

Madison County Officials Vote to Recognize Past With History Week

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EDWARDSVILLE — A passion for the past is set to shine in Madison County.

“We’re trying to present a snapshot of life in Madison County throughout the years,” Madison County Historical Museum Director Jon Parkin said. “With the museum closed it makes it hard for people to find out about our history and a history week will allow us to share the stories of our past.”

The County Institutions Committee voted Wednesday to pass a resolution declaring Sept. 14 to 21 as Madison County History Week. The County Board will take action on the resolution at its July 17 meeting.

Parkin said Madison County is an important crossroads, and significant contributor, to the history of the United States. He said with the museum closed for renovations it makes it harder for the public to learn about the county's history.

"Madison County was established on Sept. 13, 1812," Parkin said. "Madison County was established before the state and it once stretched north, extending to the border of Canada."

Although the public can still visit the Archival Library, which houses books, maps, photos, research information and more and see pieces of history, Parkin said it's not the same storytelling as when the public gets to view an exhibit.

Parkin said until the museum renovations are complete he felt it was necessary to do something so that children could learn more about Madison County's history. Previously, schoolchildren would take tours of the museum, which Dr. John Weir built in 1836 and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Parkin said that recently representatives from museums throughout the county held a round table to discuss ways to collaborate and support one another in its common mission to present history. Those who attended the event were volunteers, directors and board members from Alton Museum of History and Art, Collinsville Historical Museum, Glen Carbon Heritage Museum, Highland Historical Society, Madison County Historical Society, Madison County Historical Museum, Maryville Heritage Museum, Benjamin Stephenson House and the Wood River Museum and Visitor's Center.

Parkin said another "brown bag" round table would be held at 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Aug. 5 at the Wood River Museum, 40 W. Ferguson Ave., Wood River.

"Anyone interested in history is invited to attend," Parkin said.