

# Festival celebrates traditions, becomes tradition

By Jason Francis  
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It began as a way for the community to celebrate the Edgerton area's farming traditions.

Now, with Edgerton Tobacco Heritage Days entering its 46th year, the festival has become a gloriously deep-seated tradition unto itself.

The three-day festival – long regarded as a community-wide reunion of sorts – will be held on July 14-16 at various locations in Edgerton. It honors the city's former status as "The Tobacco Capital of the World," a moniker awarded more than a century ago thanks to the Edgerton area's tobacco-growing prowess. It has also grown to honor many other facets of Edgerton's heritage.

The festival offers a wide-ranging and impressive schedule of activities,

events and entertainment for all ages. "Something for everyone" certainly applies here.

Some annual highlights of the festival include the downtown car and truck show (Saturday), plenty of live music in Racetrack Park all three days, Arts in the Park arts and crafts show in Central Park (Saturday), big wheel races (Saturday), ball games, lip-sync contest (Saturday), Rascal Run/Walk (Saturday), ax throwing contest (Sunday), pie eating contest (Sunday) and an 11 a.m. Sunday parade through the downtown.

The Saturday car and truck show has become a particularly prolific part of the festivities each year, as picture-perfect cars and trucks of all genres and eras line downtown Edgerton streets, begging passersby for reverent close-up inspections.

Gates to the show open at 7 a.m. Judging is at 11 a.m. Trophy presentations are at 2 p.m. Following the show, all car buffs are invited to an after-show party of sorts down the road at Racetrack Park. At 4 p.m. in the park, the show's king and queen will be named.

Art of a different – more manageably-sized – type than vehicles can also be perused Saturday at the annual Arts in the Park show in Central Park starting at 9 a.m. The show – another festival favorite – features a variety of arts and crafts from 75 vendors as well as a tasty (particularly on a hot summer day) ice cream social, food, music and more.

Another highlight of the festival will come Sunday afternoon when the defending Home Talent League champion Albion Tigers take on Evansville in the Second Annual Wally Olstad Classic Baseball Game at 2 p.m. in Racetrack Park.

Something returning to the festival after a long hiatus (coming back by popular demand) will be bed races. The comfy competitors will roll in the races on Sunday at 1:30 p.m. in Racetrack Park.

Providing an appropriate soundtrack for the festival fun will be a fine lineup of live bands in Racetrack Park, starting with MadTadders on Friday from 7-11 p.m. The

band is made up of cousins Eric and Luke Tadder, Kyle Furseth and Ross Harried. "Together, they provide a laid-back atmosphere, including a mix of classic rock hits, 90s jams, and a few originals that everyone can enjoy," states the band's Facebook page. Visit [www.madtadders.com](http://www.madtadders.com) for more information.

Saturday in the park, "Hot Rod Rockabilly" band Gas Can Alley will light up the stage from 2:30-6:30 p.m. followed by Shotgun Jane from 7:30-11:30 p.m.

Gas Can Alley is all about "rockabilly, punkabilly, cool cars, guitars and pinups," states the band's Facebook page.

Shotgun Jane is a seven-piece country/rock cover band. "We are high energy, boot stompin', talented folks who love a good time," states the band's Facebook page. Visit [www.shotgunjane.com](http://www.shotgunjane.com) for more information.

On Sunday in the park a local band jam session will showcase hometown

talent from 1-8 p.m. The festival's annual raffle drawing will conclude the festival at 8 p.m.

To verify events and times, check the official

festival website, [www.edgertonobaccodays.com](http://www.edgertonobaccodays.com), or grab a pamphlet schedule as festival-time approaches. The festival also has a Facebook presence.



The annual Edgerton Tobacco Heritage Days Parade provides plenty of entertainment for on-lookers while demonstrating many creative ways to traverse the streets. (File photos)



A youngster gets her face painted during last year's Edgerton Tobacco Heritage Days. (File photo)





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