

What's Happening ...in Collinsville

Chamber offers activities for the community

The following information is provided by the Collinsville Chamber of Commerce.

The Collinsville Chamber of Commerce opened in 1928 with a mission to promote, support and represent Collinsville area business and community interests. Its goal is to make Collinsville a great place to live and do business. The Chamber offers opportunities for members to grow their own businesses while helping the community put its best foot forward.

Among the services are:

Networking events, Monthly lunches, Business After Hours, Ribbon cuttings, Golf tournament, Annual Dinner, Community Awards Night, and Festivals.

The Chamber offers many dif-

ferent types of networking events throughout the year. The events are a great way to meet other businesses that are a part of the Chamber and begin a relationship with them.

Events include:

International Horseradish Festival: Collinsville produces approximately 60 percent of the world's horseradish, and in 1987 the first festival was held. The International Horseradish Festival is always held the first Friday and Saturday in June on Main Street in Collinsville. The festival includes a variety of vendors who use horseradish in their ingredients, craft vendors, a 5k run, car and motorcycle show, and more.

For more information visit the website, www.internationalhorseradishfestival.com

Italian Fest: The Italian Fest is always held the third Friday and Saturday in September on Main Street in Collinsville. Italian Fest started in 1984 to celebrate the Italian culture and heritage the city was built on. At the Italian Fest you will see many different Italian food vendors, a huge parade, 5k, Little Miss & Mr. Pageant, Bocce Ball Tournament, Grape Stomp and more.

For more information visit the website, www.italianfest.net



Collinsville looks forward to return of Italian Fest

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

People in Collinsville love to claim a little Italiano heritage around this time of year.

The annual Italian Fest, an event that typically draws thousands of people to downtown, returns after a hiatus brought on by Covid-19. The party along Main Street takes place Friday and Saturday, Sept. 17 and 18.

Jeree Bronnbauer said last year's cancellation brought on by the pandemic was a hard pill to swallow.

"That was a very big deal, and a lot of people were very disappointed," she said.

She is co-chairing the event with Carrie Cushing, who served as chair in 2019 and was supposed to turn over the reins to Bronnbauer this past year. They determined it best to team up for this year's event. Bronnbauer had been the decorating chair for Italian Fest since 2009.

The specter of health concerns still hovers, she said.

"We keep in touch with the Madison County Health Department. If the numbers get high, we will scale back on some events. But right now, as long as the numbers are controllable, we can move forward."

The festival has events throughout the two days, starting at 11 a.m. Friday and continuing until 10 p.m. Saturday. A 5K run will be held at 8 a.m. on Saturday.

The Bocce Ball Tournament, which is held off site at Glidden Park, is one of the most popular of the events. It takes place all day on Saturday, the 18th. The Italian lawn bowling game is fun for both the participants and the spectators. Registration begins at 9 a.m.

The Grape Stomp is also popular, pitting politicians, bankers and others in a friendly bit of pressing horseplay. The more stomping, the more covered they get. (And they don't keep the juice.) The Stomp begins at 11:30 a.m. following opening ceremonies.

What is traditionally one of the largest local parades in the state is set to occur at 4 p.m. Saturday, starting on Main Street at North Hesperia Street. The route takes entrants down Main Street



to Clay Street where the Fest grounds start. From there it proceeds to Seminary Street then hooks back around to Clay Street, following the one-way patterns.

Vendors are expected to be plentiful, with many Italian specialties, hosted by nonprofit groups and others.

The music schedule was still being assembled, but local well-known bands are already committed, including Champagne Fixx, JustIn Time, Blue Marlin, Elektrik Baby Power and Derrick Keith.

The Italian Fest began in 1984 and except for last year has continued annually.

Several businesses get behind Italian Fest. They are listed as "platino, oro, argento and bronzo," or platinum, gold, silver and bronze. Platino sponsors include Laura Buick, Grey Eagle Distributors, Koerner Distributor Inc., and Robert "Chick" Fritz Inc.

"We love to support our businesses and our nonprofits and keep them going as long as we can," Bronnbauer said.

Madison County Transit will supply complimentary transportation to the Italian Fest both days. People can catch the shuttle at Doris Intermediate School, 1841 Vandalia St., to take to the festival grounds in Uptown Collinsville. The return shuttle will pick passengers up at Clay Street and return to Doris Intermediate School.

What's Happening In ...?
 In addition to our normal coverage of trends and issues, the Illinois Business Journal selects a different community to highlight what's happening.
 Next up: a look at the region served by the Greater Belleville Area Chamber of Commerce.
 We encourage businesses to participate by advertising and sharing news items.
 For more information contact Charlie Huelsmann at (618) 973-0414 or chuelsmann@better-newspapers.com.



Mandy Kitzmiller
Mandy.kitzmiller@countryfinancial.com

Scott Allen
Scott.Allen@countryfinancial.com



1605 Vandalia
 Collinsville, IL. 62234
618-346-1500



Brendan Carter
 Agent - Metro East St. Louis
 618.234.1121
brendan.carter@horacemann.com
 Insurance License #18238152





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