

Swap, don't shop: Alton Main Street hosting another Pop-Up Clothing Swap in August

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – Progressive-minded people in the Riverbend believe clothes swapping replacing always clothes shopping may be a step in the right direction.

In April 2018, a clothing swap hosted by Alton Main Street in the Crystal Room of Mineral Springs Mall was able to cycle as many as 1,000 pounds of clothes back into the community, including 100 bags donated directly to the Caravan Resale Shop, which benefits the Oasis Women's Center. Another 27 bags were recycled through Remains, which actively recycles worn clothing instead of sending them to landfills and other methods of waste. Organizer Laura Blair, who does many of Alton's "yarn bombings," said 90 people came to the event, which had more than 150 volunteer hours.

A second such swap, planned for Aug. 5, 2018, will probably be even larger, Blair said. It will be held in the more spacious and expansive historic ballroom within the Mineral Springs Mall. Blair said every aspect of the event will be improved. Considering the level of success from the inaugural event, Blair has high hopes for August.

"We have people coming in to make it look more like a retail space," she said Sunday. "We're going to have it zoned and everything for people to have a real shopping experience."

Entry to the event is \$5 if someone brings in clothes to donate and \$10 if they do not. That entry fee, which goes to Alton Main Street, will allow someone to fill a reusable bag with as much clothing as they want and can carry in it, Blair said. She said some people even bring large IKEA bags, which is within the rules of the swap.

When asked if there will be clothing for everyone – from tiny babies to large lumberjacks – Blair said someone even brought in a full wet-suit for SCUBA diving, so she felt as if all bases had ultimately been covered.

The event will take place Sunday, Aug. 5 from 12-5 p.m. Blair said 4-5 p.m. will be "non-profit hour," meaning any area non-profits who are in need of clothing donations can come sort through what is available for their organizations.

Free coffee will be provided to all swappers, Blair said, and musical entertainment will be provided by Autumn Konkol.

More information and updates can be found on the Facebook event page created for the swap: Facebook page