

City, Local Groups Plan a Supercharged Series of Events in June to Celebrate Route 66

by Cathy A. Hensley
April 25 2023 1:32 PM



EDWARDSVILLE – The City of Edwardsville and some local groups have mapped out four days of fun inspired by Route 66, the iconic 2,400-mile trek that ran from Chicago to the Pacific Coast – and for several decades passed through Edwardsville.

The events will offer a mix of music, food, history and family fun in the days leading up to and after the annual Route 66 Festival, which is cruising toward a milestone in June: its 25th year. Special activities are planned from Thursday, June 8, through Sunday, June 11, at sites throughout Edwardsville.

First up is the “Get Your Kicks!” musical travelogue that will feature an all-alumni cast from Edwardsville High School. This one-night-only production will offer songs from the 1940s, ‘50s and ‘60s, and is being produced by the Alumni Players organization and the Friends of the Wildey. The show is scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, June 8, at the Wildey Theatre, 252 N. Main Street.

All proceeds will go to the Edwardsville Community Foundation to support college scholarships. Tickets are expected to be on sale soon at www.wildeytheatre.com. The West End Service Station will be back in business with a grand opening on Friday, June 9. This former service station turned dental office is being retooled as an interpretive center about Route 66, which originally traversed Edwardsville and wound its way past the station at West and St. Louis streets. Once it opens in June, the site will be open for visitors Fridays through Sundays.

The City of Edwardsville purchased the station in 2022 and has been rehabbing it in conjunction with Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau, which secured a \$460,000 state grant for the project. More details on the grand opening will be available soon. Check back frequently to www.cityofedwardsville.com/route66 or Great Rivers and Routes’ website for updates.

Also on Friday, Edwardsville Parks and Recreation has scheduled a free Movies in the Park showing of the Route 66-infused animated flick “Cars.” The movie begins at dusk on Friday, June 9, at LeClaire Park. Just bring a chair or blanket to enjoy this family-friendly night under the stars. On Saturday, June 10, get set for an all-day extravaganza as the 25th anniversary Route 66 Festival kicks off in and near City Park, 101 S. Buchanan Street. The festival has a supercharged schedule, including a full roster of live bands and entertainment, food and marketplace vendors, a 10k run/walk, car show and cruise, trolley rides to Route 66 points of interest around downtown and a children’s play area.

A full schedule of events can be found at www.edwardsvillerroute66.com. The souped-up Route 66 weekend wraps up at 2 p.m. Sunday, June 11, with Getting Your Kicks: Memories of Route 66. Reminisce with Len Heine and Gary Sosniecki as they share their winning entries in this road trip story competition hosted by the Edwardsville Story

Project and the Edwardsville Public Library. The event is free to attend in the lower level of the Edwardsville Public Library, 112 S. Kansas Street. For more information or updates on these events, visit: www.cityofedwardsville.com/route66