

# Listen To The Heartbeats Of Southwest Illinois

by Stephanie Tate  
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ALTON - Listen to the heartbeat of the Great Rivers & Routes region in a new video series called “Heartbeats” -- showcasing ordinary people who have made an extraordinary difference in local communities.

The new eight-episode docu-series launched on [www.riversandroutes.com](http://www.riversandroutes.com) on Jan. 17. It features powerful stories themed around entrepreneurs, arts, music, healthy living, and people who give back to their communities. The series was created in partnership with the Shift Agency of Alton.

“The Heartbeats video series is a thoughtful and heartfelt look at the people who make southwest Illinois a truly great place to live. These people are the ‘heartbeat’ of their respective communities,” said Cory Jobe, President/CEO of the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau. “Because of these people, we have a destination that people not only want to visit but also where people want to live.”

Each episode is between five and six minutes long and lives on the Bureau’s website: <https://www.riversandroutes.com/destination-development/heartbeats/>

The series includes:

- Rory Morse who developed a pop-up pizzeria in Alton at the start of the COVID pandemic. Deep beneath the surface of this journey is a desire to bring more people to a table where ideas, community and inspiration are shared.
- Denise Knight of Calhoun Ferry Company. This is a story of two brothers and entrepreneurs who saw a need for a ferry service and built the company literally from the ground up along the banks of the Mississippi River. That family’s roots and pride in the region run as deep as the mighty Mississippi River itself.
- Collinsville BBQ Supply, a retail shop with roots in backyard grilling and the professional barbeque community but also built to give back to those who serve.
- Take a deep dive into the creative scene of southwest Illinois with a focus on the fine arts including Opera Edwardsville, The Macoupin Art Collective and Alton artist Michael Snider.
- Jesse Riley, an assistant football coach at Alton High School, who sees more than touchdowns and tackles – he understands the power of positive influences and how words can impact athletes both on and off the field.
- Music moves the soul and live music has a home in southwest Illinois seven days a week. Discover local venues and musicians with a passion for music, each other and their fans.
- Brenda Whitaker – a former Granite City steel worker – who followed her dreams and whose entrepreneurial spirit has helped build the infrastructure of a blooming downtown district.
- Farm-to-table takes on a new meaning between the orchards, organic farms and local scratch kitchens which grow nutrient-dense crops in the backyards of southwest Illinois. Meet the farmers who grow the crops and the restaurants who use them.

The Bureau teased the video series in November and December prior to the January launch. The videos are also part of a targeted paid social media campaign. The social media ads are targeting people in St. Louis, Chicago, Indiana, central Illinois, Paducah, KY, and Iowa.

“We are fortunate to have so many people pour their hearts and souls in to our region. These videos capture what truly is the heart and soul of southwest Illinois,” Jobe noted. “Everyone should tune in to this extraordinary video series.”