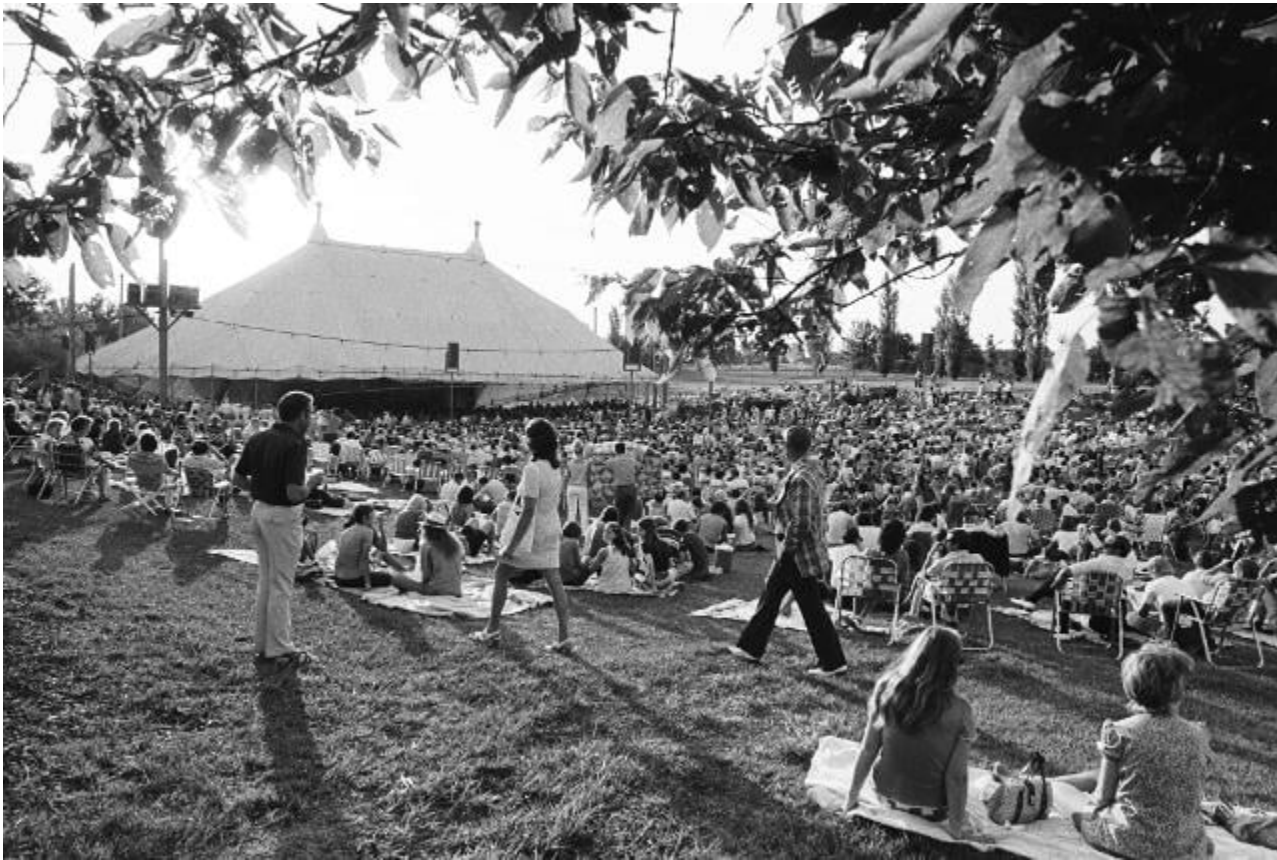


Mississippi River Festival Returning Amidst Powerboat Race Weekend

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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ALTON - After over 40 years, the Mississippi River Festival is returning to the Riverbend - this time, to the Alton riverfront amphitheater on Saturday, June 22, 2024. The concert joins an already busy weekend with a [Formula 1 Powerboat Championship Race](#) taking place from Friday, June 21 to Sunday, June 22.

Nick Bifano, festival director for the Mississippi River Festival, said the event started at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) and was a prominent festival in the area from 1969 to 1980. For the past two years, Bifano said he and his business partner Zach Johnson have been “dreaming what the resurrection of this festival could look like.”

“I just can’t stress enough what this festival would mean to the City of Alton and its residents that this festival will now live here, and our intent is to continue to make this its home, bringing incredible acts to the riverfront - now, this summer, and beyond,” Bifano said. “We are ready to roll full-steam in partnership with the F1 as far as marketing, same thing with Rivers & Routes. It’s going to be excellent.”

The City of Alton was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the State of Illinois through the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) “for the development and implementation of a tourism attraction, concert or festival in Alton.” The city has agreed to contribute \$100,000 towards the event using “immediately available funds” and will seek reimbursement through the DCEO grant.

The total production cost of the Mississippi River Festival is estimated at \$307,760 - the Mississippi River Festival organization has agreed to contribute the remaining \$203,760.

More exact details about the festival, including a list of performing acts, have not been made available yet. The agreement between the city and Rex Productions LLC (d/b/a Mississippi River Festival) to host the concert passed unanimously through the Committee of the Whole and City Council.

A full recording of the Committee of the Whole meeting, featuring Bifano’s comments, is available at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](https://riverbender.com/video).