

Fireworks on Mississippi set in Alton for Friday night; parking, safety precautions explained

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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The annual Fireworks on the Mississippi is on for 9:30 p.m. Friday on the Alton riverfront despite recent problems with high river levels.

The City of Alton said the Liberty Bank Amphitheater gates open at 5 p.m. The band "The Warehouse Project" will perform from 6 p.m. until approximately 7:30 p.m. and the Air Force Band of Mid-America will take the stage from 7:50 p.m. to approximately 9:25 p.m.

There will be a kids village and other family activities at the amphitheater.

Dan Herkert, chief of staff for Alton Mayor Brant Walker, said: "Given the high water, we have encouraged people to view the fireworks from the city rather than going across the river. Most, if not all, of the normal viewing sites across the river are closed due to the high water and it is not safe for people to park alongside the road to watch. We continue to encourage people to attend the festivities at Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater."

The Corps of Engineers notified the City on Monday that the Lincoln-Shields site across the river would be unavailable this year to use as the site for shooting the fireworks. Upon receiving that message, Fire Chief Sebold began putting the City's alternative plan into place, Herkert said.

"This plan has the fireworks shot off from the former Great Central Lumber site downtown," he said. "Using that site will cause the loss of some parking in the lot on Henry Street as well as a reduction in the size of shell that would be shot off – 8 inches to 6 inches, Herkert said.

Herkert stressed the annual Alton fireworks display is an important event to the residents and the surrounding area.

"The City of Alton is taking all necessary measures to ensure that the show will go on as planned," he said. "We expect a fun-filled night and hope that we will again have a large crowd on hand at the amphitheater and across downtown for the festivities."

The City of Alton communicated constantly with Missouri Department of Transportation this week, but they denied the request to use a site across the river to launch fireworks because of high river levels.

Below is appropriate parking locations for the public for the fireworks.

CITY OF ALTON RELEASES TRAFFIC AND PARKING INFORMATION REGARDING FIREWORKS ON THE MISSISSIPPI

Due to high water, the City of Alton has been forced to move the launch site for the fireworks to the former Great Central Lumber property. This move has resulted in added restrictions to parking, traffic flow and viewing areas for this year's fireworks show as follows:

- The parking lot on Henry Street will be closed to public parking as it falls within the Safety Zone of the fireworks' launch site. Only Argosy employees and Amphitheater staff will be allowed to park in the limited spaces available in the lot. Any unauthorized cars parked in the Henry Street lot after 3:30 pm on Friday, July 3, 2015 will be subject to tow.
- The east and west edges of the Safety Zone will be marked with orange temporary fencing. Officers will patrol these areas and anyone found inside may be subject to arrest.
- The west entrance to the Argosy Casino and Riverfront Park parking lots **WILL BE CLOSED** to the public. All traffic into the park area must enter from Henry Street.
- Parking will be available in marked parking spaces around the amphitheater and in Argosy Casino's parking lot. Any vehicles parked on grass will be subject to tow.
- Once the lots are full, vehicular access to the park will be closed.
- Henry Street south of Landmarks Boulevard will be closed to traffic beginning at 9:00pm and will remain closed through the fireworks show.

- Ridge Street south of Landmarks Boulevard will be closed to traffic from 9:00pm and 10:00 pm, during the fireworks show.
- No parking on the levee will be allowed. Spectators may choose to sit on the levee as long as they stay in the grass outside of the Safety Zone.
- The Clark Bridge will remain open during the fireworks show. Do not stop, stand or park on the bridge.
- Please keep the pedestrian bridge from Broadway to Riverfront Park clear at all times.
- No personal fireworks, other than sparklers, will be allowed in the park. If fireworks are found they will be confiscated and the owner will be ticketed.