welding shop," said Dwight Werts, president and CEO of Werts Welding and Tank Service. "My father did the labor, while my mom did the bookkeeping. I have had the pleasure of seeing it grow over the years. I've always been around the operation, and I officially joined the business in 1977."

Werts Welding, a tank and trailer service company specializing in pneumatic, petroleum and chemical tank trailers, began operations in 1957. Dwight's parents, Robert and Verna Werts, opened the business in a small building directly across the street from its current location at 400 Old St. Louis Road in Wood River. Fifty-plus years later, Werts said the business still is built on customer care.

"We have a personal touch," he said. "We have a very good employee base. Customers are still coming to us after 25-plus years. We're very fortunate to have both great customers, as well as great employees. Employees can make or break you. We have the best."

Werts Welding is known throughout the community as a business that goes the extra mile for its customers, earning it the international "Go the Extra Mile" Award from Heil Trailer in 2009. Werts described this moment as one of the highlights of his career.

"This is how we rank against our peer distributors throughout the country and the world as Heil dealers," Werts said. "This is based on customer responses, and this is a result of their input on how we did as a dealer. We do go the extra mile."

"We have maintained relationships over the years, and our customers appreciate that. They are happy to work with the same person again and again instead of a new face. Our company is thriving because of our reputation - our commitment to our customers."

The family-owned business also specializes in providing service for accident damage, customized fabrication, hydraulic systems, pumps and blowers, overfill systems, sandblasting and painting, and tank cleaning. The Wood River location performs tank repairs, test and inspections.

Werts has been a long-time supporter of the Growth Association and has used his membership and the benefits of the RiverBend Growth Association to his business's advantage.

Answers

TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT
THE UNITED METHODIST VILLAGE

PATRICK NOONAN
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Q. What is The United Methodist Village?

A. The Village is the area's only senior living community professionally managed by industry leader, Life Care Services LLC. For nearly 13 years, The Village has offered active seniors easy, maintenance-free living in spacious apartment homes and villas with an array of services, amenities and activities. Tucked into 120 acres of beautiful countryside, our location and reputation as a well-managed community make The Village an attractive alternative to homeownership or traditional rental life.

Q. What do residents enjoy most about living at The Village?

A. It starts with residents and staff who are genuinely helpful and friendly. Next, you'll find just about everything you need in one place: on-site banking, restaurant-style dining, a fitness facility and more. You'll also find a staff that takes care of everything for you—from painting to raking leaves—so you can use your time traveling or pursuing hobbies. At The Village, you enjoy an easy, independent lifestyle in an area U.S. News and World Report recently named one of the country's best places to retire.

Q. What makes The Village in Godfrey such a popular place to live?

A. Located just north of the Mississippi River, Godfrey offers shopping, dining, health care, cultural activities and easy access to the St. Louis airport. The Village is situated on rolling land with lush trees, walking trails and a small lake. Residents who move here from other parts of the country say they have no plans to leave. The most frequent comment we hear is, "We wish we had moved here sooner."

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Development Trends 2010

Two business leaders visit River Bend

By GABRIELLE GREER

As a part of its Development Trends 2010 program, the River Bend Growth Association invited two nationally renowned site selectors to give advice and insight to the business side of the area.

The Development Trends 2010 program was held by the RBGA, which invited Robert Ady, founder of Ady International Co., and Eric Canada, an expert on business expansion, to share their marketing strategies with local businesses.

RBGA President Monica Bristow invited the two businessmen to shed light on the community's local businesses

to give them direct insight into the developmental trends across the country and to help uncover opportunities for them right here in the River Bend.

"We're always striving to improve what we do here at the River Bend Growth Association," Bristow said. "We wanted to bring Robert Ady and Eric Canada to give advice on what the community businesses could do to maintain their business, as well as get their names out there for companies throughout the world."

The two men spoke to a crowd of business leaders at the Holiday Inn in Alton to share their opinions and explain the

importance of building relationships with local businesses.

"We do something every year for economic development," Bristow said. "We felt that with tours and guest speakers, the businesses could benefit."

Ady shared four key strategies for effectively marketing a region or property. Being a professional site selector of more than 30 years, he works to find ways to eliminate a region or a site so he can narrow his search to meet the needs of his

clients. Ady also said that all clients have different needs when wanting to expand, while also stressing the importance of keeping up-to-date with marketing and pointing to the Internet as a prime source.

"The best advice I can

give to a business is to keep up with the recent marketing trends," Bristow said.

"To pay attention to what others do, go to conferences; it will help to learn from others and their experiences."

"It really helped to have both Canada and Ady come to our program and speak," Bristow said. "They gave us great advice, as well as gave us a 'foot in the door' so to speak, to get local businesses out there beyond just the RiverBend area."

Bristow said the RBGA will continue to invite guest speakers such as Ady and Canada to both help and promote the businesses of the River Bend.



After the guest speakers, attendees enjoyed a reception. Visitors here are enjoying the fine foods of Gentelin's on Broadway.

The Development Trends 2010 program was held by the RBGA, which invited Robert Ady, founder of Ady International Co., and Eric Canada, an expert on business expansion, to share their marketing strategies with local businesses.

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When looking for efficient condominiums, attractive apartments, or quality, custom-built estates, you need to go no further than the River Bend area, which offers comfortable homes available to fit any budget and lifestyle.

The Christian Hill area of Alton has undergone extensive renovations and restorations over the last few years, and is perfect for the young professional, while Godfrey's Fairmont area offers luxurious mansions and elegant classic style homes tucked nicely away from the bustle of downtown, yet just minutes from anywhere.

For families looking for their dream of "white picket fences," subdivisions in Alton, Godfrey, East Alton, Wood River or Roxana offer private cul-de-sacs

containing single-family ranch style homes dating from the 1940s to today.

Executive style homes and large single-family houses can be found in subdivisions such as Fox Run and Summerfield in Godfrey, Whispering Oaks in Bethalto and Kendall Hill Estates in Wood River.

For seniors and retirees, United Methodist Village and Provision Living in Godfrey, Foxes Grove Retirement Community in Wood River, Hillcrest Apartments, Saint Clare's Villa and Glenhaven Gardens in Alton, Villa Rose in Bethalto and multiple locations of The Fountains scattered throughout the area provide personal assistance, independent living, and the care and compassion of a close-knit community.



Wind Rivers Condominiums, Grafton, IL

River Bend Demographics

Statistics for the River Bend Region consisting of Alton, Bethalto, East Alton, Elsau, Godfrey, Grafton, Hartford, Roxana, South Roxana and Wood River.

Counties served	Northwest Madison and Southern Jersey Counties in Illinois
Region	Midwest, part of St. Louis Metropolitan Area
Population	80,586
Households	33,141
Median Household Income	\$44,155
Median Age	37.61
Average Travel Time to work	25.59 minutes
Median Housing Value (owner-occupied)	\$91,554
Percentage with bachelor's degree or higher (25+ years of age)	18.53



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Reflections on Yesteryear

History

Instead of just reading about the rich chronicle of the Alton area, residents and tourists alike have many locations to visit where history comes alive with replicas, activities and tours.

THE PIASA BIRD

Located on the tall bluffs along the River Road, looming majestically over the Great River Road, is the ancient Piasa Bird. The original Piasas, two murals painted on the bluffs by Native Americans, first were discovered by Father Jacques Marquette in 1673. He described what he saw as a "monster as large as a calf, with horns on its head like those of a deer, a horrible look, red eyes, a beard like a tiger's, a face somewhat like a man's, a body covered with scales, and so long a tail that it winds all around the body."

Visitors can experience those piercing eyes and foreboding presence anytime, as a replica of the original Piasa Bird has been painted onto a bluff along the River Road, just upstream from the site of the original painting. Never mind searching for Bigfoot or the Loch Ness monster; family back home will be awed with photos and stories of one's encounter with the ancient Piasa Bird.



LEWIS AND CLARK

The Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-06 is the most important exploration of unknown territory in our nation's history. This epic two-year journey, undertaken by the 33-member "Corps of Discovery," has been retold in numerous books, films and television appearances. Illinois is the first of the 11 Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail states, and the local area is the site of the first of three winter camps built by the team.

The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, located on Route 3 at New Poag Road, is the easternmost Lewis and Clark Expedition site and one of the most informative. It continues to attract nationwide attention.



CAMP DUBOIS

The replica of Camp Dubois, Lewis and Clark's first winter camp, located at the Lewis and Clark Trail Site No. 1, provides visitors with the opportunity to directly experience the living environment of the Lewis and Clark team during the days they camped and trained in Illinois for their historic journey to the northwest.

Plans for the replica were based on the journals and field notes of William Clark.



GHOST TOURS

Halloween is no longer the only time of year where things go bump in the night. Long reputed to be one of the most haunted small towns in America, Alton boasts no less than four established touring companies in the area, providing scares for tourgoers all throughout the year. Guests can visit locations such as the site of the Old Confederate Prison, the Mineral Springs Mall, and the famous McPike Mansion, hearing about the history of supernatural activity and possibly experiencing a scare or two along the way.



Janet Kolar, owner of Mineral Springs Haunted Tours, by a gravesite at the Alton Cemetery, where paranormal evidence has been noted.

Janet Kolar, owner of Mineral Springs Haunted Tours, by a gravesite at the Alton Cemetery, where paranormal evidence has been noted.

ROBERT WADLOW

Known as Alton's "Gentle Giant," Robert Wadlow, born in 1918 and raised in Alton, continues to hold the record as the tallest person in history. At 8'11", Wadlow suffered from hypertrophy of the pituitary gland, resulting in an abnormally level of human growth hormone.

In spite of dealing with severe chronic pain on a daily basis, Wadlow earned his nickname by his down-to-earth demeanor and kindly manner. A nationwide celebrity when he was alive, Wadlow achieved an immortal spot as Alton's most beloved legend upon his death in 1940 at age 22.

Today, he stands tall and proud again as a life-size statue, erected in 1986 and located on College Avenue, across from the Alton Museum of History and Art.



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Healthcare

The two hospitals – Alton Memorial and Saint Anthony's Health Center unveiled changes over the last year. Alton Memorial opened the Duncan Wing, while Saint Anthony's opened an all-private room setting, along with other revisions.

ALTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Since 1937, Alton Memorial Hospital has cared for countless people in Alton and the surrounding communities

A gift to the community from the Smith family of Alton, Alton Memorial today is a full-service, acute-care hospital with 206 beds serving patients in a five-county area. Alton Memorial offers patients a variety of inpatient and outpatient services, including surgery services, medical imaging, interventional and diagnostic heart services, cancer care, digestive health services, physical therapy, rehabilitation, 24-hour emergency care, ambulance services and more.

In 2010, the hospital opened the Duncan Wing, which houses 76 state-of-the-art private rooms. The major \$45 million expansion project quickly changed the face of how health care is delivered in the River Bend area.

In addition to the hospital, Alton Memorial operates Eunice Smith Home, a freestanding, 62-bed long-



term care and skilled nursing facility, on the hospital campus.

Alton Memorial is a member of BJC HealthCare, one of the nation's largest health care organizations, with annual net revenues of \$3.2 billion and more than 26,000 employees in the greater St. Louis, southern Illinois and mid-Missouri regions. BJC HealthCare serves patients and their families in urban, suburban and rural communities through its 13 hospitals and multiple community health locations.

SAINT ANTHONY'S HEALTH CENTER

For 84 years, Saint Anthony's Hospital, sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr of St. George, has provided quality healthcare and a wide variety of services to the local community. The center was founded in 1925 by five pioneering Sisters, who traveled from their General Motherhouse in Thuine, Germany to expand their mission to America.

Thanks to generous donations, the Sisters were able to purchase the Nazareth Home, a combination orphanage and infirmary in 1925, and they renamed the home Saint Anthony's Infirmary. In 1956, the organization became a fully licensed hospital, operating as Saint Anthony's Hospital. In 1959, construction on a new wing of the hospital was completed. More lay persons joined with the Sisters in caring for the sick. Midnight Mass marked the opening of the new chapel in 1964 and the West Annex was completed in 1966.

In 1975, the first hospital-based home care service was implemented, Saint Anthony's Home Health Care. In 1989, Saint Anthony's acquired St. Joseph's Hospital and renamed the facility Saint



Clare's Hospital. Saint Anthony's Health Center became the parent organization of both Saint Anthony's Hospital and Saint Clare's Hospital.

Saint Anthony's Health Center is the first hospital in Alton to move to an all-private room facility in February of 2010. Renovations on private rooms were completed in April, with new flooring, new patient beds, visitor seating and flat screen televisions.

The two-campus health system today operates with two main campuses-Saint Anthony's Hospital and Saint Clare's Hospital. Saint Anthony's Medical Mall, located at Alton Square Mall, Saint Anthony's Medical Equipment Store and the Good Samaritan Center provide the utmost in convenience and quality care for those in need.

The hospital also has introduced a new 64-slice CT scan with state-of-the-art MRI with breast imaging. Saint Anthony's is the first hospital in the area to offer the CT scan, which has an extraordinarily low radiation dosing.

For more information, visit the website at www.sahc.org.

Recreation

The River Bend offers a wide variety of outdoor activities.



Fun in the Sun, Mo' in the Snow

With a wide variety of water sports locations, golf courses, haunted tours, scenic parks and even a casino, there is no need to cross the river to find all kinds of fun and relaxing activities in the River Bend.

Alton Lake, created where a dam and locks delay the river's flow, gives Alton a greatly widened Mississippi River at its front door that accommodates both power and sail boats. Riverfront Park stretches westward along Alton Lake in Downtown Alton, from the beautiful Clark Bridge to the site of the Argosy Casino, where visitors are treated to Las Vegas-style gaming.

The Alton Marina, with its various amenities including a delicatessen, renovated service area and shop, and room for more than 300 boats has brought thousands of visitors from all over the world.

Located at the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers, the Grafton Harbor is known as the Key West of the Midwest and features 180 slips and can accommodate boats of all sizes. The Harbor offers a host of resort amenities to suit an individual's needs. Whether you stay for a day or a year, there are a multitude of activities and conveniences at the Harbor or close by to make a stay more than comfortable.

Wood River offers an aquatic center featuring a 50-meter swimming pool, diving tank, and two 300-foot water slides and hosts an annual triathlon. The city's Belk Park has an 18-hole golf course, just one of six courses in the area.

Along Route 3, the Lewis and Clark Confluence Tower, located near the Lewis and Clark State Historic Site, stands an impressive 180-feet tall and offers a scenic view of the area.

Area cyclists are frequent visitors to the 13-mile bike trail that follows the Great River Road from Alton. Pere Marquette Park, a 7,895-acre park, offers hiking and nature trails, camping, picnicking, boating and fishing, and horseback riding.

In Godfrey, the Sportsmen's Club offers trap shooting, bingo, and a full menu restaurant to the public. East Alton's Winchester offers trap, skeet and pistol shooting ranges.

The 700-acre Gordon F. Moore Community Park in Alton stands out among the area's many parks as a recreation centerpiece in the area. A forest of light towers over a complex of baseball and softball fields. There are soccer fields, a tennis center, picnic shelters and barbecue pits, playgrounds, a 13-acre lake for fishing, a nature trail, a freedom shrine, a monument to volunteers, and a waterfall. In addition, the park features a 1,600 bush rose garden with a restful gazebo and carillon.

For those interested in checking out the nightlife, Downtown Alton offers some of the best in the area, with a number of nightspots. During the summer, downtown hosts the monthly Alton Block Parties, featuring vendor foods, live music, and plenty of chances to socialize and enjoy the outdoor ambience. The nearby Riverfront Park amphitheater regularly schedules local as well as nationwide acts and entertainment.

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Denver	856	1,378	2	2
Detroit	543	874	2	2
Houston	839	1,351	2	2
Indianapolis	209	336	1	1
Kansas City	253	407	1	1
Los Angeles	1,848	2,975	3	4
Memphis	294	473	1	1
Minneapolis	546	879	2	2
New Orleans	695	1,118	2	2
New York City	966	1,555	2	3
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Youth Activities

Something for kids all year long



The River Bend area is known for its abundance of baseball, softball and soccer programs aimed at the area's energetic youth.

The Alton Parks and Recreation Department offers baseball, softball, soccer, tennis and junior golf for young people, as well as summer day camps and baseball, softball and tennis clinics. Organizations such as AABC Select Baseball, Alton and Marquette High Schools, Riverbend Futbol Club, Senior and Junior American Legion Baseball Teams, Collegians Wood Bat College Baseball Team, and the Renegades Youth Football Club also utilize the area's park and recreation venues.

Several communities offer rollerblading parks for youngsters. In Roxana, the village recreation department oversees the use of the gymnasium at Rox-Arena. In Wood River, the city's recreation department organizes league play at its large sports complex and offers swimming lessons at the city's Aquatic Center.

The Bethalto Boys and Girls Club continues to implement new sports and leisure activities for Bethalto's young people. Numerous parks in the area, provide families the opportunity to fish, picnic, and participate in soccer, basketball, tennis, baseball, softball and other athletic activities.

Golfers also are welcome at the 27-hole facility at Rolling Hills Golf Course in Godfrey. Located just 30 minutes from downtown St. Louis, the family-owned business has offered thousands of avid golfers a tranquil place to swing their clubs for more than 30 years. Driving range, golf lessons, and banquet facilities also are available. In total, six golf courses serve the residents of the River Bend.

Trails West Council of the Boy Scouts of America annually serves more than 7,000 youth from Bond, Calhoun, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin and Madison counties. Boys age 7-11 participate in Cub Scouts, boys age 11-18 participate in Boy Scouts and both boys and girls age 14-21 participate in the Venturing and Career Exploring programs.

The River Bend also offers activities for young people when the weather is not so agreeable. The East Alton Ice Arena offers ice skating lessons all year long. Other activities at the arena include "lock-ins" for children and young teens, and open houses where guests can meet the staff and see everything the rink has to offer. Hockey for youngsters, teenagers, and adults can keep a person active all year long. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and many of the local high school teams play their games at the arena, and it also offers the perfect spot for large groups, including schools, churches and community organizations, to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and other special events.

The River Bend is known for its abundance of programs geared toward energetic youth.

Education

The educational programs in the River Bend lay a foundation for the bridge to a brighter future.

The Foundation to a Brighter Future

The River Bend area, realizing the importance of a good education, has provided a gift-ed, advanced and successful network of school systems for children to learn and grow. Facing challenges of budget cuts, schools have proven they can step up to the plate and continue to provide the seeds of learning for area students while facing adversity. Youth of today will be the area's leaders tomorrow, and the educational programs here lay a foundation for the bridge to a bright future.

The Alton Community Unit School District 11 is the largest of the area's districts. Alton High School was completed in 2006, offering 90 classrooms, an auditorium, gymnasium, and athletic and marching band fields on a state-of-the-art, esthetically pleasing campus.

In 2010, Alton Middle School was identified as a "School to Watch" by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Entering its fifth year at the old high school campus, the school is proud of its ongoing efforts to transform the building into an ideal oasis of learning for middle school students. Restrooms have been renovated, the auditorium is being reconditioned, the public address system has been updated, mounted LCD projectors have been installed in every room, and display cases and a concession stand have been added to the gym lobby.

In addition, Alton also offers four parochial schools, focusing on Christian principles and Catholic foundations.

The Bethalto Unit School District 8 has seen many exciting changes including the implementation of the Apple One-to-One Initiative Program, providing all seventh- and eighth-graders with their own personal Apple MacBook, as well as providing laptop computers for sixth-grade classes to use in the classroom. The district also is planning to create one center at Meadowbrook Intermediate School for its entire fourth- and fifth-grade population, while expanding Civic Memorial High School to better serve its students and faculty.

The Jersey Community School District 100 serves all of Jersey County, including the communities of the Village of Elsah and the City of Grafton. A new elementary school was opened in Grafton in 2006, joining the other elementary schools in Delhi, Dow, Fieldon and Jerseyville. Illini Middle School and Jersey Community High School round out the list.

The Roxana and Wood River/East Alton school districts also continue to implement technology and dedication into their daily curriculum.



LEWIS AND CLARK

Lewis and Clark Community College, located in Godfrey, is a two-year higher education institution with two campuses, two Community Education Centers and training centers located throughout the area, servicing seven counties.

With a student population of 13,500 as of 2010, Lewis and Clark stands out among Illinois community colleges with the longest continuous growth trend in the state and has enjoyed 15 consecutive years of enrollment growth, a 71 percent increase in credit students.

In addition to offering numerous associate degrees and certificates in many growing and prosperous career and transfer programs, the college has something for just about everyone, from GED courses and Workforce Training to College for Kids and so much more.

Also unique to the college is the Godfrey campus' beautiful, historic location on the grounds of the former Monticello College, an all-female seminary. The campus also features a number of eye-catching sculptures and fountains, and is a Signature Garden site for the Missouri Botanical Gardens.

Lewis and Clark offers 43 degree programs, in addition to certificates and transfer options, and 14 colleges and universities offer bachelor and master's programs on the Godfrey campus. Eighteen student clubs and organizations on campus offer membership to students, realizing the importance of varied tastes, interests and orientations.

Lewis and Clark is home to many successful Trailblazers athletics teams, including the women's soccer team, which has brought home two national titles in just more than a decade (1999 and 2008). The men's basketball team took fourth place in the 2009 national tournament, and both the men and women's tennis teams were 2009 national tournament qualifiers.

The buildings on the N.O. Nelson Campus in Edwardsville were on Illinois' list of "Ten Most Endangered Historic Sites" prior to Lewis and Clark purchasing the complex and renovating the buildings. The campus is now home to more than 1,500 students and numerous community events.

The Lewis and Clark Community College Mobile Health Unit, part of the outreach initiative through the Nurse Managed Center, provides health-care services and education to underserved residents throughout the region. Lewis and Clark is the first and only Community College in the nation to operate a mobile clinic and a nurse managed center.

Through the Mobile Health Unit, the college also delivers free dental screening and preventive work to families at least once a year during the annual Clean and Screen event.

For more information on the college and what it has to offer, visit the website at www.lc.edu.

SIUE

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, a nationally recognized university, has a student-teacher ratio of 17 to 1. It offers the advantages of a small, liberal arts college with the lowest tuition of all 12 of the state universities in Illinois.



Center for Spirituality & Sustainability on SIUE campus. Geodesic dome designed by R. Buckminster Fuller

Only 25 minutes from downtown St. Louis, with its nationally known Fortune 500 companies, professional sports venues, cultural offerings, the SIUE campus is situated on 2,660 acres of forested woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottom land.

Holding classes since 1957, SIUE emphasizes undergraduate education. Students interact with faculty at all levels, a critical factor in academic success.

Among its many accomplishments, SIUE's Senior Assignment Program has been heralded by the Association of American Colleges and Universities as a national model in the effectiveness of academic programs offered. For the fifth consecutive year, U.S. News & World Report has listed SIUE in the senior capstone experience category, among 17 universities - including Yale, Harvard, MIT and Princeton - for its comprehensive program measuring the competency of graduating seniors. And, U.S. News continues to name SIUE among America's Best Colleges because of this assessment program, which engages students and enriches their academic experience.

In addition, SIUE is among the top 15 public universities in U.S. News' Midwest-Master's category for the third consecutive year and also is in the top one-third of all public and private Midwestern universities. U.S. News bases its overall scores on the academic preparedness of students, graduation rates, faculty characteristics and the reputation of SIUE in higher education.

SIU School of Dental Medicine graduates consistently rank high among the nation's 54 dental schools on national board exams. The Carnegie Commission categorizes SIUE as primarily a residential campus, providing student life activities comparable to many larger universities.

The School of Nursing uses a state-of-the-art, simulated learning lab and serves an enrollment of students that is at an all-time high. More than \$14.6 million in state, federal and private grants also was allocated in 2008-09 to the East St. Louis Center for its programs.

For more information on what SIUE has to offer, visit the website at www.siu.edu.

TOP TEN EMPLOYERS IN RIVER BEND REGION

Olin Corporation	Manufacturer of chlor alkali products and Winchester ammunition	1,732 emps.
Global Brass and Copper, Inc.	Manufacturer & Distributor of copper and copper-alloy sheet, strip, plate, foil, rod and fabricated components	1,140 emps.
Saint Anthony's Health Center	Health Center	1,000 emps.
Alton Memorial Hospital	Health Center	860 emps
Alton Community Unit School District #11	Elementary/Secondary Education	850 emps.
Conoco Phillips Wood River Refinery	Petroleum Refining	755 emps.
Lewis and Clark Community College	Community College	578 emps.
Argosy Casino	Riverboat Gaming	570 emps
American Water	Customer Service Center	505 emps.
Beverly Farm	Home/Training Center for adults with developmental disabilities	420 emps.



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COMMUNITY WEBSITES

- City of Alton** www.alton-il.com
- Village of Bethalto** www.bethalto.com
- Village of East Alton** www.eastaltonvillage.org
- Village of Elsau** www.elsah.org
- Foster Township** www.fostertownshipil.com
- Village of Godfrey** www.godfreyil.org
- Grafton Chamber** www.enjoygrafton.com
- Village of Hartford** www.hartfordillinois.net
- Village of Roxana** www.roxana-il.org
- Village of South Roxana** www.southroxana.net
- City of Wood River** www.woodriver.org
- Wood River Township** www.toi.org/woodrivertownship
- River Bend Growth Association** www.growthassociation.com



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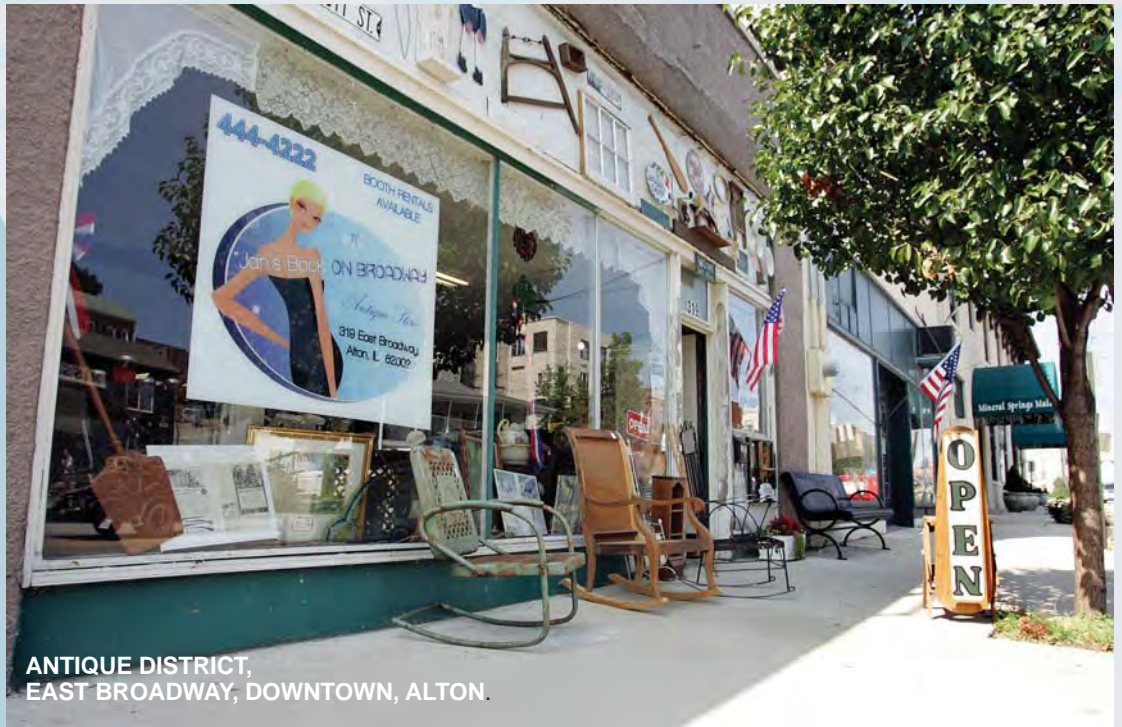
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Shopping

The River Bend offers twelve shopping plazas, a variety of clothing, book and gift shops for every need and occasion.



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Shopping in the River Bend is an experience that truly stands out from other metropolitan areas. Twelve shopping plazas offer a variety of clothing, book and gift shops for every need and occasion.

Since 1978, the Alton Square regional shopping mall has provided the area with a plethora of shops and services. Focusing on community involvement and participation, the mall has added interactive services such as a children's play area, bridal fairs and holiday concerts and activities to make the shopper's experience as pleasant and memorable as possible. Hayner Public Library District has its main branch in a new 18,000 sq.ft. facility on the lower level of Alton Square. The library serves the residents of Alton, Godfrey and Foster Township.

Stretching from downtown Alton upward, Broadway in Alton has gained

nationwide fame for its antique lover's paradise—block after block of antique shops, offering everything from dollar trinkets to elegant furniture pieces from the 18th century. Antiquing continues to be a tremendous draw for the area, and antique malls and shops also are scattered throughout the River Bend area.

For those who prefer a larger shopping arena, Kohl's, Target, Farm and Home Supply in Alton, Wal-Mart and a variety of stores in Wood River offer convenience and value. Godfrey welcomes Wal-Mart and the many stores that will surround it.

Grafton also offers a selection of gift shops, candy stores and wineries such as Jeni J's and the Grafton Winery & Brewhaus. In addition, shops like Mississippi Mud Pottery in Alton showcase the most unique gifts and will forever be a one of a kind present to be treasured for a lifetime!

UTILITIES

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Ameren	800-981-9409
Southwestern Electric Co-op	800-637-8667

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AT&T	Residential	800-222-0300
AT&T	Business	800-222-0400
PAETEC	Business	877-340-2600
Sage Telecom	Residential	888-972-7243
Sage Telecom	Business	888-226-2121
Trinsic Communications, Inc. (division of Matrix)	Residential	800-511-4572
Trinsic Communications, Inc. (division of Matrix)	Business	866-728-7490

Water

Illinois-American Water Company	Alton, Elsah, Godfrey	800-422-2782 (in IL) 800-538-1125 (outside IL)
Municipal	Bethalto	618-377-8013
Municipal	East Alton	618-259-6521
Municipal	Fosterburg Water Dist.	618-259-0935
Municipal	Grafton	618-786-3344
Municipal	Hartford	618-251-2690
Municipal	Roxana	618-254-5513
Municipal	South Roxana	618-254-1166
Municipal	Wood River	618-251-3131

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RIVER BEND AREA CITY AND VILLAGE HALLS

City of Alton	618-463-3500	101 East Third Street, Alton, IL 62002
Village of Bethalto	618-377-8723	213 North Prairie Drive, Bethalto, IL 62010
Village of East Alton	618-259-7714	119 West Main Street, East Alton, IL 62024
Village of Elsah	618-374-1568	51 Mill Street (P.O. Box 28), Elsah, IL 62028
Village of Fosterburg	618-259-0726	2919 Main Street-Fosterburg, Alton IL 62002
Village of Godfrey	618-466-3324	6810 Godfrey Rd (P.O. Box 5067), Godfrey, IL 62035
City of Grafton	618-786-3344	118 E. Main Street (P.O. Box 287), Grafton, IL 62037
Village of Hartford	618-254-5211	140 West Hawthorne, Hartford, IL 62048
Village of Roxana	618-254-4709	400 South Central Avenue, Roxana, IL 62084
Village of South Roxana	618-254-2086	211 Sinclair, South Roxana, IL 62087
City of Wood River	618-251-3100	111 N. Wood River Ave., Wood River, IL 62095
Wood River Township	618-259-7260	41 S. Ninth Street, East Alton, IL 62024

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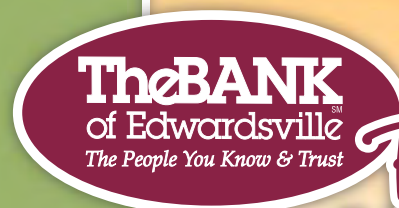
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Photo by JOHN BADMAN

ERIC MCROY, GENERAL MANAGER, TODAY'S ADVANTAGE

THE TELEGRAPH

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The history of The Telegraph dates back to January 15, 1836, when Richard M. Treadway and Lawson A. Parks founded the weekly Alton Telegraph.

The Alton publication, with a main office at 111 E. Broadway in Alton and an Edwardsville bureau, covers news in the Madison, Jersey, Macoupin, Greene, and Calhoun counties. In addition to its award winning print edition and special magazines such as *Flaire for Women* and *Home Style*, The Telegraph also offers up-to-the-minute online news at www.thetelegraph.com, as well as Facebook posts, reader polls, and staff blogs. Online subscriptions also are available.

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WBGZ (1570 AM, "The Big Z"), located in the heart of Alton on Market Street, provides area listeners with the latest in local news, weather, and sports as well as upcoming local bargains and events. Broadcasting for more than 50 years, the Metroplex Communications Inc. owned station has a 24-hour talk format with two daily talk shows, a morning and afternoon drive show, and local weekend programming (including a popular outdoors show). For more information visit www.wbgzradio.com or call (618) 465-3535.

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Today's AdVantage features local news and photography, a calendar of coming community events, births and obituaries, and a variety of columns that include sports and religion.

Display and classified advertising are a large part of this free-distribution publication delivered mid-week by the United States Postal Service to eighteen communities.

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MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC SITES

Alton Museum of History and Art	618-462-2763	2809 College Avenue, Alton IL 62002	
The Americas' History Museum of Godfrey	618-208-1530	P.O. Box 116, Godfrey, IL 62035	www.americashistorymuseum.org
Benjamin Godfrey Chapel	618-468-7000	5800 Godfrey Road (LCCC campus), Godfrey IL 62035	
Bethalto Historical Museum	618-377-9944	124 W. Main Street, Bethalto IL 62010	
Confederate Cemetery and Memorial		Rozier Street, Alton IL 62002	
Confederate Prison		William Street at Broadway, Alton IL 62002	
Elijah P. Lovejoy Monument		Alton Cemetery, Monument and 5th St, Alton IL 62002	
Haskell Playhouse		1211 Henry Street, Alton IL 62002	
Koenig House		829 E. 4th St., Alton IL 62002	
Lewis and Clark Confluence Tower	618-251-9101	435 Confluence Drive, Hartford IL 62048	www.confluencetower.com
Lewis and Clark State Historic Site #1	618-251-5811	1 Lewis and Clark Trail, Hartford IL 62048	www.campdubois.com
Lincoln-Douglas Square		Broadway and Landmarks Blvd., Alton IL 62002	
Melvin Price Locks and Dam #26	618-462-6979	IL Route 143, Alton, IL	www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Rivers
National Great Rivers Museum	618-462-6979	2 Lock and Dam Way Road, East Alton IL 62024	www.mtrf.org
Pere Marquette State Park Visitors Ctr.	618-786-3323	13112 Visitor Center Lane, Grafton IL 62037	
Piasa Bird		Piasa Park on IL Route 100, Alton IL 62002	
Robert Wadlow Statue		2810 College Avenue (IL Route 140), Alton IL 62002	
Sacagawea Statue	618-468-7000	5800 Godfrey Road (LCCC campus), Godfrey IL 62035	
Village of Elsah Museum	618-374-2626	26 LaSalle St., Elsah IL 62028	
Wood River Camp Dubois	618-254-1993	IL Route 143 & IL Route 3, Wood River IL 62095	www.woodriverheritagecouncil.org
Wood River Museum and Visitors Center	618-254-1993	40 W. Ferguson Avenue, Wood River IL 62095	www.woodriverheritagecouncil.org
Wood River Refinery History Museum	618-255-3718	900 S. Central Avenue, Roxana IL 62084	www.wrrhm.org

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SeniorServicesPlus.org

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The River Bend offers a paradise for travelers or local residents.

From French Fries to Flambe



Diners enjoy the wonderful food at Castelli's Restaurant at 255.

By FRED POLLARD

With a seemingly endless array of dining options from fast food to elegant restaurants, the River Bend area is a paradise for both the famished traveler as well as hungry local residents.

On Homer Adams Parkway, you can find nearly any type of quick cuisine, including a variety of Chinese, Mexican and hometown dining choices, along with Red Lobster, Applebee's and Amarillo Tex's, located near Alton Square Mall.

In Downtown Alton, clubs such as the Rajun Cajun, Bossanova martini lounge and Chez Marilyn offer "bar food" as well as full entrees. Fine dining choices Tony's and Gentelin's on Broadway are perfect for anniversaries, celebrations, or that all-important first date. Downtown's newest find, the State Street Market, is a European-style fresh gourmet food and home goods market, offering fresh breads, produce, and wines. With an outdoor patio

in the rear, it is the perfect destination to grab lunch and enjoy the weather and the company. Castelli's Restaurant at 255 continues its tradition of offering fine dining in Fosterburg.

Wood River also has its share of Chinese, Mexican and American cuisine, primarily located at Illinois Routes 111 and 255. Grafton has expanded its offerings of dining options with the addition of the Big Kahuna and the Grafton Winery and Brewhaus.

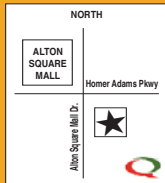
Alton, Grafton, and other surrounding communities offer a variety of Bed and Breakfast destinations, while the North Alton/Godfrey area contains a number of motels for convenient lodging. Pere Marquette State Park Lodge, located along the River Road on what was once an American Indian village, recently has undergone renovations of its 50 guest rooms and 22 natural stone cabins. The lodge offers nearby walking and camping areas, fine dining and a spacious banquet center.



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By GABRIELLE GREER

Old St. Louis Road in Wood River is a corridor with family owned, customer driven businesses. Phone Masters, Heritage Environmental, Kane Mechanical and Helmkamp Construction are all successful, long-term businesses and have found their customer base here in the RiverBend.

Established in 1986, Phone Masters is a female-owned and -operated business specializing in voice and data telecommunications. With certified and trained professionals, Phone Masters employees believe that they supply the best service and virtually any telecommunication product available through their suppliers.

"We have a phenomenal customer base because of our longevity," said Barbara Davis, owner of Phone Masters. Davis said she believes that her staff and customers have made the business what it is today. Davis sees Phone Masters as a business built on the productivity of communication both in the office

and with sales.

"We have people that have worked here for 14 years," Davis said. "Our worker with the shortest time here is five years. We run Phone Masters like a family. We still run it like a business, being professional, but we trust each other. We know that if someone is sick or is out of the office, we will work together to pick up the loose ends."

Phone Masters was owned by Davis' father-in-law until 1993. At the time, Davis didn't see owning a business as a part of her future. She said she would not have taken that courageous first step toward owning Phone Masters without the support of her friends and family.

"We were in the right place at the right time," Davis said about the start of their business. "I was a waitress and worked for an attorney. Then, when my father-in-law retired, my husband and I took over. At the beginning, I didn't know what to do, but now I look back and thank God that my husband pushed me to do this. We are very lucky.

"Phone Masters provides both the small family business personal touch, while still giv-

ing high-quality service," she said. "We provide the total package; that is key with us. We work with customers from small businesses to big corporations."

Phone Masters is located at 523 N. Old St. Louis Road.

Heritage Environmental Services is the new kid on the block. A service company that has developed a variety of customized programs to help customers manage small amounts of waste generated from multiple locations over a wide geographic area, recently moved to 251 Old St. Louis Road

The corporation serves to improve customers' environmental compliance and greatly reduce their current and future liabilities.

"We assist our customers' waste-disposal needs," Vice President Dean Croft said. "It's about providing value to our customers. We ask our customers what they need, and we do

continued on next page



HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Heritage Environmental Services is located at 251 Old St. Louis Road

our best to deliver. Giving our customers great service is what we do every day."

Heritage Environmental Services gives the community a business that is involved in every aspect of waste management, including what the company calls the hierarchy in waste management: prevention; reuse; deconstruction; detoxification and treatment and disposal. Heritage believes that they are a solutions company, offering customers quality management services, innovation and a safety/compliance mindset. Croft believes the location has added to their business' success.

"Our customer base is mostly centered from the RiverBend," Croft said. "Locally, we are a family-owned business, and our company feels like family. We see our customers on the streets, at church and around the town."

Helmkamp Construction is a full-service general contractor with construction management and design build experience. Since 1938, Helmkamp Construction has served the St.

Louis and Metro East construction markets.

"Helmkamp is a third-generation family-owned general construction company," said Tom Finan, director of business. "There is no question about it, our business is like a family. The people who work here have the attitude that 'you have to do what it takes to get it done,' the attitude that brings employees into the office on a Friday night because they have the work ethic to know what it takes to take care of the project. It's refreshing."

Finan has worked as a magazine publisher and invested much into marketing communications, gaining 35-plus years in the field. After joining Helmkamp Construction last December, Finan describes his experience working there as being surrounded by family.

"I feel very lucky to be surrounded by the folks that I work with," he said. "A part of my job is to let people know who we are as a company, and that part is very easy for me to describe because of the wonderful people here. It takes a lot of work ethic to make it here. Employees stand next to others in times of personal needs, and we perform our business in the same way."

Helmkamp Construction works with the owner to determine the best contract for the project and serves as the prime contractor or

Helmkamp Construction Co. is located at 1 Helmkamp Drive in Wood River

construction manager on conventional, design/build and/or fast-track projects under a negotiated or competitive bid basis.

"Our customer base is great here," Finan said. "A lot of our employees are from the RiverBend area and have worked here for years, so that definitely brings in loyal customers."

Helmkamp is built on a number of company values that are professional, innovative, timely, successful, reputable and integrity-driven. The company mission vows to serve clients with skill, integrity and responsibility, along with continuous dedication to safety, quality, performance and education that provides customer satisfaction and pride within their organization.

Helmkamp Construction Co. is located at 1 Helmkamp Drive in Wood River.

continued on next page 40



HELMKAMP CONSTRUCTION CO.

Kane Mechanical is located at 170 East Alton Ave., East Alton

Helmkamp is built on a number of company values that are professional, innovative, timely, successful, reputable and integrity-driven. The company mission vows to serve clients with skill, integrity and responsibility, along with continuous dedication to safety, quality, performance and education that pro-

vides customer satisfaction and pride within their organization.

Helmkamp Construction Co. is located at 1 Helmkamp Drive in Wood River.

Kane Mechanical is a full-service mechanical contractor serving the Metro East since 1949 and specializes in piping, plumbing, heating, air conditioning, sheet metal and fire protection.

Their 24/7 service is one of the main contributors to their success. Kane Mechanical is a third-generation mechanical contracting company in which the employee base has an

average of 35 years of experience.

Kane Mechanical has been in business for 60 years and has experience in all types of commercial, industrial and institutional projects; they are known for their reliability and professionalism.

Kane Mechanical is located at 170 East Alton Ave., in East Alton.

These four businesses are the epitome of good customer service, dedicated employees that are treated like family; and all realize the importance of being involved in and supporting community projects and organizations.



KANE MECHANICAL, INC.

Religion

For many area residents, faith and morality are the building blocks to a fulfilled life. Anyone looking for a home church, support group, prayer center, or spiritual counselor can find what they are looking for in the River Bend area.

Perhaps one of the most striking trends among local churches is the number of blossoming youth ministries and youth centers. Nearly every religious organization in the area offers some kind of support center for teenagers and young adults. Sports programs, study groups, substance-free activities and retreats occur throughout the year, with many youth pastors emphasizing a God-based foundation early in life.

Music also plays a larger part in modern worship, with worship services and concerts open to members and guests every weekend throughout the Alton and surrounding areas. Modern equipment and acoustically enhanced worship centers make the idea of slow, uninspiring hymns obsolete.

For a more traditional setting, several area churches offer buildings hundreds of years old, with majestic steeples and awe-inspiring architecture that can only enhance a serene, spiritual setting.

Stretching beyond mainstream Christianity, the River Bend area also offers sanctuary for those interested in world religions, New Age belief structures, and other monotheistic religions.

When it comes to faith-based foundations and interfaith cooperation, the River Bend area has someplace where every seeker can feel at home.



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The River Bend continues to progress forward



By FRED POLLARD

For generations, the River Bend area has been known as one of the most beautiful destinations in this part of the country, offering scenic landscapes, abundant wildlife, and safe habitats for endangered animals.

Visitors travel from across the country to see the bald eagles soaring over the River Road and nesting in the trees, making the observation areas a hot spot for tourists and locals alike. Pere Marquette State Park in Jersey County, Illinois' largest state park, offers a meditative respite from the industrial age, with more than 8,000 acres of nature to explore.

Today, the River Bend area continues to take up the challenge of progressing and growing without sacrificing its resources.

Developers such as Lepchenske Construction LLC and Wellspring Development Co. are striving to ensure progress continues in the region, without sacrificing the precious land they are building on. Newer residential areas such as Rock Hill Trails near Belk Park in Wood River incorporate low impact site development practices combined with high-performance, nationally certified green homes, offering healthier, high-efficiency homes with a low environmental footprint.

The local area also has cultivated young entrepreneurs who are determined to protect the places they call home. Nick Bristow, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design engineer with Clayco in St. Louis, grew up in Godfrey, where his passion for the environment was born.

"Some environmentalists are against new construction and prefer renovation of existing buildings," Bristow said. "Tomorrow, if everyone on earth started building to the same standard of living we enjoy, there would simply not be enough resources to support it. If we could build more with fewer natural resources, more people around the world could share in our same luxuries. I see it as our responsibility to develop the technology, know-how and ingenuity to continually push the envelope and make it happen."

Today, the River Bend continues to grow and greet the future, protect and honor its past, and do its part to preserve the environment and the world in which we live.

The River Bend area continues to take up the challenge of progressing and growing without sacrificing its resources.

ALTON

Founded in 1818 and incorporated in 1837, Alton enjoyed rapid growth in its early years, thanks to its prime location on the banks of the Mississippi River. Today, the city is the largest municipality in the River Bend area, with a population of around 30,000 people.

It is the region's principal shopping center. Downtown Alton's array of quaintly styled antique shops makes it one of the St. Louis area's best antique districts. The city boasts such grand attractions as a regional shopping mall, the popular Argosy Casino, the Riverfront Amphitheater, and the Gordon F. Moore Community Park with its 18-hole golf course and 12 baseball fields and 19 soccer fields. The golf course was the setting for the 1999 USGA Public

Links Championship.

The city's homes encompass everything from turn-of-the-century mansions on high bluffs overlooking the Mississippi to impressive new executive style homes, from comfortable new and old mid-size single-family homes and quality condominium and apartment complexes to small cozy homes with one to three bedrooms.

Alton Community Unit School District 11, with 11 schools, serves Alton and a few neighboring communities. Private schools are also an option. The Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville School of Dental Medicine is located in Alton.

The city has three hospitals, Alton Memorial Hospital, Saint Anthony's Hospital and its affiliate Saint Clare's Hospital.



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BETHALTO

Chartered as a village in 1869, Bethalto is one of the fastest-growing communities in Madison County. It currently has a population of 10,000 residents.

Home to the St. Louis Regional Airport, Bethalto sits at the intersection of State Routes 140 and 111. Illinois 255, which is located on the west side of the village, opened in 2006.

The community is served by the Bethalto Community Unit School District 8, offering kindergarten through high school classes. In addition, there are two parochial schools housing preschool through eighth grade students.

Bethalto has worked hard to have a fine public library, a Boys and Girls Club, a public swimming pool, a large senior citizens' center, and through the grant process has developed a 25 acre park on the northwest side of town. The park joins four oth-

ers in the village and has a one-mile walking/jogging path, fishing lake, play area, picnic pavilions, and a nature area for all to enjoy.

Construction is booming in Bethalto with several new residential developments, single-family homes and condominiums being developed with more on the drawing board. A large commercial development is planned at the Illinois Route 140 and Illinois 255 interchange.

Housing is available for all pocketbooks ranging from apartment living to large single family homes, and senior living ranges from condominiums to a senior living facility.

Spirit abounds in Bethalto, "Bethalto Spirit" that is. Volunteers make up the group and sponsor concerts in the park during the summer, a magnificent Christmas Walk, and beautify the village with plantings each year.



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EAST ALTON

With a population in excess of 6,800, East Alton also stands on the banks of the Mississippi River, adjacent to the nation's largest lock and dam. Illinois Route 3 makes travel throughout the region easy and the village is located just minutes from Illinois 255 and Interstate 270.

Incorporated in 1893, East Alton is the home to the two largest employers in the Riverbend Region, Olin Corp. (approximately 1,700 employees) and Global Brass and Copper (1,100 employees). The village's housing includes everything from apartments to large executive homes. The village has its own Fire and Police protection. East Alton School District 13, East Alton - Wood River Community High School District 14 or Roxana

Unit District 1 serve the community's students with excellent facilities, equipment, education programs, and instructors. Residents have quick access to Alton's Hospitals. The East Alton Library (a member of the Lewis and Clark Library System) serves the community with excellent service.

Three community parks are located in East Alton - Vanpreter Park, Lions Park, and Kutter Park. The Keasler Recreation Complex is the home of the Parks and Recreation Department, which provides programs starting at age 3 up to programs for senior citizens. This facility has a full gym, weight room, game room, and various meeting rooms including an auditorium. The East Alton Ice Arena is the only one of its type in the Riverbend.



CITY HALL



EAST ALTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



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ELSAH

The village of Elseh's entrance is in the valley at the base of Mount Radiance, one of the high limestone bluffs that form much of the Mississippi shoreline in the River Bend area.

The village of Elseh municipal limits include the valley and the bluffs to the east. The Great River Road is the primary access road, although the village can be reached from the north off Illinois Route 3, as well from the east on Beltrees Road.

Valuing the community's historic architectural heritage, the village includes two historic districts. The Elseh Historic District is composed of 19th century buildings located in the valley. On the bluffs, the Principia College Historic District is a National Historic Landmark recognizing the work of architect Bernard R. Maybeck. Local zoning and the dedication of the community to historic preservation have helped retain the appearance of the buildings as well as the character of the village.

The quality of life, quiet neighborhoods, and sense of a close-knit community have drawn a variety of residents to Elseh. Also, since 1935,

Principia College, a liberal arts four-year college for Christian Scientists, has been a part of village life, and the campus gives access to residents for events and other activities. Two bed and breakfasts, a few shops and a restaurant provide a destination for tourists that harmonize with the residential nature of the village. Elseh Museum offers a glimpse into Elseh's past, and Farley's Music Hall, owned and operated by Historic Elseh Foundation, offers a perfect venue for community dances, wedding receptions, speaker presentations, and other community activities. Since 1893, Elseh has been a "dry town."

The Elseh Civic Center encompasses two buildings. The contemporary section to the north offers meeting space and a kitchen for village meetings and community events, while the village government offices and a smaller meeting room occupy the adjoining 1857 Elseh School Building.

Elsah residents have easy access to employment in Jerseyville, Alton, and St. Louis, and children attend schools in the Jersey County School District. Hospitals, shopping and entertainment are nearby in Alton, Jerseyville and Grafton.



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GODFREY

Originally called Monticello, The Village of Godfrey was named for a Massachusetts sea captain, Benjamin Godfrey, who was one of the community's first settlers and largest landowner at the time of settlement. Today, the unique community of Godfrey sits just northwest of Alton along the Mississippi River. The village is second in the state only to Chicago as the municipality with the largest area base, measuring in at 36 square miles.

The community has a large residential base and a number of commercial properties. Godfrey is poised for development with the extension of Illinois 255 and the U.S. 67 corridor intersecting in the village. With a Super Wal-Mart at its core, the village has been preparing for development along the corridor by addressing

the future infrastructure needs.

Lewis and Clark Community College, a 215-acre historic campus that boasts an increasing student population every semester, serves as a regional resource to area residents and visitors throughout the world and is located in Godfrey. Beverly Farm, a home of some 380 residents with developmental disabilities, and 500 employees, is located in Godfrey.

Within Godfrey, the Alton School District serves the community with three elementary schools and the new high school, which was recently selected as one of America's Best High Schools.

Godfrey is served by its own fire protection district, with police protection contracted through the Madison County Sheriff's Department. Residents utilize



LEWIS AND CLARK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

three hospital facilities in the adjoining community of Alton.

Recreation opportunities abound in Godfrey. Rolling Hills Golf Course boasts 27 holes of golf. Godfrey Parks & Recreation Department offers youth and adult programs throughout the year including soccer, baseball,

basketball, volleyball, Zumba, and more. The 200 plus acres of parks in Godfrey offer walking and bike trails, playgrounds, native landscape, fishing and athletic fields. A very unique feature every fall is the "Great Godfrey Maze" - a giant 7-acre corn maze within Glazebrook Park.

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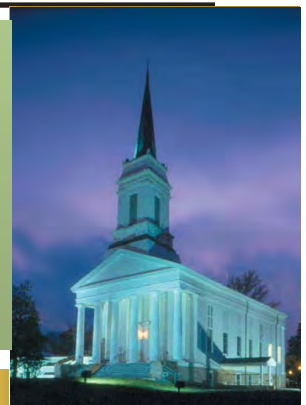
To Live: Nestled near the beautiful bluffs of the Mighty Mississippi, Godfrey is everyone's hometown. From quaint country farmhouses to modern residential developments, Godfrey has a home for your family. It is an affordable community where your housing dollar goes further.

To Learn: Godfrey's children enjoy quality educational opportunities in both elementary and secondary schools. Lewis & Clark Community College is a regional leader in higher education.

To Shop: You can visit dozens of hometown shops, tea rooms and stores to find that special item or gift. Stop and shop at our many fine establishments and take home something unique.

To Visit: Good food and lodging - and our special brand of hospitality make Godfrey an important stop when touring the River Bend area. We welcome you to visit anytime! Located on the National Scenic Byway.

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GRAFTON

Grafton is a picturesque small community nestled between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers and the beautiful limestone bluffs that run the length of the National Scenic Byway (Illinois Route 100). Alan Solomon of the Chicago Tribune named the Great River Road, "one of the 10 greatest drives in the nation."

Tourists from far and near come to the historic river town to enjoy its wineries, a wide variety of dining establishments, shops and riverview eating and drinking spots.

Home to Raging Rivers

WaterPark and Pere Marquette State Park, fishing, boating water sports, and charming overnight places to stay are available. Advertisements ask visitors to come for a Weekend and stay for a Lifetime.

New businesses are seeking opportunities in Grafton as it continues through its marketing plan to strengthen tourism and recreational facilities.

The quality and variety of real estate development is attracting a host of prospective buyers. Giving beautiful lots to people who build a home in Grafton Hills has generated national attention, including in the New York Times.



VIEW OF SUNSET OFF THE GREAT RIVER ROAD



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HARTFORD

The village of Hartford is located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and offers easy access to St. Louis, just 30 short minutes southwest.

The village is excited about tourism and providing jobs for our region and the opening of the Lewis and Clark Confluence Tower commemorating the departure of Lewis and Clark Expedition from Site No. 1 of the Lewis and Clark Trail.

The village is focused on tourism and business development highlighted by a 180-foot Lewis and Clark Confluence Tower located in the 60-acre Lewis and Clark Commerce Center with prime real estate available for hotel and restaurant development to serve residents and visitors coming to the River Bend area.

Downtown redevelopment is important to Hartford's future along with development throughout the community to better serve residents and bike riders traveling along the Confluence Bikeway from the spectacular Lewis and Clark Visitor Center and the fabulous Great Rivers Museum in

Alton. The development of 375 industrial acres on the east side of the community is a top priority with enterprise zones and TIF district incentives. This industrial site offers rail access, electric and gas lines along with water and wastewater lines.

Hartford was incorporated in 1920 and provides police and volunteer fire protection to 1,545 residents. Two school districts serve the community: Wood River-Hartford School District 15, with two elementary schools and a junior high school and East Alton-Wood River High School District 14, with one high school in Wood River.

The village is rich in recreation with a 17-acre community park containing a great walking/jogging path that also offers recreation to all ages, several neighborhood parks and a Veteran's Memorial Park on Route 3. Hartford also has the Woodrow Wilson community center with a gymnasium available for rent for citizen's enjoyment. The village is located along the Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway and adjacent to the Confluence Bikeway.



LEWIS AND CLARK CONFLUENCE TOWER

ROXANA

The Village of Roxana is proud to be a part of the southeastern corner of the River Bend region and is host to the ConocoPhillips refinery and the Roxana Landfill Authority in addition to several other business operations.

The Raifort Commerce Park, located adjacent to Illinois 255, offers several hundred acres of property suited to support future development in the River Bend.

The village offers numerous public services with a full time police and fire department, water and wastewater treatment, and



refuses and compost waste collection. Roxana also is the center of Roxana Community School District, which is adding a \$4.5 million expansion to the school

complex. The Roxana Park District is well staffed and provides year-round recreational programs and activities for all ages.

Infrastructure projects include

a new wastewater treatment facility and road improvements.

Roxana officials say their community is a great place to live and raise a family.



SOUTH ROXANA

As its name implies South Roxana is located in the south end of the River Bend area and is home to just under 2,000 residents who are served by a full-time police department and the South Roxana Volunteer Fire Protection District.

The Roxana School District serves South Roxana with one elementary school located with-

in the village.

The village has two parks including the 10-acre South Roxana Dad's Club. The Dad's Club sponsors the annual homecoming along with weekly bingo.

Two industrial TIF districts were established to attract development along Illinois Route 111 and Madison Avenue to its intersection with Illinois 255.



EAST ALTON-WOOD RIVER HIGH SCHOOL

WOOD RIVER

The City of Wood River was incorporated in 1908 after it became home to many Standard Oil employees and their families. The community has grown to a population of 11,300 residents and is located in the western portion of Madison County.

The city provides a wealth of resources for residents in the form of services, recreation and tourism, economical housing and convenience.

As a full-service community, the city provides highly professional services via its council-manager form of government. The city employs 75 full-time staff members, operates a \$17 million budget, provides water and sewer services, operates a 911 emergency service and maintains an ISO rating of 4.

A blend of history and scenic beauty combine to make living here a unique quality of life experience. The community lies at the bend of the Mississippi River along the Illinois banks and was the winter home for explorers Lewis and Clark during their famous expedition. The significance of the Lewis and Clark trail attracts many history enthusiasts

to the area.

The community enjoys all the amenities available to an urban population while cherishing a small town atmosphere. Wood River offers a top-rated 18-hole public golf course and banquet facility along with a family-friendly Aquatic Center providing a swimming pool, diving well, and dual-flume water slide. Other recreational facilities include soft-ball diamonds, a skate park, and a soccer complex.

For the region's shopping needs, Wood River Plaza is a 72-acre complex anchored by a Wal-Mart SuperCenter. Numerous restaurants, specialty shops, and national tenants are located within the complex. The Plaza offers three stand-alone strip malls and several outlot parcels.

Wood River consists of a diverse stock of housing, from modern luxury homes to historic Sears homes. There are currently two new subdivisions offering homes/lots for sale. Rock Hill Trails is a 300 lot planned unit development focusing on sustainability and LEED certification. Grand View Hills sits on 45 scenic acres and offers green space with 82 lots ready for construction.



WOOD RIVER AQUATIC CENTER

ad directory

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