

Fairs • Festivals • Summer Fun



The Mendota Reporter & The Amboy News

Wednesday, May 28, 2025



Sweet corn is dropped into the tank in preparation to be served to the many people that line-up down Illinois Avenue to get a taste of the delectable treat.



Children are entertained by the performance of Magic Matt, who strolls the festival all day showing his tricks.

Sweet corn, pageants, parade and more highlight the 78th Sweet Corn Festival

MENDOTA – Tons of free, hot, buttered, delicious sweet corn will be the highlight of the 78th annual Sweet Corn Festival to be held in Mendota on Aug. 7-10.

The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce is preparing for the gigantic undertaking of hosting over 60,000 visitors, who consume over 50 tons of sweet corn during the festival weekend.

Don't miss the excitement as the festival offers a variety of entertainment events for the entire family. The events take place primarily in the downtown area, and with the exception of the beer garden, have no admission fees or parking fees.

Free musical entertainment is in abundance. The Crafters Market Place and Flea Market features dealers in hand-made crafts and unique merchandise. There is a Queen Pageant, beer gar-

den with live bands, grand parade and a carnival with rides and games for both adults and children, plus much more.

The midways are lined with food booths, featuring a multitude of ethnic, regional and festival foods, but the "BIG EVENT" is the serving of the free sweet corn on Sunday afternoon. For over 75 years, it has been cooked

to its golden goodness with the help of a vintage steam engine.

The good times are waiting, the welcome mat is out, come to Mendota for one of the Midwest's oldest and largest harvest festivals, the 78th annual Sweet Corn Festival.

For more information, visit www.sweetcornfestival.com.



LAMOILLE BUFFALO DAYS

June 13-15, 2025

THURSDAY, JUNE 12

5:00-7:00 Paint the Town (\$5)
Gurney street (behind bank)
Foam Party Included / Snacks
provided. (Rae 910-7711 / Ashley
878-7909)
5:00 Chiller's Shakeups & Ice
Cream (\$)

FRIDAY, JUNE 13

4:00 Food - Taco Special / Beer
Tent Opens
Chiller's Shakeups & Ice Cream (\$)
4-8 Blondin's Bounceables
(Wristbands \$10)
5:30 Baby Buff Winners Announced-
Allen School
6:00 Prairie Princess- Allen School
(Mara 579-1833)
5K Stampede-High School
(Stacy 878-6962)
8:30-12 Music By **THE BRAT PACK**
- Beer Tent
11:00 Egg Sandwiches

Parade Registration is in the High
School parking lot. Parade Route will go
North this year on Main Street, starting
at Burnett Street, ending at the Park.

**Come get your
buffalo burger!**

Congratulations

**2025 Grand Marshalls: 2 Time State
Champion in 8 man Football. Here's
your 2023-24 Amboy / La Moille /
Ohio Clippers Football Team**

SATURDAY, JUNE 14

8:00 Tractor Show (Munro 303-1960)
10:00 Food / Beer Tent Opens
Parade Registration - HS Parking Lot
10-4 Vendor Fair (Tammy Mcstoost-
Stachowiak 830-8215)
11:00 Parade-Main Street
(Jeremy 343-6848 / Brian 200-2899)
12:00 Adult Waterfights Registration-
Sheldon Street by Park
Chiller's Shakeups & Ice Cream (\$)
12-4 Silent Auction
12-8 Blondin's Bounceables
(Wristbands \$20)
1:00 Adult WaterFights Begins
Magic Show by John Measner
1-3 Kids Fun fair
1-4 Around the Town Entertainment
- Caricature Drawing
2:00 Magic Show by John Measner
2:30-4:30 Foam Party (included in
wristband)
3:00 Magic Show by John Measner
3-7 Music By **WISE GUYS** - Beer Tent
8-12 Music by **WILDCARD** - Beer Tent

11:00 Egg Sandwiches

SUNDAY, JUNE 15

9:00-10:30 Churches of La Moille
Service Park Pavilion
9:30 Biscuits and Gravy (food tent)
10:30 Sign Up Bags Tournament -
Beer Tent
11:00 Food / Beer Tent Opens
Bags Tournament begins
Kiddie Waterfights Registration
- Sheldon Street
Chiller's Shakeups & Ice Cream (\$)
11:30 Kiddie Waterfights begins
1-6 Music by **BURN N BUSH** - Beer Tent
2:00 Live Auction - Beer Tent (Lori
252-2827)
5:30 50/50 Drawing

Complete listing of events:
www.lamoillebuffalodays.org
Or call 815-878-5858



Mendota's 78th Annual Sweet Corn Festival

August 7-10, 2025



FREE ADMISSION!

FREE PARKING! FREE ENTERTAINMENT!

Carnival Mega Pass - Ride All Day, Every Day! Ride Thursday through Sunday from open until close with a Mega Pass!

Saturday and Sunday

Crafter's Marketplace & Flea Market -

Lots of vendors in two locations. Veteran's Park on Rt. 34 in downtown Mendota and the Elks Club parking lot on Indiana Ave. & Jefferson St. just 1/2 block north of Veteran's Park.

Grand Parade at 1 p.m.

on Sunday, Aug. 10

Tons of FREE Hot, Buttered, Delicious Sweet Corn Served Sunday, Aug. 10 at 2 p.m., at the intersection of Illinois Ave. & Jefferson St.

Sweet Corn 50/50 Raffle

Sweet Corn Festival 50/50 Tickets for the 2025 festival are on sale now at the Mendota

Chamber of Commerce Office!

In 2024 the pot reached \$29,519 and the winner took home \$14,760!

On site sales will conclude on

Sunday, Aug. 10, at 3pm.

The winner will be drawn live on Sunday, Aug. 10.



'The Wayouts' will perform on the Main Stage at Amboy Depot Days on Aug. 22.

Journey back to the '60s with the sounds of 'The Wayouts' at Amboy Depot Days

AMBOY – Get ready to go back in time with the fabulous sounds of the 60s when 'The Wayouts' take the Main Stage at Amboy Depot Days on Friday, Aug. 22 at 7 p.m.

The Wayouts are made up of four passionate rockers – Steve Cimino on drums and vocals, Eric Korte on bass and vocals, Brian McDonnell on guitar and vocals, and Jeff Palac on guitar and vocals.

The Wayouts are the newest stand-out on the Chicago festival scene. Dedicated exclusively to garage rock hits from the 1960s, The Wayouts deliver an authentic revival of Rock n' Roll's first generation with hits from The Kinks, The Animals, The Troggs, The Monkees, The Zombies, The Sonics and tons more — songs

everybody knows with no run-of-the-mill "oldies."

The Wayouts are a family-friendly, dance-crazy, beer-tent shaking revival of Rock n' Roll's first-generation anthems, appealing equally to hipsters, soccer moms and grandparents. The carefully curated Wayouts' set list is made up exclusively of songs that everybody knows but aren't worn out by your average classic rock and oldies acts. There are no computers, no synthesizers and no gimmicks... just four guys and the coolest songs ever written.

All veterans of the Chicago music scene, The Wayouts' members have diverse musical resumes including signed, original indie rock projects, solo singer/songwriters and high-pro-

file cover bands. The four friends discovered a shared love of 1960s garage rock anthems and recognized an opportunity to offer something different in Chicago's live music scene.

Formed in 2017, The Wayouts' broad appeal was immediately recognized by fans and promoters alike. Their meticulous set selection, raucous delivery and expert musicianship quickly landed them premier billing at summer festivals and premier venues throughout the Chicago area including Rosemont's Parkway Bank Park, Naperville Rib Fest and Wrigley Field's Gallagher Way.

Get ready to journey back to those far out and groovy days of the 1960s with The Wayouts at this year's Amboy Depot Days.

Plenty of fun in store at LaMoille's Buffalo Days on June 13-15

LaMOILLE – LaMoille Buffalo Days is back on June 13-15 with plenty of entertainment, fun and food, including the famous buffalo burger.

The celebration will kick off with a paint-the-town event from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, June 13.

The activities will ramp up on Friday, June 13 with food vendors, activities for children and the beer tent. Baby Buff winners will be announced at 5:30 p.m. and the Prairie Princess will take place at 6 p.m. as well as the 5K Stampede. The beer tent will be open from 8:30 p.m.-midnight featuring the music of 'The Brat Pack.'



A tractor show will start the day on Saturday, June 14 at 8 a.m. Food vendors and the beer tent will open at 10 a.m. and a vendor fair is set for 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The parade will kick off at 11 a.m. on Main Street with this year's grand marshals being members of the two-time Illinois 8-Man Football state champion Amboy/LaMoille/Ohio football teams. Other highlights of the day include adult water fights at 1 p.m., a silent auction from noon-4 p.m., a kids' fun fair from 1-3 p.m., magic shows at 2 and 3 p.m., and plenty of other children's activities. 'The Wise Guys' will entertain in the beer tent from 3-7 p.m. and 'Wildcard' will take the stage from 8 p.m.-midnight.

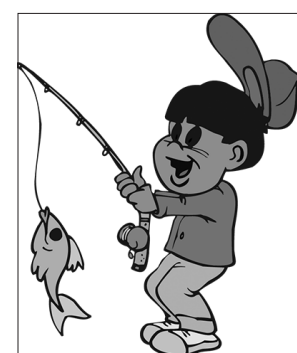
Among the events for the final day of the celebration on Sunday, June 15 are a bags tournament at 11 a.m. and kiddie water fights at 11:30 a.m. Music by 'Burn N Bush' will be provided from 1-6 p.m. in the beer tent. A live auction is scheduled for 2 p.m. and the 50/50 drawing will take place at 5:30 p.m.

A complete listing of events is available at www.lamoillebuffalodays.org or call 815-878-5858.

Lions Club to hold Kids' Fishing Rodeo on June 8

MENDOTA – The Mendota Lions Club will hold a Kids' Fishing Rodeo on Sunday, June 8 at Lake Mendota. Registration is from 10-11 a.m. and fishing will be from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The fishing rodeo is for all children ages 3-15. Every child wins a prize, and receives a hot dog, chips and drink for lunch.





Cowboy Co. The Country Music Show to entertain at Amboy Depot Days Aug. 23

AMBOY – Cowboy Co. The Country Music Show will perform on the Main Stage at Amboy Depot Days on Saturday, Aug. 23 at 7 p.m. Cowboy Co. The Country Music Show is a Nashville style band experience based in Chicago. With a huge repertoire, each set list is picked by the audience during the show, making every single performance unique. The band plays modern hits from artists like Morgan Wallen, Hardy, Zach Bryan, and Taylor Swift while simultaneously bringing Metallica, Elvis, Beyonce, and more to the table.

28th annual Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival set for Aug. 15-17 at Rochelle's Atwood Park

ROCHELLE – The 28th annual Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival is planned for the weekend of Aug. 15-17 at Atwood Park in Rochelle.

There will be a carnival/games and beer garden for all three days of the event. There will also be a 50/50 raffle, other raffles throughout the weekend, craft, vendor and business booths, a food court and various local talents performing each day.

Friday, Aug 15 will feature the Little Miss Peanut competition at 7 p.m. and the music of Rollin' Whiskey from 8-10 p.m.

On Saturday, Aug. 16,



the Hub City Cruisers Car and Motorcycle Show will take place from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Day two of the festival

Third Thursday concert series is now underway at Hegeler Carus Mansion

LaSALLE – The Third Thursday Concert Series for 2025 in the Grove at the Hegeler Carus Mansion in LaSalle kicked off May 15 and will continue every third Thursday through September. Concerts will take place from 6:30-8 p.m. (gates open at 6 p.m.).

Each concert will feature live music, food vendors, a guest emcee, and a 50/50 raffle. Bring your chairs, blankets, and your favorite people for an awesome time under the tree canopy.

The remainder of the 2025 lineup includes: June 19-Fiddle Rock; July 17-Steve Sharp; Aug. 21-Kev Roy and the Overjoyed; Sept. 18-Big Uproar.

A unique add-on this year includes a Crescendo Tour: Trip to the Stars on Sept. 18. After the concert join in for a special trip to the highest point of the mansion: the cupola. This "night cap" will



last 10-15 minutes and be the high point of your evening. Cost: \$15/person

"The concerts are back with a few new opportunities," said Laura Walker, Hegeler Carus Foundation Executive Director. "You won't want to miss it."

Admission is \$5 a person at the gate or online at the

mansion website, hegeler-carus.org. Buy your tickets in advance and make your plans.

The Hegeler Carus Mansion was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995, and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2007, a prestigious designation

granted by the U.S. National Park Service. The Mansion is located at 1307 Seventh St., LaSalle.

For information about tours and services of the Mansion, visit its website at www.hegelercarus.org or Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/hegelercarus/>



MENDOTA

KIDS FISHING RODEO

Kids ages 3-15 are welcome. Every child wins a prize, and receives a hot dog, chips and a drink for lunch.

SUNDAY, JUNE 8TH
LAKE MENDOTA

Registration
10:00 am - 11:00 am

Fishing
11:00 am - 12:30 pm



will also be Kids' Zone Saturday with free face painting, games, bouncy houses, snacks and drinks for the kids from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Magic Matt's Family Fun Show will be strolling through the festival grounds from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. and Rise Up Dance Co. will perform from 10-11 a.m. Next up, Blue Steam will be performing from noon-1 p.m., followed by a performance from Ballet Folklorico Xchiquetzal from 1-1:45 p.m. Vanguardia will take the stage from 2-4 p.m., and then PM Studio C Dance will entertain from 4-4:45 p.m., the music of

The Beaux Band can be enjoyed from 5-7 p.m. and Hi Infidelity will finish up the night from 8-10 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 17 will start with New Hope Fellowship church service from 9:30-10:30 a.m. A parade will kick off at 1 p.m. with the parade route set for Route 38 and Lincoln Highway into downtown. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Magic Matt's Family Fun Show will be walking the festival grounds. Neal Woolbright Music will be featured from 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m., followed by 3 Good Men from 1-3 p.m. and Members Only 80s Band from 4-6 p.m.

Railroad Heritage Day making a return to Mendota on June 14th

MENDOTA – The Mendota Historical Society is pleased to announce that it is bringing back one of its most popular events. Railroad Heritage Day will be held on Saturday, June 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Union Depot Railroad Museum, 783 Main St., Mendota.

This one-day event will feature lots of great history focused activities and exhibits. The day will include activities for people of all ages.

Among the outstanding things on the docket will be a display of antique cars and trucks, barrel train rides for the children and a vintage inspection car. In addition, the Old West Regulators will be there to stage a robbery of



the on-site historic mail car.

Food and beverages will be available for purchase and music will be provided by local favorite, Ray Tutaj. The event will go ahead rain or shine. This is going to be fun for the entire family.

According to Historical Society board member Alan Russell, "This event has always been a favorite with the community. After taking a break from it last year, we wanted to be sure to bring it back for 2025."

Star-studded musical lineup to take the Grandstand Stage at the 2025 Illinois State Fair

SPRINGFIELD – A wide variety of musical genres will take the Grandstand Stage during this year's Illinois State Fair, which takes place Aug. 7-17 in Springfield.

This year's lineup includes Jake Owen-Aug. 8; The Black Crowes-Aug. 9; Megan Moroney-Aug. 10; Sheryl Crow-Aug. 12; Snoop Dogg-Aug. 13; Brad Paisley-Aug. 14; The Chainsmokers-Aug. 15; Def Leppard-Aug. 16; Turnpike Troubadours-Aug. 17. All shows start at 8 p.m.

There are multiple "tiers" of tickets available in the grandstand, along with tickets available on the track in a standing room only section. A "Blue Ribbon Zone" is also available, with ticketholders receiving barstool seating and drink service, according to officials.

More information can be found on the Illinois State Fair's website.

Tickets do not cover admission to the fairgrounds. Tickets to the fair cost \$5 Sunday-Thursday and \$10 on Saturdays and Sundays for individuals between the ages of 13 and 59, with discounts for senior citizens and free tickets for children age 12 and younger.



Friday, Aug. 15
Saturday, Aug. 16
Sunday, Aug. 17

FUN IN
THE PARK

Atwood Park
in Rochelle

FRIDAY AUGUST 15

*FOOD COURT 4-10 P.M.
*AMUSEMENTS 4-10 P.M.
*BEER GARDEN 4-10 P.M.
SPONSORED BY LISA'S PUB
*LITTLE MISS PEANUT 6-7 P.M.
*ROLLIN' WHISKEY 8-10 P.M.



SATURDAY AUGUST 16

*CAR SHOW 8 A.M.- 3 P.M.
*CRAFT & VENDOR SHOW 10 A.M.- 5 P.M.
*CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT 11 A.M.- ?
*KIDS ZONE 11 A.M.- 3 P.M.
*MAGIC MATT'S FAMILY FUN SHOW 11 A.M.- 8 P.M.
*FOOD COURT 11 A.M.- 10 P.M.
*AMUSEMENTS 11 A.M.- 10 P.M.
*BEER GARDEN 11 A.M.-10 P.M.
SPONSORED BY LISA'S PUB
*BLUE STEAM NOON-1 P.M.
*BALLET FOLKLORICO XOCHIQUETZAL 1-1:45 P.M.
*VANGUARDIA 2-4 P.M.
*STUDIO C DANCE 4-4:45 P.M.
*THE BEAUX BAND 5-7 P.M.
*HI INFIDELITY 8-10 P.M.

SUNDAY AUGUST 17

*CRAFT & VENDOR SHOW 10 A.M.-4 P.M.
*MAGIC MATT'S FAMILY FUN SHOW 11 A.M.- 6 P.M.
*BEER GARDEN NOON-6 P.M.
SPONSORED BY LISA'S PUB
*PARADE 1 P.M.
*NEAL WOOLBRIGHT 11:30 A.M.-12:15 P.M.
*3 GOOD MEN 1-3 P.M.
* MEMBERS ONLY 80'S BAND 4-6 P.M.

50/50 RAFFLE
TICKETS
PLUS OTHER
PRIZES

lhhfest.com



Stillman
BANK



Justin Moore to appear Aug. 9.

Country music sensation Justin Moore headlines the Boone County Fair

□ Fair to run Aug. 5-10 in Belvidere

BELVIDERE — The Boone County Fair Association is proudly presenting multi-platinum hitmaker Justin Moore to be headlining the 2025 Boone County Fair on Saturday evening, Aug. 9, with special guest Noah Hicks at 7 pm.

Tickets for the concert are on sale now online at boonecountyfair.com. Ticket prices range from \$30 to \$50. Tickets purchased online will be held in Will Call at the Fairgrounds ticket office at Gate 1 and will be available for pickup beginning Saturday, July 12 through Saturday, Aug. 9. ID is required. Ticket office hours will be posted on the fair's website and Facebook page.

The 2025 Fair will also feature in the evenings the Miss Boone County Fair Queen and Little

Miss Pageant Tuesday, the Monster Truck Show Wednesday, Truck and Tractor Pulls Thursday, Next Level Professional Bull Riding Friday, and Two Demo Derbies on Sunday. The 2024 fair recorded a record attendance of 242,072 fairgoers.

The 2025 Boone County Fair, 8847 Illinois 76, will run from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 5 through Sunday, Aug. 10. Daily admission is \$10 ages 11 and up. 10 and under free. Seniors 65+ Free on Thursday. Free parking. Season passes \$25 in advance. All tickets for all shows go on sale at the Fairgrounds ticket office beginning Saturday, July 12 from 8 a.m. to noon. Hours, schedule and more will be posted as they are available at www.boonecountyfair.com. It's going to be FAIRTASTIC!

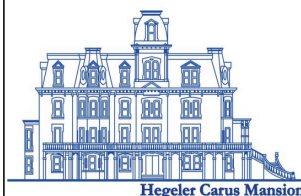


On the grove of our
National Historic Landmark

1307 Seventh St. * LaSalle, IL
61301

- Gates open at 6:00 pm
- \$5.00 admission pay at gate
- Food and drink allowed, bring chair or blanket

For more information visit our website at
www.hegelercarus.org



Third Thursday Concert Band Line-up

May 15th -	Cody Calkins <i>Country</i>
June 19th -	Fiddlerock <i>Classic rock played on fiddle</i>
July 17th -	Steve Sharp Band <i>Jimmy Buffet, Acoustic guitar</i>
August 21st -	Kev Roy and the Overjoyed <i>Blues/Jazz</i>
September 18th -	Big Up roar <i>American Rock</i>

Concert Sponsor

Halm Electric*
Heartland Bank & Trust*
Korte & Turpen Tree Service*
Lifetime of Smiles*
OSF Healthcare*
Reel Creative
Shaw Local Radio*
Starved Rock Media *

Sterling St.

Dimond Brothers Insurance*

Seventh St.

Aplington, Kaufman, McClintock, Steele, Barry*
Central Bank *
Ficek Electric & Communication Systems
Hometown National Bank*
JB Contracting*
Tieman Builders*
Witek Wealth Management*

Family

Grasser Plumbing & Heating
Illinois Valley Community College
La Salle State Bank *
Mueller Funeral Homes*
John Pohar & Sons Inc.*
Peru Federal Savings and Loan*

* Recurring Sponsors



Amboy Depot Days

AUGUST 21, 22, 23 & 24

Amboy, IL • depotdays.com

WORLD FAMOUS AMBOY DEPOT DAYS

CAR SHOW

50/50 DRAWING





National music acts to play Streator Fest July 31-Aug. 3

STREATOR — Streator Fest is returning bigger and better than ever from Thursday, July 31, to Sunday, Aug. 3, 2025, at North Point Plaza in Streator.

This year promises to feature larger national music acts, an increased number of vendors, more live music, a beer garden, and over a dozen food vendors each day. Additionally, attendees can enjoy rides and games and the largest fireworks display in downstate Illinois on Sunday night.

The Streator Fest main stage lineup is as follows:

Thursday, July 31 – Quiet Riot, Britny Fox, 80's Bush
Friday, Aug. 1 – Aaron Lewis and The Stateliners, Sterling Elza, TBA

Saturday, Aug. 2 – Theory of a Deadman, 10 Years, Revel In Red

Sunday, Aug. 3 – The Eric Church Experience and Tennessee Whiskey, Wreckin' Dixie, Banda Cerro Azul De Chicago, and Grupo Cadencia

Exciting news has arrived regarding this year's concert lineup, and with it come some important changes to the pricing

structure. In previous years, Streator Fest offered free general admission, with \$5 wristbands available for attendees over 21 who wished to purchase alcohol. This year, however, wristbands will be complimentary for anyone aged 21 and over. General admission tickets for the concert will now cost \$10 in advance for all attendees (Thursday, Friday and Saturday – Sunday will remain a free event).

Additionally, concertgoers can purchase VIP Party Pit tickets, which provide access to a section closest to the stage for an exhilarating concert experience, right in front of the general admission area. This VIP section also includes an exclusive lanyard, private restrooms, and dedicated bars. Three-day festival ticket packages are available at a discounted rate as well.

Tickets for both general admission and Party Pit access are on sale. Be sure to purchase yours early to avoid missing out on what promises to be an electrifying event. For more details about ticket sales and concert information, please visit www.streatorfest.com.

There's something for everyone at Illinois State Fair

SPRINGFIELD—Something old and something new, the Illinois State Fair will offer a little something for everyone to enjoy this year.

Fans of the fair and its food gathered at the state fairgrounds in April to celebrate the countdown of 100 days until the Illinois State Fair begins Aug. 7. Thousands of people traveled to Springfield on April 29 to savor their favorite fair foods, purchase discounted admission books and more.

Joe Khayyat, Illinois State Fair year-round events coordinator, told FarmWeek renovations at the Illinois State Fair Coliseum, which began with a roof overhaul in 2019, are nearly complete. Phase two renovations focused on updating electrical, heating and cooling, plumbing and sound systems, as well as improving accessibility.

The building is functional and was recently used for a horse show. Khayyat said the project is now in its "punch list phase," which involves final touches and corrections before the project is officially completed.

In addition to infrastructure improvements, Khayyat mentioned that the state fair team, especially Rebecca Clark, Illinois State Fair manager, has worked hard to make the fair more accessible. This includes offering a sensory room for individuals with sensory issues and providing more food options for those with dietary restrictions.

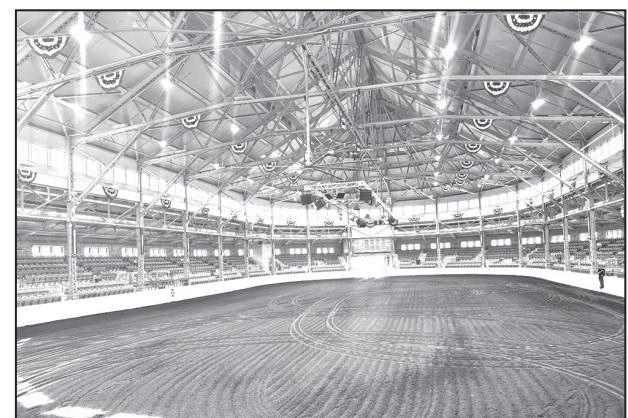
"I just think that we've made a real concerted effort over the last couple of years to make the fair more friendly to more potential fairgoers," Khayyat said.

One of the newest additions to the fair's food vendor list, and a friend to

those with dietary needs, is Hae's Bakery and Coffee Shop. The vendor made its debut at the fair last year, and Alex Devaney, Hae's new general manager, is eager to return this summer.

"I've been a fairgoer since I was a baby," Devaney said, noting that she used to work in a corn dog stand at the state fair while she was in high school. "I just feel like everything kind of flows pretty naturally out here, so that's why I'm so excited to be back."

Whether visitors come to show livestock, see the butter cow, attend a concert at the grandstand, enjoy fair food or try something new, Khayyat said there is always something for everyone. The new additions to the fair are exciting, but the traditional favorites are



The Illinois State Fair Coliseum renovation project just needs final touches and corrections before the project is officially completed and ready for this year's Illinois State Fair. (Photo by Hannah Spangler of FarmWeek)

what make the Illinois State Fair special.

"What draws a lot of people is really the combination of old and new," Khayyat said.

(This story was distrib-

uted through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)

LEE COUNTY FAIR & 4-H SHOW

July 24-27, 2025

Lee County Fairgrounds • 1196 Franklin Road, Amboy

FUN ON THE MIDWAY

Barrel Train, County Fair Speedway, Axe Throwing, Pony Rides, Petting Zoo, Bounce Houses, Magic Show

GRANDSTAND EVENTS

TRACTOR/TRUCK PULLS: July 24th & 25th • RODEO: July 26th

leecountyfairgrounds.com or on Facebook @leeco4hfair

SMILES FOR DAYS!





8 games to try at the next backyard bash

Games can enhance any outdoor function. Whether at the beach or in one's backyard, activities can keep guests entertained in-between the food and other refreshments. And the good news is that most games designed for these types of functions are appropriate for players across a wide range of ages.

The following are eight games that can add to the excitement of any outdoor gathering.

1. Ladder toss: Also known as ladder golf, this game requires players to toss string-attached balls onto a ladder-shaped target. Points are awarded depending on which rung the ball lands on.

2. Kubb: Pronounced "KOOB," this Swedish lawn game believed to have originated during the era of the Vikings and is best described as a blend of bowling and horseshoes. Two teams compete to knock over their opponents' wooden blocks by throwing batons.

3. Cornhole: Many people have played cornhole, which involves tossing bean bags at the cornhole board. The objective is to get the bag into the hole or on the board to score points. The game can be played as singles or doubles. The first team to reach 21 points wins.

4. Spikeball™: Also called Roundnet, this two-on-two sport is played by hitting a ball off a net with the goal of preventing the opposing team from returning the ball within three touches.

5. Ring toss: This is another game that tests hand-eye coordination. Players take turns tossing the rings onto the target pegs. Each peg is worth a different number of points. The first player to reach the agreed-upon amount of points wins.

6. Connect four in a row: Giant versions of familiar tabletop games also are available for yard use. With this game, players need to get four chips in a row, either up and down or diagonal.

7. Kan Jam®: Similar to cornhole or horseshoes, Kan Jam® features two teams of two that alternate between throwing a frisbee and trying to deflect it. The goal is to get the frisbee into the can.

8. Rollers: Goals are placed 25 feet apart and then players roll wooden discs to try to get closest to the goal. Each side of the disc has a different number to determine the point value.

Backyard events can be enhanced with some game play. There are plenty of fun options for your next gathering.

Gear that first-time campers will want to take along to the campsite

The natural beauty of the great outdoors compels millions of people to incorporate nature into their daily routines. Whether it's a morning walk around the neighborhood, an ocean-front weekend spent with toes in the sand or an afternoon lounging on a lake, there's no shortage of ways to enjoy the great outdoors.

Camping is a wildly popular way for outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy nature. Spending daylight hours in a wooded area or forest may not be unusual for outdoor enthusiasts, but camping under the stars at night can be intimidating for first-timers accustomed to comfortable, climate-controlled bedrooms. The right gear can calm any nervousness first-time campers may have, and the following are some items to take along.

• Tent: A tent is obviously a must-have when planning to spend the night under the stars. Shelter protects campers from the elements, insects and wildlife, so it's imperative that first-time campers bring along enough tents to accommodate everyone on the trip. Novice campers may be overwhelmed by the assortment of options available when they look to buy a tent, so it's best to visit a local outdoor retailer for advice. Share the specifics of the trip, including how long it will be and how many people will need to be accommodated. Such information will help to determine the best tent for your trip.

• Sleeping bag, pad and pillow: A sleeping bag is another necessity, but it's also important to bring along a sleeping pad. Temperatures drop at night, so



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a well-insulated sleeping bag can keep campers warm at night. A multi-season sleeping bag can be an especially useful investment that helps campers prepare for fluctuating temperatures. No matter how comfortable a sleeping bag may seem, the hard ground does not typically increase the chances of a good night's rest. That's why a sleeping pad is vital, particularly for first-time campers unaccustomed to sleeping in anything other than a bed. Round out your sleeping must-haves by bringing along a pillow.

• Chairs: Of course, camping trip comfort isn't all about sleeping. A comfortable and foldable chair for everyone in the party is another essential. Chairs should be sturdy and ideally not too heavy, particularly if

the campsite is a long walk from the car.

• Kitchenware: Cooking is a fun part of camping, especially when campers remember to bring along the appropriate kitchenware. A camp stove with two burners can make it easy to whip up just about anything. A single burner stove might suffice for small camping parties, but the double burner stove enables cooking more than one item at once. In addition to a sturdy stove, bring along some forks, knives and plates.

• Bug spray: Bugs won't get the hint that campers don't want them around the campsite, so don't forget to pack some bug spray to repel these unwanted guests.

• Sunscreen: Even if you're staying in a wooded area or forest with ample

shade overhead, you'll want to apply sunscreen to avoid skin damage. Even a mild sunburn can make sleeping in a tent for the first time more difficult, so apply sunscreen early and reapply as directed on the bottle.

• Miscellaneous items: Lighting to augment light coming from a campfire, toiletries to ensure bathroom breaks are as comfortable as possible, garbage bags and containers to secure trash and reduce the risk of attracting wildlife, and a few books or magazines to read while resting at the campsite are some additional items first-time campers won't want to forget.

Camping is a fun activity that's even more enjoyable when campers remember to pack the right gear.



Country music's Sawyer Brown to appear in Sublette

□ Concert a part of Hops + Harmony

SUBLETTE – Hosted by Sublette 365, Hops + Harmony is back for its fifth year with an exciting lineup featuring over 15 craft breweries from Northern Illinois and Chicago.

With each passing year, the Hops & Harmony event grows in excitement. This year, the committee is thrilled to announce that the headliner will be Sawyer Brown, a band often referred to as the “Rolling Stones of Country Music.” They will be performing in Sublette on Saturday, Sept. 6, 2025. Sawyer Brown has released 23 albums and more than 50 chart singles, earning several CMA, ACM, and CMT awards.

Opening the show this year is Walker Montgomery, who has been recognized as an Artist to Watch by Country

Now, Music Mayhem Magazine, Sounds Like Nashville, and The Boot. Montgomery is a rising singer/songwriter who understands the importance of family tradition while forging his own legacy. At just 21 years old, he is the son of John Michael Montgomery and the nephew of Eddie Montgomery from Montgomery Gentry, showcasing a lineage matched only by his passion for country music.

Beer-tasting tickets include both tastings and concert access, while concert-only tickets will also be available for purchase. This is an all-ages event. Gates and the beer tasting will open at 6 p.m. at Centennial Park, Sublette, with live music beginning at 7:30 p.m.

For ticket information, go online to www.sublette365.com.

Lee County 4-H Fair provides family fun

AMBOY – If it’s the end of July in Lee County, it means one thing – it’s time for the Lee County 4-H Fair & Junior Show. This year’s event is set for Thursday, July 24 through Sunday, July 27 at the Lee County 4-H Fairgrounds located at 1196 Franklin Road, just north of Amboy.

Gates open at 10 a.m. on Thursday as judging for general projects and livestock begin immediately. The Midway will be open from 4-9 p.m. At 5:30 p.m., a new feature, Get Creative with TMG Designs, will be held in the vendor tent. Another new feature will be Farmer Games in the Show Barn. The excitement continues at 6 p.m. with the Truck & Tractor Pull by Back Road Pullers, Inc.

Friday’s fun begins when the gates open at 8 a.m., followed by the start of livestock judging and 4-H project judging at 9 a.m. The Midway will open for action at 11 a.m. and will remain running until 9 p.m. The petting zoo will open at 1 p.m. and pony rides will be available at 4 p.m. Magic by Cory will also take place at 4 p.m. in the auditorium. From 4-8 p.m., Rustic Ridge Axe Throwing will be held on the Midway. The day will wind down with the Lee County Fair and Illini State Pullers Truck & Tractor Pull starting at 6 p.m., and then Pin Dodge Ball will fill the show barn at 7 p.m.

A full day of activities is scheduled for Saturday, starting with a pancake breakfast by Teen Turf at 7 a.m. on the patio. Gates open to the fairgrounds at 8 a.m. to prepare for a morning filled with livestock and special projects judging. The Midway will be open from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m., with Rustic Ridge Axe Throwing

returning from noon-8 p.m. The petting zoo will open for business at 1 p.m. and pony rides will once again be available at 4 p.m. Also at 4 p.m., Bingo lovers can play in the entertainment tent. The day will conclude with the thrill of the T&A Bucking Bulls Rodeo at 7 p.m.

The gates will open at 7 a.m. for the final day of the fair on Sunday. Two events will take place at 8 a.m. – horse novelty classes in the arena and shooting sports with Rock River Chapter of NWTF. A Culinary Creations Cook-off is on the agenda from 9-11 a.m. and the Marketplace Vendor Fair is set for 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Starting at 11 a.m., the petting zoo will open and pony rides will

be available, as well as axe throwing and the opening of the Midway. A pedal pull is also scheduled for 11 a.m.

in the show barn.

The county fair speedway and barrel train will run daily for great fair fun.



ROLLIN' OUT THE GREEN CARPET FOR YOU!

The semi-private Mendota Golf Club is a challenging 18-hole course—6,186 yards from the championship tees and 4,863 yards from the front tees—with very challenging par 3's. With five sets of tees, meandering creeks, strategic ponds and more than 35 bunkers, golfers of all skill levels can enjoy the par 70 course. A full-service bar has a limited menu food service, and the pro-shop is fully stocked. Mendota has both men's and ladies leagues, club parties and golf outings.

Contact Jodi Manning to get more information about letting MGC host your next golf outing.

New Member Special

Have you been looking for an opportunity to join one of the nicest golf clubs in North Central Illinois? Here is a deal you can't pass up. This offer is available to new members only. We are confident that you will enjoy your experience at Mendota Golf Club. **Hurry offer ends soon!**

Individual \$500 • Married Couple \$550 • Family \$600



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August 5-10



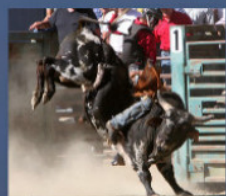
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Saturday, Aug 9 * 7pm



**Pro Bull
Riding
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Tractor Pulls
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