

Mississippi Earthtones Festival needs volunteers: Here's how to apply

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – Alton Main Street is seeking volunteers for the Mississippi Earthtones Festival on Sept. 15, which is designed to make Alton a more fun and welcoming place to both go to and live.

One of their biggest festival, which is put on in conjunction with the Piasa Palisades Chapter of the Sierra Club is the Mississippi Earthtones Festival. That festival is a celebration of river stewardship and culture as well as a good chance to peruse environmentally-sustainable vendors and enjoy some local arts and music. Outside of

general volunteers for the event, which usually has more than 100 such people, Alton Main Street and the local chapter of the Sierra Club are also looking for artists.

Alton Main Street Executive Director Sara McGibany said she is looking for several creatives in regards to Mississippi Earthtones. Some of them may even receive a small grant for supplies in exchange for their agreed participation.

“We are seeking fashionistas to make garments out of discarded and upcycled items for the Recycled Fashion Show,” McGibany said. “The Sierra Club is granting \$1,000 for on-site art projects (with a max of \$200 per project).”

Lillian Bates at By Design is spearheading the Recycled Fashion Show, as she has each year of its incarnation. During this time, models and designers are invited to put together their best attire made of upcycled materials and strut their stuff on the runway at the show.



The theme for this year's festival is “Go With the Current!” meaning the festival's organizers are seeking sculptures, installations and/or interactive experiences involving that theme. Those grants of up to \$200 will go to artists to attain materials needed to construct such exhibits. McGibany said the theme means each should have some element or symbolism of renewable energy, including solar, wind, water and geothermal energy sources.

Other volunteers are needed for the general maintenance and operation of the show, and McGibany is requesting special volunteers with trucks to help her move the large sheet-metal #OurAlton letters donated for the city's use by Winona-based small business YourType.

“The only way that we are able to produce this large-scale free event for our community is due to the generosity of more than 100 people who volunteer their time every third Saturday in September,” McGibany said. “Our amazing planning committee works for months to create this celebration of Alton's river culture.”

More details on the festival and opportunities to volunteer can be found here:

<http://www.altonmainstreet.org/page/mississippi-earthtones-festival/>

McGibany said the usual litter clean-up before the event will be moved to the following Saturday, Sept. 22. She said volunteers working with Main Street and the Sierra Club have removed as much as 32 tons of trash from the Mississippi River.