



Coming next weekend: Mississippi Earthtones Festival

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - A celebration of the river, the land around it and the people who live on its banks, Alton Main Street and The Sierra Club proudly present their Mississippi Earthtones Festival, which makes a triumphant return next Saturday, Sept. 16.

The event lasts from noon until 10 p.m. and includes events and vendors for people of all ages. Main stage events include a recycled fashion show in which all items worn are crafted from recyclable goods, hula hoop dancing and workshop and a "Colorfest" during which people are invited to "tie dye themselves." Bands will also take the main

stage, including The Mellow D's, Hideous Gentlemen and Jake's Leg. A drum circle will also take place on the main stage previous to Jake's Leg.

Other festival activities include a street performance by the local Rogue Theatre from 11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. and a Shamanic Drum Dance Flow Workshop from 5-6 p.m. A second stage, called "Confluence Stage" will feature more hula hoop dancing and workshops as well as performances by Foraker Harbison, Amalghemy and Ahna Schoenhoff.

"The event's goal is to bring the community down to Downtown Alton to celebrate Illinois watersheds through education, recreation and conservation where there will be hands-on informational booths, live music, nature arts and crafts and a river clean-up," Alton Main Street Executive Director Sara McGibany said in an email. "Free fun for the entire family! Wind-powered music will fill the air throughout the day, culminating with Jake's Leg (a jam band based out of St. Louis that has been interpreting the music of the Grateful Dead for over 30 years) from 7-10 p.m.

This year's river cleanup will take place the following weekend of Sept. 23. Sign-up sheets will be available at Earthtones for that cleanup.

Pollinators are the theme of this year's events, with butterflies and bees being showcased among pollinators through large art installations placed throughout Broadway during the event.

Vendors will include: artisan soaps, all-natural skin care, essential oil blends, handmade baskets from natural reed, wood sculptures featuring handmade jewelry, walking sticks, original prints, tees, paper bead jewelry, personalized hand-stamped metal jewelry, hand-painted glassware and other gifts.

"All of the local artisans will embrace the green rules and provide a myriad of unique and environmentally-sound products at this year's festival," McGibany said. "Among the green rules for this year's event are: green products should either be biodegradable, organic, locally-made, all-natural, result in significant energy savings, handcrafted from recycled, up-cycled or reclaimed components and/or help reduce environmental impact through minimized printed materials. No Styrofoam containers or #6 Plastic containers will be allowed at the event."

Food will be provided by The Old Bakery Beer Company, Bluff City Grill, Indian Sunshine Cuisine, Team Honduras of Main Street Methodist Church and Bubba Grump Smoked Pretzels. Vegan and vegetarian options will be available.