



# West End Service Station Grand Opening Set

by Stephanie Tate  
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**EDWARDSVILLE** - A piece of Route 66 history in Edwardsville is coming back to life as a Mother Road interpretive center with the grand opening of the West End Service Station, 620 St. Louis St., on Friday, June 9.

Local officials will celebrate the grand opening of the station with a formal ceremony as part of a series of events showcasing Route 66 in Edwardsville. The West End Service Station will serve as a Route 66 interpretive center and museum. It will be open Fridays through Sundays each week from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Originally slated for demolition, the historic building gained new life when the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau received a \$919,000 Route 66 grant in 2022. A total of \$460,000 was earmarked in the grant, allowing the City to purchase and retrofit the vacant building into an interpretive center showcasing Edwardsville's place on the famous highway.

"There are so many great stories along the Last 100 Miles of Route 66 in Illinois and we want to bring those stories back to life in time for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this iconic roadway," Cory Jobe, President/CEO of the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau noted. "The grant funds enabled the City of Edwardsville to save this historic building and give new life to the West End Service Station. We are happy to be a part of this initiative."

"Preserving interesting and historic buildings like the West End Service Station allows us to maintain an importation connection to Edwardsville's past," said SJ Morrison, Edwardsville's Ward 4 Alderman. "I'm also encouraged that the rich heritage of Route 66 continues to serve as a catalyst for present-day culture-making in our community."

Edwardsville is celebrating Route 66 with special events over four days, which include a one-time musical performance called "Get Your Kicks the Musical" at the Wildey Theatre, Thursday, June 8. The West End Service Station grand opening takes place on Friday, the animated feature "Cars" will be shown at Leclaire Park on Friday night, and the popular all-day Route 66 Festival will be held Saturday, June 10, in and around City Park. The events wind down on Sunday, with the winners of a Route 66-themed road story contest at the Edwardsville Public Library.

The Tourism Bureau represents the Last 100 Miles of Route 66 in Illinois which stretches through southwest Illinois from Virden in the north to East St. Louis. The road is a major draw for domestic and international tourism.

The service station located at 620 St. Louis St. served as a bustling hub of Route 66 activity from 1927 until 1964 when Route 66 was rerouted along Interstate 55. The West End Service Station transitioned into an office building and served as dental offices for

55 years. The station is one of Edwardsville's few remaining Route 66 landmarks and is one the last original Route 66 service stations in over 60 miles.