



Mississippi Earthtones Festival to be relocated for its ninth year

May 8 2015 3:45 PM

It has been determined that the Mississippi Earthtones Festival (MEF) will be relocated for its 9th year, after organizers and the Alton Amphitheater Commission were unable to reach an agreement.

The concept for the MEF was conceived through a partnership between Alton Main Street the Sierra Club, and the duo has co-presented the event since 2007. A consortium of organizations has collaborated on the event's planning committee over the years. The group will convene to review its options, and partner organizations will weigh in on the future home of the festival.

If it is determined that the event will be moving to a different community, Alton Main Street would step down as the fiscal agent and pass the responsibility of licensing, liability insurance, etc. to another entity. "It doesn't make sense for our organization to remain involved if the event is not fulfilling our purpose to generate economic and social activity in Downtown Alton," explained McGibany, "It would be unfortunate for Alton's Riverfront to lose this special occasion, but numerous organizations have built this event together so a change of this magnitude should be a group decision." A number of venues have expressed interest in hosting the festival in recent years, so the committee will spend the next 30 days investigating all of the alternatives. The group will entertain proposals from potential host venues or communities, and welcomes suggestions from the public at: www.facebook.com/EarthtonesFestival

The Mississippi Earthtones Festival is a celebration of our rivers through art, music, and conservation, held annually on the 3rd Saturday in September, as part of the State of Illinois' "It's Our River Day" initiative. Past highlights have included: a 4,000 gallon mobile educational aquarium; a Riverbend Catfish Tournament; demonstrations from The Saint Louis Science Center; art sculptures made from trash found during the river clean up, nature photography contests, Plein Air artists painting live on the festival grounds, upcycled arts & crafts projects, solar-power experiments, entertainment from

local musicians, and the Confluence Conservation Leadership Awards which have been accepted on the MEF stage by notable winners such as Representative Dan Beiser and Lt. Governor Sheila Simon.

The event has grown to 50+ exhibits, and many area nature-based and environmental organizations attend the MEF every year to promote their activities and teach festival-goers about our native ecology. Local businesses set up informational booths to tout their environmentally-conscious products and services, while educating the public on how they can incorporate more sustainable practices into their daily lives. All participating organizations and companies are asked to reserve the date of September 19th; registration information will be forthcoming as soon as the location of the 2015 festival is determined.

The river clean-up scheduled that morning will continue as planned, using grant funds received from the Environmental Protection Agency. A total of 19 tons of trash has been removed from the Mississippi River during the MEF clean-ups to date.

At the Mayor's request, citizens who care to voice their opinion on the matter are welcome to contact him at bwalker@alton-il.com or 618-463-3500x3, as well as Brett Stawar, President of the Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, who is also a member of the Amphitheater Commission, at bstawar@visitalton.com or 465-6676.