



Letter To The Editor: Food Trucks Vs. Restaurants

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Madison County board began a fiery debate this month in considering lowering food truck license fees that pitted brick-and-mortar restaurants against the food truck arena.



The argument being offered is that food trucks are no different than restaurants so there should be no difference in licensing fees. While there are counterpoints to that argument such as food truck operations are normally restricted to daylight hours, trucks are

seasonal, and as an outdoor venue, they cannot offer the accommodations of an indoor dining establishment.

The reality is that ultimately it does not matter what side of the fence you stand on. Madison’s neighboring counties have already deemed that there is a difference between food trucks and restaurants, and they set food truck licenses at a lower rate. The real argument that needs to be debated is can Madison County compete with its neighbors and ultimately entice food trucks and the revenue that they bring at the current license expense.

Below is a fee comparison by county:

County	Fees	Plan Review	Total
Madison	\$375	\$200	\$575
St Clair	\$78-\$100	Case by case	\$78-\$100
Jersey	\$100	Case by case	\$100
St Louis	\$100	\$210	\$310
St Charles	\$150	\$150	\$350

The 39%-575% higher taxation has inhibited free enterprise and prevented Madison County from enjoying the positive economic impacts that are associated with this growing trend.

As an example, the owners of Flock, Madison County’s first food truck park, are finding it difficult to fill their lot with trucks, sighting high licensing fees as the sole reason for non-committal.

To support this claim, an overview of the annual food truck festival in Alton can be used. This event is a success because Madison County allows vendors to receive a

reduced one-day rate to operate and over the past 8 years (excluding 2020 due to COVID), the Alton Amphitheater Commission has booked on average 17-21 food trucks that bring in estimated crowds in the range of 4,000 people with the largest crowd in 2019 of 6000 to 7000 customers.

Food trucks continue to grow in popularity and can attract tourists who will explore other events and attractions that Madison County has to offer.

I am asking Madison County to align our food truck licensing fees with those from our neighboring counties so that we can enjoy the economic reward of having food trucks in our county.

Raymond Strebel

Alderman, City of Alton

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