

Bees, butterflies, common sculpture themes at this year's Mississippi Earth Tones Festival in Alton

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - This year's Mississippi Earth Tones Festival has been the biggest one yet, Alton Main Street Executive Director Sara McGibany said Saturday afternoon.

The event, which is a coalition between Alton Main Street and the Sierra Club, celebrates the environmental aspects of this area through music, art, fun and responsible commerce. This year had 84 exhibitions and vendors alongside a renewed focus on art.

"We expanded the amount of focus on arts this year," McGibany said. "So



far, this is looking to be our biggest one yet."

Part of that expanded focus on art were sculptures created by local artists to celebrate this year's theme of "pollinators." Bees and butterflies were common themes of the sculptures distributed across East Broadway, which was closed to automobile traffic to host the event.

Informative vendors such as The Nature Institute (TNI) provided valuable information about the local natural world, while other vendors sold organic and sustainable products.

Organically made beer from Old Bakery Beer Company was converted to slushies for the day, with Hibiscus tart and Cerveza Con Lime beers as the flavors on deck.

Local civic activist Greg Gelzinnis was also on hand, selling "walking tacos" and soft drinks to support his church's annual mission trip to Honduras to help fluoridation treatments for impoverished children.

Gelzinnis said the most popular product for the day was a bottle of water, possibly due to the heat.

