

A Dream Comes True: Grafton Sky Tour Lift is Expected to be Large Draw to Region

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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GRAFTON - The Grafton Sky Tour Lift had a big weekend with a ribbon-cutting and grand opening Saturday.

The Sky Tour is prepared for a brisk winter season of Christmas lights and eagle observations. The lift opened officially on Nov. 1.

“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.”

Jeff Lorton, the owner, and J.D. Lorton, both thanked everyone for their patience and hard work on helping make the project a reality for Grafton.

Village of Grafton Mayor Rick Eberlin said the new Sky Tour Lift will be a huge boost for Grafton.

“Jeff is a dreamer and this will be a tremendous draw for Grafton and extend the tourism season into the late fall and winter months,” Eberlin said. “We need big dreamers in Grafton and this is a fantastic project.”

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.

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. "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.

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



[Charles Thomas also contributed to this story.](#)