



It's the time of the season: Peak fall coming to the Riverbend

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
October 26 2017 10:48 AM





ALTON - It's a sign of the season, when colors run high.

A simple cruise on the Great River Road - a favorite pass time of people across the area - will show the red, yellow and orange hues emerging slowly but surely from the once-green foliage. While late October seems more colorful in memories of earlier years, Alton Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Brett Stawar said his bureau has been collecting data regarding the Alton area's "peak fall" weeks for the last five weeks, and this year is pretty average with that data.

"We're estimating we're at about 60-70 percent of peak change now," Stawar said. "There is still a lot of green."

According to his figures, Stawar said this year's peak will occur sometime this week or next - possibly encouraged by a recent cold snap breaking a streak of above-average temperatures. In 2011, Oct. 23 was the peak, but in 2013, peak waited until Nov. 3.

"Ten years ago, we'd peak in mid-October, and go Trick-or-Treating with piles of leaves, but now that just doesn't happen," he said.



On the plus side of things, this apparent shift in the climate is allowing two more weeks of fall for "leaf-peepers," which is the tourism industry's nomenclature for people traveling through scenic routes to enjoy fall's splash of color.

This week, Stawar said the trail at La Vista Park in Godfrey near Clifton Terrace is the best spot to hike through some beautiful foliage. Within a week or two, however, he said that focal point will shift to Pere Marquette State Park outside Grafton, which changes slower due to the amount of foliage staying green.

Stawar said several events celebrating the fall leaves are occurring throughout Alton, Grafton and even Elsah, which features tours through the sprawling Principia campus. Stawar said those tours are beautiful. Cruises on the river are also available through several outlets, especially in Grafton, which also has [helicopter rides on the weekend](#).

"People are able to see the leaves change through several vantage points if they want to," Stawar said.

Once the last leaves have fallen from the trees, which may take until mid-to-late November at this rate, assuming there is no massive wind storm, Stawar said Alton will be gearing for winter, and everyone knows what that means - eagles.

In Alton and Grafton, the changing of the leaves is a slow-paced signals eagle season is just around the bend.



[Steven Spencer also contributed to this story.](#)