

The City of Collinsville turns 150, with plans to party all year long

By DEVESE URSERY

This year, 2022, marks the 150th birthday of the City of Collinsville. As part of this milestone celebration, special wooden Sesquicentennial Candles have been placed in different locations throughout the city. There are four different activities centered around these Sesquicentennial Candles to help mark the city's birthday celebration.

The City of Collinsville's Sesquicentennial celebration officially began on May 29, in conjunction with the City's annual Memorial Day Weekend Fireworks event. At that event, Mayor John Miller read a proclamation recognizing the City's 150th birthday. Kruta Bakery provided cupcakes, and a giant 150th birthday card was on display for everyone in attendance to sign.

The first Sesquicentennial Candle celebration component was the 150th Birthday Candle Hunt, which ended on July 31. For this celebration activity, participants were asked to find 10 of the 150 candles placed throughout the city, take selfies in front of them, and then post them on Facebook or Instagram using the hashtag "#Collinsville150."

Those who did so were entered into a drawing for a chance to win \$150 gift cards to local businesses, as well as their very own candle to keep. "This was a great summer activity that encouraged families to explore Collinsville, and it was really neat to see all of the people who were getting out and finding candles all over the city," said Jed Robbins with the City of Collinsville Parks and Recreation Department.

All 150 Sesquicentennial Candles were decorated with intimate designs by a variety of people. Earlier in the year, local businesses, organizations, and nonprofits were given the opportunity to sponsor one of the pre-cut, pre-sanded,



and ready-to-decorate Sesquicentennial Candles for a minimal fee. Once purchased, a representative from the business or organization could design the candle to best reflect their business or organization. In addition to the sponsored candles, people of all ages were also able to help design the candles by stopping by the "Sesquicentennial Station" at the Memorial Day Weekend Fireworks Festival. Parks and Recreation Department staff painted a few dozen candles that can now be found in city parks, civic buildings, and at some of the entrance signs that welcome visitors to Collinsville. Students from Collinsville Middle and Holy Cross Lutheran Schools also helped design the candles.

"Where's That Candle?!" was the city's second celebration component employing the special occasion Sesquicentennial Candles. It challenged participants to correctly match the snippets of 15 Sesquicentennial Candles to where you can find them around the city. Players used a location bank on the back of an activity sheet to match all 15 candles to their specific locations. They then submitted their completed activity sheet to the Collinsville Activity Center, or to City Hall, by the Sept. 30 deadline.

Players who correctly matched all 15 candles to their locations were entered into a drawing for a Sesquicentennial Prize Basket that included gift cards from local businesses and special Sesquicentennial souvenirs, with one winner selected at ran-

dom. "Where's That Candle?!" was different from the first candle program as it required players to locate specific candles, instead of simply finding any 10 candles. On Oct. 1, the City of Collinsville hosted an official celebration at the Collinsville Historical Museum and Collinsville Library. The event celebrated 150 years of Collinsville history, from the first settlers to present-day Collinsville, with brief presentations by museum staff and William Furry, Director of the Illinois State Historical Society. Additionally, never-before-seen Sesquicentennial Candles were placed on display for public viewing. The last two celebration components on the calendar to finish out the year and employ the special Sesquicentennial Candles are the Golden Sesquicentennial Candle Hunt in November and the Holiday Candle Workshop in December.

The Golden Sesquicentennial Candle Hunt is a celebration component where residents will now be searching for a miniature Golden Sesquicentennial Candle that is hidden somewhere in the city limits of Collinsville. Clues regarding the candle's location will be released twice a week. The first person to bring the golden candle back to the Collinsville Activity Center will win a prize. The Holiday Candle Workshop, the last of the Sesquicentennial Candle celebration program components, will take place in December. The Parks and Recreation Department will host a Holiday Candle Workshop where participants will be able to decorate one of the Sesquicentennial Candles and keep using it as holiday décor themselves. For additional information regarding this year-long party in Collinsville marking its 150th birthday and its remaining celebration activities, contact the Collinsville Parks and Recreation Department at (618) 346-7529.

St. Clair County Transit District awarded \$300,000 for Phase II of the Fairview Heights–Swansea Trail

St. Clair County Transit District (SCCTD) recently announced it has been awarded \$300,000 through the Metro East Park and Recreation District's Park and Trail Grant Matching Program for Phase II of the Fairview Heights – Swansea Trail.

This phase of the project features a 1.5-mile bike and pedestrian off-road pathway that will begin at SCCTD's MetroBikeLink Trail and extend along the west side of Sullivan Drive to Frank Scott Parkway in Fairview Heights and include a separate pedestrian bridge over the MetroLink tracks – connecting 2,000 homes in Fairview Heights and Swansea to the trail system.

The first phase of the Fairview Heights – Swansea Trail is also underway,

featuring a one-fifth of a mile off-road trail segment from the traffic signal at the intersection of Illinois Route 161 and Sullivan Drive in Belleville to the MetroBikeLink where Phase II begins. When work is completed on both phases, the Fairview Heights – Swansea Trail will be a 1.7-mile-long bike and pedestrian pathway that connects to the 14 continuous miles of trails in Southwestern Illinois known as the MetroBikeLink System, which links users to six Metro Transit Centers.

The Fairview Heights – Swansea Trail is a \$3.1 million dollar investment in the local community. TWM is spearheading the engineering and design phase of the project in its entirety, which is set to be completed in the Fall of 2023.

The construction phase will follow and is expected to be completed in 2024.

"We are grateful for the grant funding received from the Metro East Park and Recreation District and look forward to next steps in the trail development process," commented Ken Sharkey, managing director of St. Clair County Transit District. "This project is a key connector in the ever-evolving MetroBikeLink System, which has proven to be a really great amenity for local communities."

The MetroBikeLink System opened in 2002 and was comprised of a four-mile trail, extending from Southwestern Illinois College to the Swansea MetroLink Station. Since then, the system has expanded to include the Memorial, Fairview Heights

and Shiloh Scott sections for a total of 14 miles of trail adjacent to the MetroLink light rail tracks. Additional trails have been built by SCCTD to connect to this main artery, including SCCTD Orchard Loop Trail Phases I and II, the Engelmann Park Connector and the Old Collinsville Road Trail (currently under construction), totaling another eight miles of SCCTD-connected trails. These accessible pathways, along with the connecting trails from other municipalities, will combine to provide over 35 miles of connected trails in St. Clair County.

To learn more about the Fairview Heights – Swansea Trail and the MetroBikeLink System, visit www.scctd.org.

Lewis & Clark's WESST meets new federal CDL training requirements

Lewis and Clark Community College's Workforce Education, Solutions and Safety Training (WESST) division is an approved provider for new requirements set by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) is required for individuals seeking to obtain their Class-A or Class-B CDL in order to remain compliant.

According to WESST Director Kathy Willis, the requirements are an effort to standardize driving

competencies and safety practices, which varied from state to state.

"L&C's academic commercial driver's license (CDL) program already includes the ELDT content and practices for those seeking first-time employment as truckers," Willis said. "That program has eight and 16-week options for the Class A CDL. The training needs for individuals seeking their Class-B CDL can be addressed through the shorter WESST ELDT workshops, generally, in less than a week." To qualify for the training, stu-

dents must be at least 18 years old, a legal United States resident and have a valid non-CDL driver's license.

To obtain a Class-A or Class-B CDL, students must complete L&C's ELDT course and pass all ELDT testing, as well as obtain a commercial learner's permit (CLP) and pass the Class-A or B test through the Illinois Department of Motor Vehicles.

For more information on the Class-A CDL program, contact Coordina-

tor Kent Ripperda at (618) 468-5797 or kripperda@lc.edu. You may also contact Trainer/Instructional Trainer/Instructional Planner Joe Turner at (618) 468-5780 or josturner@lc.edu.

To learn more about the Class-B CDL program, contact Associate Director Safety Training Boyd Wells at (618) 468-5780 or WESSTtraining@lc.edu.

To learn about other courses offered by WESST, visit the website at www.lc.edu/Workforce_Training.