

CELEBRATION OF GERMAN HERITAGE: St. Mary's Oktoberfest loaded with weekend activities, events

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Every year people throughout the River Bend area, St. Louis and beyond look forward to the annual **Oktoberfest at St. Mary's** in Alton.

The time has come and things open officially tonight at the **St. Mary's Church and School** grounds. The



celebration runs all day Saturday and through Sunday night.

St. Mary's Oktoberfest public relations coordinator Carolyn Simansky said she expects it to be a big success as usual with thousands coming. The St. Mary's organizers have even thought about the St. Louis Cardinals games and will have big screens to watch the contests.

"This is 157 years for St. Mary's, so it is kind of a big anniversary," Simansky said. "We try to make this better than the typical German festival, plus working in our heritage with the parish and school."

Proceeds from the weekend benefit St. Mary's School and also St. Mary's Church. The fund-raising event is huge for St. Mary's and takes cooperation of many volunteers to plan and carry out, Simansky said.

Glendale Riders kick off the festivities from 7 to 11 p.m. tonight on the main stage.

Saturday there will be a Basket Raffle and Live and Silent Auction. There will be loads of games and inflatables for children. At 11 a.m. on Sunday, there will be the annual Mass in the Grass at Garfield Park in Alton.

The German food will again be second to none, Simansky said.

"We will have loaded baked potatoes as always and we are adding loaded sweet potatoes," she said. "We will have corn on the cob, skillet sausage with onions and sauerkraut, frankfurters and bratwurst. The Knights of Columbus of Alton have the funnel cakes for us. We will have German potato pancakes and desert pancakes, along with Bavarian Cream puffs and a lot of other German desserts."

The annual keg tapping will occur at 1 p.m. on Saturday. The annual Oktoberfest sweepstakes prize will also be picked over the weekend.

ST. MARY'S OKTOBERFEST BANDS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9

GLENDALE RIDERS 7-11 PM MAIN STAGE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

LOUIS CZECH EXPRESS 1-4 PM – MAIN STAGE

DIXIE DUDES – 2-5 PM – FESTIVAL STAGE

THE OWLZ – 6:30-10:30 PM – FESTIVAL STAGE

BAYWOLFE – 7- 11 PM MAIN STAGE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11

BIG SHAKE DADDIES – 12:20-4:30 PM – FESTIVAL STAGE

LOUIS CZECH EXPRESS 12:30-4 PM – MAIN STAGE

HARMAN FAMILY BAND – 4-6 PM – LIVE AUCTION TENT

BACK IN THE SADDLE – 6:30-10 PM – MAIN STAGE