

Great Rivers Tourism Bureau announces 4th annual Miles of Possibility Route 66 Conference

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ALTON - Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau is proud to announce the 4th Annual Miles of Possibility Route 66 Conference in Carlinville, Illinois, Thursday-Sunday, October 25-28, 2018. Additional sponsors of the event are Carlinville Tourism, Macoupin County, Blackburn College, the City of Gillespie, Blue Carpet Corridor Coalition, and Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway.

Friday and Saturday's conference sessions, keynote speaker, and roster of presenters, plus the Friday evening banquet and band and the Saturday afternoon one-act play premiere, are all scheduled to take place at Blackburn College. Featured speakers

include: David Clark (Chicago IL), Roamin' Rich Dinkela (St. Louis MO), Nick Gerlich, Ph.D. (Canyon TX), Jim Hinckley (Kingman AZ), Cheryl Eichar Jett (Edwardsville IL), Geoff Ladd (Lincoln IL), Jerry McClanahan (Chandler TX), David Schwartz (Cleveland OH), Anne Maro Slanina, Ph.D. (Harrisville PA), Sharon Smith (St. Louis MO), Lisa Hicks Snell (Tahlequah OK), Joe Sonderman (St. Louis MO), and Bill Thomas (Atlanta IL), plus Carlinville historians and speakers Andrea Duncan, Tom Emery, Dan Hauter, and Deborah Young. In addition, six panel discussions will address Route 66 tourism topics, led by moderators Larry Bloemker (Hamel IL), Debyjo Ericksen (Joliet IL), Nick Gerlich, Ph.D. (Canyon TX), Bill Kelly (Chatham IL), and Bill Thomas (Atlanta IL). The welcome to Carlinville will be given by Mayor Deanna Demuzio and the welcome to Blackburn College will be given by Interim President Jennifer Braaten, Ph.D. Brett Stawar, CEO and President of Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau, will give the keynote address.

On Thursday afternoon, registration check-in will be at Blackburn College. An optional three-hour bus tour of “Historic Carlinville,” with stops at the Million Dollar Courthouse, Anderson Mansion, Sears Home, and Blackburn College, featuring guide Deb Young, Carlinville Tourism President, will be available. On Thursday evening, the City of Gillespie will host “Mining on Route 66” with an open house and tours at the new Illinois Coal Museum. The evening will include three showings of “Coliseum Ballroom Memories,” a short documentary about the legendary ballroom, and nearby restaurants will be open, all on Gillespie's stretch of historic Route 66.

On Friday evening, a banquet will be served in Woodson Hall on the Blackburn College campus, followed by a concert and dance featuring popular oldies band, the Robert Perry Band with the Original Mojos.

On Saturday evening, the City of Carlinville's annual Halloween Parade with this year's theme of “Get your kicks on Route 66” will proceed around the historic Carlinville Square. A Halloween Costume Party with a buffet, cash bar, and guest DJ Joe Sonderman is scheduled at the former Crabby's Supper Club on the south side of Carlinville.

On Sunday morning, an optional three-hour bus tour of “The Haunts of 66” from Carlinville and back will go in search of ghosts and ghost roads, spirits and their haunts, miners, mobsters, and murderers, presented by InSites Tours and featuring guide David Clark, the Windy City Road Warrior.

A conference weekend package, as well as a one-day special “Essentials of Route 66 Tourism” package, are available for registration at the conference website route66miles of possibility.com. Add-ons and single tickets for various activities are also available, and complete schedule, lodging information, and speaker bios can be found

on the website. For more information call Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau at (800) 258-6645.