

Murray the Groundhog Will Decide if Spring is Around Corner or Winter Lingers Sunday in Alton

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ALTON - Will he or won't he? See his shadow that is. One of the region's favorite forecasters, Murray the Groundhog, will figure out if spring is right around the corner or if winter lingers on Sunday, Feb. 2, from noon to 2 p.m at the Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piassa St., Alton.

The public is encouraged to help kick off the spring tourism season during The Great Rivers & Routes annual Groundhog Day Celebration at the Visitor Center. Since Groundhog Day is also Super Bowl Sunday, Murray will try to pick the winner of the Kansas City Chiefs and San Francisco 49er's matchup. This event is free and open to the public.

TreeHouse Wildlife Center's permanent resident groundhog, Murray, will make his fifth annual Groundhog Day forecast with the help of area mayors and residents. Enjoy a free wood carving demonstration courtesy of the Itchy Brothers Chainsaw Art during the event. Cookies and hot chocolate will be on available.

"We hope that Murray can tell us the future. Are we going to have another six weeks of winter or will spring come early?" Brett Stawar, President and CEO of the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau, said. "Weather here in the Midwest can be unpredictable, so we decided to turn the spring predictions over to an expert -- Murray!"

Over the last two years, Murray has seen his shadow and ultimately those years spring has been slow returning to the area. Murray has been consistent in his predictions and has been accurate 50 percent of the time.

Alton Mayor Brant Walker will read a proclamation honoring Murray and his prediction. Area mayors and dignitaries will also be on hand.

If Murray sees his shadow another six weeks of winter is coming, but if he doesn't, spring will be here before we know it!

An informal meet and greet with Murray, TreeHouse officials and local mayors will be held immediately following Murray's prediction at the Visitor Center.