

# Hooray for Earth Day! Riverbend Celebrates Conservation and Sustainability

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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ALTON – This year's Riverbend Earth Day Festival, celebrated at Old Bakery Beer Company, was a joint venture between the beloved local brewery and the Piasa Palisades Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Sierra Club representatives, Virginia Woulfe-Beile and Christine Favilla, said the event this year was a culmination of Earth Day's purpose of sustainability and conservation. Unlike previous years, when the event was held outdoors at places such as Piasa Harbor and the sprawling area of The Nature Institute (TNI), this year's event was under the roof of Old Bakery Beer Company. The establishment had previously assisted the event when severe weather was a threat and has worked with TNI in the past, most notably when they incorporated foraged plants into beer brews.

“I think it's great that we have it here,” Woulfe-Beile said. “While Earth Day may seem a lot more of an outdoors event, the threat of wind and rain often isn't good for a lot of our vendors and participants. I think it's a great event promoting sustainability and is great for the local economy.”

Favila said this year did not have a specific theme, instead saying it incorporated all the values for which Earth Day stands as a concept. Many of the vendors on hand were dedicated to educating the general public or were selling wares sustainably produced with the ethics of environmentalism.

One of the booths was operated by 1 Mississippi, a group which lobbies on behalf of Mississippi River conservation. Representative Kitty Mertz said 1 Mississippi views the river in its entirety.

“That's the point of 1 Mississippi,” she said. “We look at the river as a whole, as one big thing, instead of breaking it down into states. We try to look at the whole picture instead of just by state-to-state.”

The group invites people to become “River Citizens,” by being aware of the dangers the river faces as well as being active in possible solutions. More information on the group can be found at [www.1mississippi.org](http://www.1mississippi.org).



elephants, spiders, and even octopi were made from the bending and melting together of forks and spoons. More information on those pieces can be found by emailing [fireandhammerrings@gmail.com](mailto:fireandhammerrings@gmail.com).



Old Bakery Beer Company Manager Lauren Pattan said the event was successful this year. In a previous interview with Riverbender.com, she said the business wanted to unburden TNI this year as the group is working on staffing, saying environmentalism has always been at the foundation of the business, which produces USDA-certified organic beer. She said sustainability is at the forefront, which is why they have always been a part of the Riverbend Earth Day Celebration as well as TNI.