

Daily Chronicle

From corn to classic cars, festival season underway in DeKalb County

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DeKALB – It's festival season in DeKalb County.

Communities throughout area are hosting more than [15 summer celebrations](#) between June and September this year.

Whether you are young or old, from Sycamore or Somonauk, there is guaranteed to be a festival tailored to your interests, DeKalb Mayor John Rey said.

"I think they give a variety of activities that residents in the community and visitors to the community can participate in," Rey said. "It provides a showcase for a lot of the attractions that our community has to offer."

Some of the most-attended events include Genoa Days, and Sycamore's Turning Back Time Weekend, as well as DeKalb's Kite Fest and Corn Fest, according to Debbie Armstrong, the executive director of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"Genoa Days is running this weekend," Armstrong said. "We have so many local festivals in all of our towns and villages throughout the summer that are wonderful events for people to attend."

Genoa's 80th annual festival will end today with a closing performance by classic rock cover band, [The Beaux](#), from 6 to 10:30 p.m. on the main stage.

Leading up to the night's final performance, community members can take part in Brett's 5K Run and Walk at Genoa High School, a 4-H petting zoo, the Genoa Days parade, kids' carnival rides and a performance by [Beth Fowler's School of Dance](#).

Although Genoa's festival is nearly through, people from all over can set their sights on DeKalb's [Corn Fest](#), in the third year of its return to a downtown location.

The festival will be from Aug. 28 through 30, and will feature Lou Gramm, the original singer of the band Foreigner, said Lisa Angel, Corn Fest chairwoman, who also is the marketing development manager at the Daily Chronicle.

Corn Fest committee members have already heard buzz from Chicago residents planning to visit DeKalb to see Gramm perform, Angel said.

Admission to the soundstage area and beer garden will cost \$5 for one day, and admission to the

festival itself will remain free.

“You could do everything for free if you wanted to,” Angel said. “You could walk in for free; we have a viewing area on Locust Street for free, and you can have free corn on Saturday and walk away not spending a penny.”

Proceeds from this year’s Corn Fest will be donated to [TAILS Humane Society](#) and the [Fairdale Relief Fund](#), she said.

Fairdale residents also will get free admission into the carnival.

“If somebody comes over to the carnival with a driver’s license with Fairdale on it, they’ll give them free all-day wristbands for the family so they can come out and not only enjoy everything for free, but they can take their kids on the rides for free,” Angel said.

In addition to receiving part of the weekend’s proceeds, TAILS Humane Society in DeKalb will host an adoption event Aug. 30 at the DeKalb Municipal Building. Guests will be invited to adopt and take home their new pet the same day.

Sycamore’s [Turning Back Time Weekend](#) has perhaps the second-largest turnout, Armstrong, of the convention and visitors bureau, said.

The weekend will showcase vintage and classic cars and motorcycles. It is expected to draw a significant number of out-of-state visitors, Armstrong said.

“Those car owners come from all over,” she said. “That’s something from a tourism point of view, that we know large crowds are attracted to.”

The weekend will begin with a free outdoor showing of “Paddington” at 8:30 p.m. July 24, and end with the annual Fizz Ehrler Memorial Car Show on July 26 in downtown Sycamore.

Similarly, [Kite Fest](#) brings in audiences from across the nation, and is suitable for anyone who enjoys watching or flying kites as both a hobby and as a sport, Armstrong said.

“We draw people from the suburbs. We’ve gotten people from Wisconsin and different states,” she said. “Last year, we had a record year for attendance, and this year, we’re hoping to top that because this is actually the 10th anniversary.”

July marks the busiest month for festival-goers, with at least nine celebrations throughout Kirkland, DeKalb, Shabbona, Somonauk, Sycamore and Waterman.

Kirkland will kick off its annual [4th of July Celebration](#) at 5 p.m. July 2 with food, vendors and carnival rides, and come to a close at 11 p.m. July 4 with a raffle drawing and fireworks.

DeKalb’s [Let’s Dance Big Band Weekend](#) will feature a new addition in its 10th year. Guests of the 2014 dance requested the recording of a special album to commemorate the decade anniversary, according to a news release.

John Smith, founder of [Just Make it Happen](#), and his band The Shananigans recorded the album in May during a live “dance party” recording session, where community members were invited to listen to the live recording while dancing along.

The album will be released during this year’s Let’s Dance Big Band Weekend from July 17 through 19, and event coordinators are considering video recording the weekend, according to a news release.

[The Shabbona Hometown Festival](#), [Somonauk Summer Fest](#), and [Waterman Summer Fest and Tractor Pull](#) will offer a range of events to DeKalb’s neighboring communities, including live musical performances, craft shows, and fireworks.

This year’s Kishwaukeee Fest and Baconpalooza have been canceled and coordinators are unsure if the festival will return in the future, organizers said.

The summer’s festival-packed schedule is one both the community and local economy will benefit from, Armstrong said.

“The community gets to enjoy the benefits of the events plus we get to raise money from visitor spending which goes back into our community,” she said. “It’s a win-win whatever way you look at it.”

A year-long list of festivals with links to each celebration’s calendar of events can be found at dekalbcountycvb.com.

If you go

What: Corn Fest

Where: Downtown Dekalb (Lincoln Highway between First and Fourth Streets)

When: Aug. 28 through 30

Website: cornfest.com

What: DeKalb Kite Fest

Where: Corner of Lucinda Avenue and Kishwaukeee Drive, DeKalb

When: TBA

What: Sycamore’s Turning Back Time Weekend

Where: Downtown Sycamore

When: July 24 through 26

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