



Village of Elsau Festival Returns August 27

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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ELSAH - The first Village of Elsau Festival in three years will be held Saturday, August 27 from 1-5 p.m. Live music, local vendors, food and drink, self-guided wetland trail tours and historic tours of the village will be available for anyone looking for the best chance to explore Elsau, which was voted the #1 Top Scenic Spot in Illinois by the Illinois Top 200 project.

Connie Davis, Elsau tourism committee chair and co-owner of the Green Tree Inn with her husband Gary, said they started the festival as a way to put Elsau on more people's radar and the event has grown immensely since it began.

“My husband and I started this several years ago, just ourselves. We were just trying to get the word out, because there are so many people who live in this area that have no idea that Elsau is even here - they drive up and down the River Road and they don't know that we're here,” Davis said. “So we started the festival just to kind of get the word out, have another reason for people to come to the village.”

The festival hasn't been held since 2018 due to flooding in 2019 and COVID the following two years, Davis said, but that's given them plenty of time to prepare for an even bigger return this year.

“In the meantime, we've added more businesses here in the village so it's very, very exciting for this year's festival,” Davis said. “The purpose is just to get people to come explore the village and then want to come back.”

Live musical entertainment will be scattered around Elsau for the afternoon. From 1-3 p.m., world music percussion artist Justin Young will perform at the Riverview House at 1 Mill St., followed by Dusty James & Abalone Pearl from 3:15-5 p.m. Visitors can hear more music at the Gazebo at Green Tree Inn, on the lawn behind 15 Mill St. Singer

/guitarist Jay Sabo will perform there from 1-3 p.m., followed by classically-trained violinist Evan Ghislin from 3:30-5 p.m.

There will also be several local artisan and craft vendors in the Farley Music Hall at 37 Mill St. and the Elsay School/Civic Center at 51 Mill St. Photography, painting, pottery, homemade crafts, soaps, and much more will be available. Tree House Wildlife will bring some of their resident animals to the Elsay School/Civic Center from 1-3 p.m. and the Historic Elsay Foundation will offer history and baked goods at the Farley Music Hall.

Food and drink will be available at the Green Tree Inn Gazebo, including hot dogs, chips, water, soda, baked goods, popcorn from Poputopia! and Lulu's Shaved Ice Truck. Be sure to bring cash as some items are cash-only.

Visitors can also enjoy self-guided tours of the newly-installed Wetland Trails beginning at 12 Mill St., with maps and brochures available at all Elsay businesses - Davis said these also include a chance to win prizes.

“One thing that I’m really excited about this year is we have a couple folks who have worked really hard on the wetlands and the pollinator gardens here in the village,” Davis said. “They are going to have brochures where you can identify the plants, and then once you identify your plants, you can submit your entry for a chance to win a gift certificate to the village.”

Davis’s husband and Green Tree Inn co-owner Gary will also be giving two different walking history tours of the village for those who want to learn more history, information and antidotes behind the village as they stroll through it. These tours begin at the Green Tree Inn, located at 15 Mill St., starting at 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. and Davis said these tours usually last around an hour.

All Elsay businesses will carry festival maps to help visitors navigate their way around the village. Parking attendants will also be there to help guide people where to park, and Davis said additional parking is available near the Civic Center at 51 Mill St.

Davis said she’s looking forward to seeing the village bustling with activity again.

“It’s just going to be nice to see lots of activity in the village again. It’s been too long since we’ve had a festival,” Davis said. “It’s going to be nice to see all the businesses be open ... just to see life and activity and a flurry of things going on in the village always makes me happy.”

For more information about Elsay and about this year's Village of Elsay Festival, visit escapetoelsah.com.