



Riverbend Libraries Participate In Library Crawl

by Tom Emery
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Several public libraries in the Riverbend will welcome new visitors throughout October with a program sponsored by the region's library system.

The 4th Annual Library Crawl invites patrons to explore new libraries throughout the Illinois Heartland Library System, which composes the southern half of the state. The Crawl also demonstrates the benefits of a library card, which allows users to check out materials from the libraries they visit.

Some 125 libraries across central and southern Illinois are taking part in the Crawl, which runs from October 1 through October 31.

Participating area public libraries include all three Hayner Public Library locations, including the main branch downtown at 326 Belle Street, the Alton Square Mall branch, and the Genealogy and Local History Library at 401 State Street.

Other participating libraries include Wood River, Bethalto, Roxana, East Alton, Hartford, Carlinville, Staunton, Gillespie, Glen Carbon, Edwardsville, Maryville, Jerseyville, Highland, Troy, Cahokia, Greenfield, Roodhouse, White Hall, Litchfield, Worden, Fairview Heights, Caseyville, Dupon, Bunker Hill, Brighton, and Benld.

Both branches of the Six Mile Regional Library District in Granite City (Delmar Ave. and Johnson Road), as well as the Mississippi Valley Library District (Collinsville and Fairmont City), are also on the Crawl.

The first Library Crawl was introduced in 2019 by the Bethalto Public Library, which continues to coordinate the event. The idea was designed to encourage library users to explore the resources of other libraries that are available to request and check out with a valid library card.

Twenty-eight libraries participated in that first year, a number that has now increased nearly five-fold.

Patrons may pick up a passport for the Crawl at any participating library, and try to visit at least five libraries during the event.

At each new library, visitors may stop at the main circulation desk to have their passports stamped. To complete the crawl, patrons may simply return their passports to their home library.

As a new feature this year, staffers at each library have created a page for an online guide, *Local Eateries and Attractions*, which includes information on local restaurants and points of interest in the communities with participating Crawl libraries.

Some libraries also offer special treats for visitors on the Crawl. After any visit to a participating library, patrons are invited to take pictures to post on social media, under the hashtag #IHLSLibraryCrawl2022.

Many libraries are closed in observance of Columbus Day on October 10, so anyone planning a visit should call ahead, to check on hours of operation. Visitors must also adhere to any COVID-19 protocols that remain in place at individual libraries.

For more information on the Crawl, visit www.illinoisheartland.org or call any of the participating libraries.