

Janesville Hot Spots & Happenings

Compiled by Jason Francis

Hot Spots

The Janesville Performing Arts Center (408 S. Main St.) is a 633-seat theatre found at the former site of the original Janesville High School. Construction on the center concluded in 2004, when a 1920s architecturally-styled facility was unveiled featuring Prairie-style stained glass, ornate plaster molding and original light fixtures. A wide variety of shows and performances are offered, including a series of family-oriented events. 608-758-0297, www.janesvillepac.org

The highly decorated and successful **Rock Aqua Jays** water ski team performs shows twice weekly between Memorial Day and Labor Day at RAJ Stadium in Traxler Park along the Rock River. Watch as the talented skiers present themed performances featuring gravity-defying pyramids, ballet moves, jumps and barefoot skiing. Admission is free to the 70-minute shows; donations are encouraged. Shows are Wednesday and Sunday nights at 7 p.m. through mid-August and 6:30 p.m. for show dates thereafter. 608-757-3171, www.rockaquajays.org

Happenings

Saturdays, May-Oct.-Janesville Farmers Market: Located on Main Street in downtown Janesville. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. A completely local outdoor market featuring fresh produce, meats, cheese, eggs, honey, baked goods, plants, cut flowers, soaps, hand cream, jewelry, herbs, seasonal products, art and more. 608-289-9292, www.janesvillefarmersmarket.com

Sundays, May 13-Oct. 28-Rock County Farmers Market: At Nature's Touch Garden Center, 5013 Hwy. 11 West. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fresh produce, meat vendors, flowers, baked goods, crafts and more. 608-449-4900, www.rockcountymarket.com

Ongoing-City-Wide Rummage Sales: Local resident rummage sales are held every 3rd Saturday, April through September.

June 9-Rock County Dairy Breakfast: Being held at the Den-Bar Dairy (Dennis and Barbara Kersten Farm), 4522 W. Mineral Point Rd., in rural Janesville, from 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$2 for children 10 and under. The all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast includes yogurt, cheese sticks, ham patties, applesauce, milk or coffee and ice cream. Back

by popular demand will be the Crafty Cow Contest. The county "herd" will be "grazing" during the breakfast. Dairy breakfast attendees can vote for their favorite decorated cow and prizes will be awarded. Your fun-filled day on the farm will also feature crafters, dairy recipes, Heatwave 4-H Choir, small animal display, tractor wagon rides, kids games and more. 608-290-4921, www.dairydaysofsummer.com

June 13-Rock County Porkfest: 4-7 p.m., Rock County Fairgrounds, 1301 Craig Ave., 608-757-5696. Drive-up serving begins at 4 p.m. Pork chop dinner served with potato salad, applesauce, rolls and beverage. Fresh, uncooked seasoned pork chops for sale as well. Live music, kids activities, dessert sales and the annual Pork Fest Car Show. www.wppa.org

June 16-Janesville Morning Rotary's 18th Annual Pie Ride: This bicycle event features a 20K, 50K, 100K, and Century Route through scenic southern Wisconsin. Serious riders can choose a longer ride, while the 20K ride is perfect for a fun family activity. Registration includes a pie and T-shirt, as well as free admission to Rotary Botanical Gardens. Riders are invited to begin the ride any time after 6 a.m. and the event features a shotgun start at 8 a.m. Lions Beach, 1401 Palmer Dr. 608-290-3161, www.pieride.org

June 23-Mercury Open Water Ski Tournament: See the best water ski teams in the country compete in the first ski show tournament of the season. Each team will present a one-hour show and be judged by a panel of experts in such areas as doubles, barefoot, ballet line and pyramids. Concessions, beer tent and vendor booths throughout the day. Free admission. Traxler Park - RAJ Stadium, 600 N. Main St., 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. 608-757-3171, www.rockaquajays.com

June 30-Liberty Fest: Liberty Fest is a free celebration to raise awareness and funds for our veterans. Enjoy live music, a beer tent, food vendors, a craft fair and fun for the kids. 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Traxler Park, 600 N. Main St. 608-208-4698, www.janesvillecvb.com

June 30-Freedom Fest: Freedom Fest started as a "backyard BBQ" in 2002 and has developed into one of the largest community events in the area. Between 25,000 and 30,000 people attend each year, with its attractions, food, carnival rides, stage performances and an incredible fireworks display. There is no cost for admission, parking, rides, concert or fireworks. The festival now includes the Day of Compassion from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with a free health clinic and educational seminars by Mercy Health. There is also a children's area with a petting zoo, face painting and balloon animals. Presented as a family-

friendly, Christ-honoring, patriotic event. New Life Assembly of God, 2416 N. Wright Rd. 10 a.m.-10 p.m. 608-756-4175, www.freedomfestnewlife.com

July 3-Patriotic Concert in the Park: The Beloit Janesville Symphony Orchestra presents a traditional July Pops concert honoring our servicemen and women and celebrating the anniversary of our nation's independence. Enjoy favorite classics, such as the Armed Forces Salute, the Star Spangled Banner, The Stars and Stripes Forever, and The 1812 Overture. Bring your own chairs. Food vendors will be on site. 6:30 p.m., Janesville Courthouse Park. 608-313-1200, www.beloitjanesvillesymphony.org

July 4-Independence Day on the Rock: The Rock Aqua Jays Water Ski Show Team presents this annual festival on the Rock River celebrating our nation's independence. Enjoy an "anything that floats" competition, helicopter rides, bounce house plus other family fun events. Capped off with nearly half an hour of colorful fireworks. The show is free and open to the public (donations welcome) with concessions available. Starts at 3 p.m. with fireworks at dusk. Traxler Park, 600 N. Main St. 608-757-3171, www.rockaquajays.com

July 21-Home Garden Tour: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., various locations in Janesville. Ticket booklets on sale at Rotary Botanical Gardens and K&W Greenery in Janesville. This event is an opportunity to explore unique and delightful area home gardens. All proceeds benefit Rotary Botanical Gardens. Admission that day to the gardens is included. 608-752-3885, www.rotarybotanicalgardens.org

July 21-Fast Feet for Families 5K run/2-mile walk: Rock County Health Care Center, 3530 N. Cty. Rd. F. This annual event offers a great opportunity to get out with your family and friends, enjoy the fresh air and exercise while still supporting two great causes in your community. Proceeds from this event support the Rock County Foster Care Program. www.fastfeetforfamilies.webs.com

July 21-22: Janesville Warbird Weekend: Fantastic show of warbirds lined up for the entire family, with air-rides, ground-tours, live 1940s music, re-enactors, vehicles, displays, and food and ice cream vendors. Some of this year's highlights include: B-24 Diamond Lil, B-25 Miss Mitchell, AC-47 Spooky Gunship, Grumman C1A Trader, BT-13 Vultee, North American SNJ, C-45 Expeditor, T-6 Texan, PT-13 Stearman, L-5 Stinson, Ryan PT-22 and L-29 Delfin Jet. Aircraft are accepting air-ride reservations now. Steve Snyder,

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Monterey Dam removal slated for July

By Michelle Lovrine Honeyager
Special to the Lakes Edition

The construction to remove the Monterey Dam is scheduled to begin in July of this year. The contract for the project was awarded to Drax, Inc. out of Madison, Wis., according to Tim Whittaker, Janesville City stormwater engineer.

"The City has applied for three separate DNR grants to help fund this project," said Whittaker. "The three grant programs are a WDNR Municipal Dam Grant Program with an approximate value of \$400,000, the WDNR Municipal Flood Control Grant Program with an approximate value of \$460,000 and the WDNR Stewardship Grant program with an approximate value \$60,000."

The Janesville City Council voted to remove the Monterey Dam in March 2017. The dam was built to generate power, which it no longer does. Ongoing costs to keep it were deemed inefficient.

Plans for added amenities

One of the major benefits of taking the dam down means returning the areas to a more natural state. Original habitats for fish, wildlife and vegetation will be restored. The oxygen level in the water is expected to increase.

Removal of the dam could also return the upstream reach of the river to a more free-flowing state, which is conducive to young fish and species that prefer flowing water and gravel. It would more closely match other portions of the Rock River.

All of that opens up opportunities for recreational additions and beautification initiatives. Current plans for the area include a canoe/kayak launch, increased trails, picnic lawn, increasing fishing access and a stormwater pond.

As far as the biggest changes go, Whittaker said, "In the space between the river walls in downtown Janesville, the river will drop five inches. The river will still go wall-to-wall. Farther down closer to the dam, the elevations will drop approximately three feet."

Problems with old dam

According to the City of Janesville website, the dam was first built in the mid-1800s to provide hydroelectric



The controversial removal of Janesville's Monterey Dam is scheduled to begin in July 2018. (File photo)

power to local woolen mills. The dam hasn't had its hydroelectric equipment for decades now, and it hasn't provided power since the 1960s. It also doesn't hold back the Rock River from flooding.

In 2012, the dam was inspected by Bloom Companies, and it was found that the dam has several structural problems. Some of those problems are deteriorating and missing concrete, spillway cracking and exposed steel.

A contested removal

The vote to remove the dam was hotly contested and filled with much debate before the Janesville City Council voted to remove the dam in March 2017.

There are some cons of removing the dam. The City of Janesville's website mentioned that fish will no longer stack up downstream of the dam, making fishing less of an ease in that spot. Large, flat areas of water that have come to define the area will be lost, to the point where the water will be less visible from the road. While there will be no dam maintenance, there could be maintenance for the current bay area and the added amenities.

The construction itself could also include short-term impacts, like sediment release downstream and disturbance near the actual construction site.

Another large concern was how the dam removal would affect the local historical site, The Rock. However, the only change is that the water's edge would be farther away from The Rock.



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