



Grafton Sky Tour Opens on Friday in Time for Peak of Fall Colors

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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GRAFTON - The Grafton Sky Tour lift has opened just in time for the peak of fall colors, Christmas lights and eagle observations. The new aerial lift opened Friday, Nov. 1, offering a new, scenic route to Aerie's Resort in Grafton.

The aerial lift, which features enclosed gondolas and open-air chair lifts, will take visitors to new heights in Grafton. From the foot of Grafton's Main Street to the top of the river bluffs overlooking the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, visitors will soar 300-feet high on a leisurely ride. Grafton Sky Tours is open Monday through Thursday from noon to 6 p.m. and Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for a round trip pass. Season passes are available for \$29 per person.

"The aerial lift is opening just in time for the peak fall colors," J.D. Lorton, Director of Operations for Aerie's Resort, said. "Visitors can enjoy the breathtaking views of the region while taking a relaxing ride to see all the amenities and activities Aerie's has to offer."

Owners Jeff and Sandy Lorton and the Aerie's organization partnered with New Hampshire companies SkyTrans Manufacturing and SkyFair Incorporated to design, develop, and create the amazing SkyTour experience.

J.D. Lorton said this will not only be a big deal to Grafton but the whole region and this part of Illinois.

"What I mean is you have to go to Gatlinburg or to the Colorado mountains to see something like this," J.D. Lorton said. "We did a lot of research and trips to these different resorts in Gatlinburg and Colorado to find what we have the combination of cabins and the best view of the Midwest on the Grafton Sky Tour Lift."

The project had to overcome significant setbacks and frustrating delays when record flooding along the Mississippi River forced construction delays.

"The project's dedicated partners have now succeeded in creating a world-class attraction that showcases the spectacular scenic beauty of the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers at Grafton from a whole new vantage point," J.D. Lorton said. "With over 1.5 million vehicles traveling through this small town each year, Grafton's economy is dependent on the town's success as a tourist destination."

"The SkyTour partners, as well as the supportive municipal leadership and enthusiastic business community in Grafton, all recognize this as more than just the opening of a unique year-round attraction; it is also the start of a substantial new revenue generator for the entire city, a much-needed aid to alleviate traffic and parking problems, and a boon to the entire Riverbend tourism experience. The Grafton SkyTour holds a promise to take visiting guests, local businesses, and the community at large to amazing new heights."

For more information on the Grafton SkyTour, call 618-786-8439.

