



Alton Celebrates 4th of July with Festival and Fireworks on the Mississippi

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - Alton's 4th of July celebration promises to go off with a bang tonight, July 3 at the Alton Amphitheater.

Starting at 5 p.m., the event offers live music and plenty of food before the fireworks display at 9:30 p.m.

“People always look forward to the fireworks festival, and the Amphitheater Commission does a wonderful job of putting together a nice event down at the riverfront. There will be music, food and a festive atmosphere and it culminates with the fireworks,” Alton Mayor David Goins said.

Alton’s fireworks display is a local favorite. Fireworks company [J&M Displays](#) started setting up the launchsite in West Alton, Missouri at 10 a.m. today. Supervisor Bill Bojarzin said this is his 25th year of launching the Alton fireworks. He added that Independence Day has always been one of his favorite holidays.



A local DJ is playing music from 5–7:30 p.m., and then the 399th Army Band will take the stage at 8 p.m. until the fireworks start. Started in 1944, the band hails from U.S. Army Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri and is comprised of active service members who regularly perform across Illinois, Missouri and Indiana.

There are five performance groups within the 399th Army Band; the rock band group is in attendance tonight. Specialist Douglas Olenik noted that playing for Independence Day celebrations like Alton's is a moving experience.

"I think any of the musicians in the band would say that getting to play music like this when we weren't in the Army was always an honor, and it was always a really cool way to show our appreciation for our armed forces. But now that we're in , and we actually get to play for them specifically, it is extremely more meaningful," Olenik said.

Sergeant Tatiana Preziuso added that the rock band will "help us countdown to the fireworks."

"They just have a wonderful set of their hits put together," she said.

Until then, local food trucks, including [Kona Ice](#), [Pig on a Wing](#), [Quick Bite and Frozen Treats](#) and Ray's Soul Touching Tacos, are fired up and waiting for customers. For the adults, [Robert "Chick" Fritz Inc](#) is slinging beer and other drinks all night long.

While tonight is a celebration, Olenik said that he always remembers who the 399th Army Band is playing for. As Independence Day parties continue into tomorrow, he expressed his thanks to his fellow service members.

"We play for music to be enjoyed and to be danced to, sung along with or even just watched and observed and enjoyed in that way," Olenik said. "But also, we come together to thank our soldiers for their services, thank those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and enjoy the freedoms that we all get to enjoy as Americans."

To stay updated on the fireworks show and Alton's 4th of July celebration schedule, check out the [event on Facebook](#). For information about other local fireworks displays, click [here](#).





