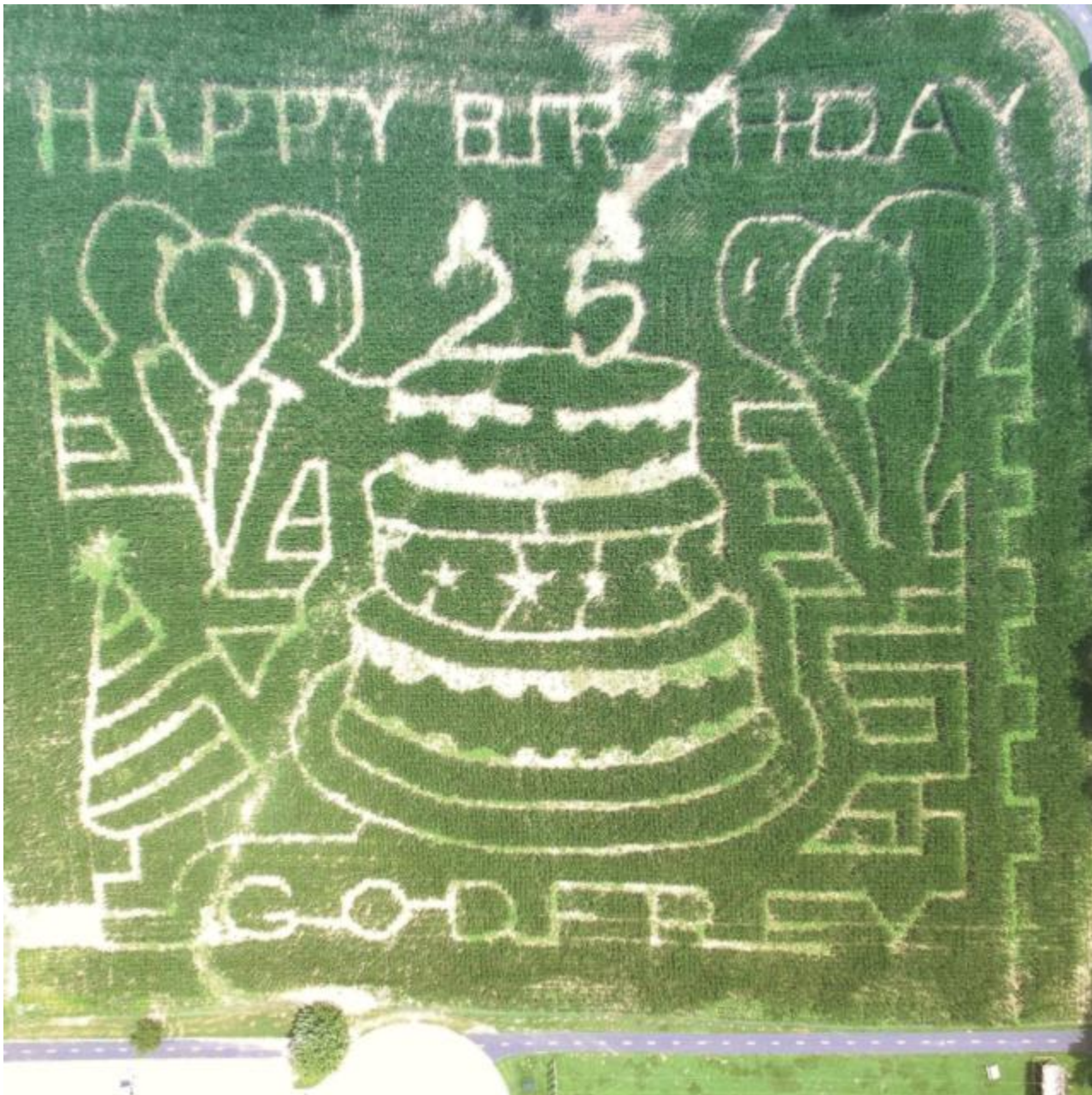


Happy birthday, Godfrey!: Local village turns 25 this year

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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GODFREY - Godfrey turns 25 this year, although many River Bend residents believe it is much older.

The story behind Godfrey's incorporation began when Godfrey was operated as a township. **Godfrey Village Clerk Pam Whisler** said the incorporation of Godfrey was voted down three times, with the third measure being a tie. The fourth attempt in April 1991, however, was a success. Whisler said that measure was a success because it incorporated the entire township, instead of only parts and parcels of it as previous measures had.

"The voters of the community wanted to control their own destiny," she said. "We were controlled by **Madison County Government** with building and zoning and our roads. The community wanted a voice of its own. Also, the **City of Alton** was annexing some of our prime properties."

Some of those "prime properties," as Whisler called them, included areas near **Alton Square Mall** and **Oakwood**. Whisler said each of those areas once belonged to **Godfrey Township**.

To celebrate a quarter century of existence, Godfrey is hosting a birthday party this Friday, Sept. 2, at **Glazebrook Park**. The event will coincide with the opening of the **Great Godfrey Corn Maze**, which this year is shaped like a birthday cake. **Godfrey Parks and Recreation Director Kimberly Caughran** said Friday night will feature much more than the opening of the maze.

"We're having the ribbon cutting, some cake, face-painting, a clown and even a visit from **Benjamin Godfrey**," she said.

Godfrey is the historical founder of Godfrey, and its namesake. After moving from Massachusetts to Alton, Godfrey began a women's seminary, which is currently operated as Lewis and Clark Community College. The college is home the the **Benjamin Godfrey Memorial Chapel**. That chapel is one of the most notable landmarks of the entire village.

Caughran said the parks and recreation department worked with the economic development department to coordinate this year's birthday party and cake design. She said they were going to invite former trustees and elected officials, current trustees and elected officials and the public at large to the event.

Current **Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick** said he would be there. He thanked the two previous mayors, **Lars Hoffman** and **Mike Campion** for their positive contributions to Godfrey.

"People wanted their own community," McCormick said about the decision to incorporate in 1991.

Whisler said Godfrey's first mayor, Hoffman, the first six trustees and the elected village clerk all had to work 18 months without a salary following the vote to incorporate. Whisler was elected village clerk at that time.

"That was tough," she said.

The birthday party will start at 6:30 p.m. Friday at Glazebrook Park. McCormick said he was expecting good weather for the event.

"I think it's going to be a beautiful night," he said. "Weather long range forecast is looking fantastic. Really looking forward to it."