



A VARIETY OF ECLECTIC ENTERTAINMENT AND EXHIBITS AWAIT YOU AT THE 6TH ANNUAL MISSISSIPPI EARTHTONES FESTIVAL

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(6 Sept 2012 – Alton, IL) Alton’s RiverfrontPark and Amphitheater will come alive on Saturday, September 15th, where from Noon until 10:00 p.m. festival-goers at this free and family-friendly event will discover a multitude of exciting activities centered around celebrating and protecting our natural environment.

The park grounds will be transformed into an eco-village where you’ll find over 50 booths filled with conservation exhibits, Earth-friendly products and services, and nature craft vendors. Shop with many eco-artisans, such as a potter who digs, processes and throws her own local clay, and a woodworker who makes furniture out of Mississippi driftwood. Kids are encouraged to complete and mark off activities on the “River Passport of Fun” between Noon and 4:00 p.m. which will enter them into a drawing to win a free week of Summer Camp at The Nature Institute in 2013. Visitors will find a great selection of food booths all day, and the beer tent will open at 4:00.

A giant 4,000 gallon mobile aquarium will be on site for educational and entertaining shows using highly trained Labrador retrievers who dive and swim with native fish during the demonstrations; showtimes for the “Fetch N Fish” seminars are 1:00 and 3:00.

The Saint Louis Science Center will be bringing their new exhibit, “Unplugged: Energy in Motion,” featuring EVie the electric truck, a fully interactive, video enhanced,

electric-solar experience, providing visitors information on energy and electric vehicle technology. EVie is unique in that unlike other electric box trucks, she is outfitted with 11 solar panels, which provide 8-10 hours of power for 20 plus traveling exhibits brought out from her cargo space, which are enjoyable for both children and adults. The ScienceCenter will also have segways available to rent for \$5 for guests 12 and older.

Award winning storyteller and author Brian “Fox” Ellis will engage listeners as he embodies several characters that celebrate the history of the river and the champions who have protected our country’s natural spaces. Come meet Henri De Tonti, the French Explorer who paddled the entire length of the Mississippi in the 1680’s, and Steamboat Captain Henry Detweiller, who was friends with Lincoln, and Twain’s rival. Fox’s programs include songs, poetry, audience participation, and a variety of humorous, adventurous, and touching stories. He tells ecological tales that celebrate the mysteries of creation and our place in the web of life, and conveys stories of the natural history of America's inland waterways. Showtimes are Noon and 2:00 p.m.

The Riverside Reptile Ranch was the hit of last year’s festival; they will be returning with 14 animals, and the TreehouseWildlifeCenter will also have live rehabilitated birds for the public to interact with.

The main stage performances will be top-notch this year, featuring a range of genres from Reggae and Rock to Urban Tribal Fusion and a Grateful Dead tribute. For those who would like to get in on the musical action, a bring-your-own-drum circle will be led by the percussionists from the Raw Earth ensemble from 6:30 – 7:00 p.m. You can also make your own percussion instrument on-site using recycled materials at the Sierra Club booth.

There will be two activities for yogis at this year's MEF; a yoga workshop with instructor Ashley Schroeder at 3:30 on the confluence stage, as well as a series of sun salutations on top of the grass seating area from 6:30-7:00 during the drum circle. The festival will also offer a hula hoop workshop with master-hooper Ren Waters, which will coincide with tribal music on the main stage, starting at 4:30 also at the top of the grass hill. Performances will be offered throughout the day, such as music from the Alton Youth Symphony Chamber Group, Tae Kwan Do with instructor Brendan Neal, and Grupo Lucenda Capoiara with instructor Matthew Hawkins.

JacobyArtsCenter will be offering an eco-art activity where participants will decorate a wire armature by attaching plastic bags, forming the foliage as they create a temporary installation. The goal of the social commentary work of art is to raise consciousness about the overconsumption of single-use plastic bags in our country. Visitors are encouraged to bring plastic bags with them to be used for the piece, which will be taken to a recycling facility after the event. Information will also be available on JAC’s

upcoming Recycled Art Program that will kick off in the spring. Other artistic elements of the event include a river photography exhibit and a plein air painting competition.

On-site collections will also take place on festival grounds for hand, power and garden tools in working condition, which will be donated to The Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Bring plastic plant pots of any size which will be donated to The Nature Institute for use at their native plant sale fundraiser. Old cell phones will also be collected for recycling in Alton at Somtech Recycling, as well as clean shoes, old or new that help purchase water filters in third world countries.

Guests will learn an abundance of ways to conserve natural resources and achieve more sustainable lives. Visit the experts at the American Water booth to learn about ways to save water around your home. Rain barrels to harvest rain water for gardening will be available at the festival for \$65 – supplies are limited, it is suggested to reserve yours in advance by calling 618-334-3630. Ameren Illinois will present a workshop on energy efficiency programs for customers, and Homefield Energy will speak about Residential Electric Aggregation in our community. MadisonCounty will share tips for energy conservation in your home, weatherizing and information for applying for County programs. Allied Waste will present a program titled “THINK before you THROW - Don't trash your recycling!”. Informational displays on electric & hybrid vehicles will be on-site, as well as advice on composting methods and instructions on how you can get involved with monitoring the water quality of your local streams.

For those who are after an active festival experience, there will be a 3-sided climbing wall that looks like real rock and can accommodate up to three climbers at once. At 23 feet tall, each of the rope stations has different routes that range in difficulty from beginner to expert (remember to wear closed-toe shoes). Before or after you enjoy the festival, take a bike ride on the levee trail, guided by the Wild Trak Cycling Club. A water station will be offered at the NationalGreatRiversMuseum. Or you can choose to stay stationary while you try out “The Energy Bike”, which allows residents the opportunity to experience the law of conservation of energy and energy efficiency. By pedaling the bike which is attached to an electrical board, the rider generates electricity to power a variety of light bulbs and small appliances. New to the festival this year is “Play Camp” where adults, families and kids of all ages are welcome to get in shape, have fun, burn fat and tone muscles, while increasing stamina and flexibility by playing in the park! You'll perform kids games with a grownup twist; it's tougher than a bootcamp and a lot more fun. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and bring a water bottle. An exercise mat is recommended, but be prepared to get a little grimy since it is outdoors.

Kick the day off right by participating in the Great River Clean-Up from 9am-12pm, which includes a free lunch, boat ride, and your choice of t-shirt or water bottle. (Pre-registration is required, please call 462-6802)

The use of solar panels and the purchase of wind-power credits will offset energy use to make this event completely sustainable. The festival committee will be bestowing “Confluence Conservation Leadership Awards” to members of our community who have displayed exemplary commitment to protecting the environment.

The Mississippi Earthtones Festival is presented by Alton Main Street and the Sierra Club with support from The Nature Institute, the NationalGreatRiversResearch & EducationCenter, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Alton, and the AudubonCenter at Riverlands. Sponsors include: American Water, Mungenast Alton Toyota, ConAgra Mills, Bossanova Restaurant and Lounge, Day & Night Solar, Homefield Energy, The Telegraph, Riverbender.com, WBGZ Radio and the Environmental Protection Agency. Fun volunteer opportunities are available; please contact 463-1016 to sign up for a shift. Please note that no coolers or pets are allowed in RiverfrontPark during events. Visit: www.RiverfrontAmphitheater.com/Earthtones for more details and registration info, or stay up to date at: www.facebook.com/EarthtonesFestival.