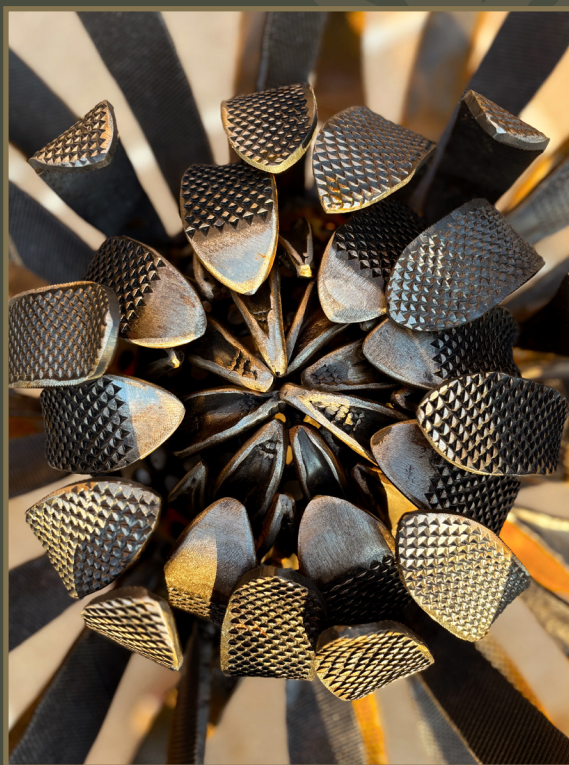


A GUIDE TO
ART + CULTURE



2026 - 2027

W E L C O M E T O EFFINGHAM!

The City of Effingham is proud to be an arts-friendly community.

We welcome guests and residents to explore our local cultural outlets!

Whether you're catching a live show at the Effingham Performance Center, viewing a sculpture along our avenues or touring a local gallery, you're sure to find inspiration and creativity around every corner in Effingham...

Enjoy your visit!



Jodi Thoele
Director of Tourism
Visit Effingham

VISIT EFFINGHAM

201 E. Jefferson Ave.
Effingham, IL 62401

Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Toll Free | 800.772.0750
Phone | 217.342.5310
Fax | 217.342.4939

Email | effinghamsculptures@gmail.com
Website | visiteffinghamil.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK
facebook.com/visiteffingham

INSTAGRAM
[visiteffingham](https://instagram.com/visiteffingham)

YOUTUBE
[@EffinghamTourism](https://youtube.com/EffinghamTourism)



VISIT
Effingham
IL - USA
A MIDWESTERN
GETAWAY



enjoy
illinois



INSIDE THE GUIDE

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SCULPTURES - P 4

Learn details about the exhibit, including background on the artists and what inspired each piece. Map on page 6.

** Flip to page 45 for a surprise installation - any guesses where it will appear?*

FESTIVALS + MARKETS - P 34

Celebrate local makers at one of our artisan-centered community events. Discover artisan goods + local talent, right here in Effingham!

FARMERS + MAKERS - P 36

Nourish yourself - mind, body and soul - through locally-grown produce and handcrafted meals. Learn more about our Illinois Makers, as well!

EXHIBITIONS + GALLERIES - P 42

Browse local galleries at your leisure and enjoy nearby exhibitions...

THEATER + PERFORMANCE - P 44

Take in a show at the local performing arts theater! Find out where you can see art come to life in the City of Effingham.

DESIGN YOUR OWN SCULPTURE - P 46

Imagine your own public art piece -
what would it look like?

Dream of and design your own sculpture!

MADE IN EFFINGHAM - P 47

Celebrate the local makers who bring Effingham to life and learn how to get involved!



WALK OUR GALLERY

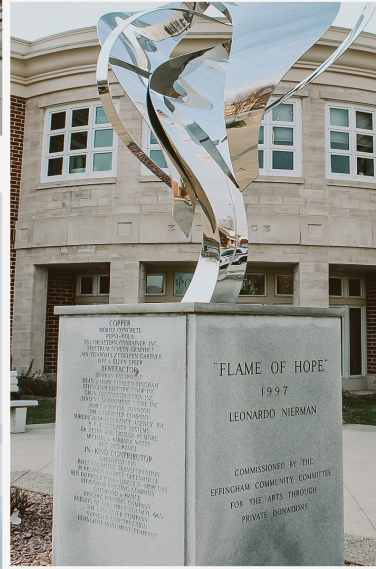
These sculptures, which bring life to the streets of Effingham, were created by some of the Midwest's most well-known sculptors - as well as a few of its best-kept secrets.

Each piece is part of the annual Sculptures on the Avenues outdoor exhibition.

Now celebrating its 28th year, Sculptures on the Avenues is a self-guided walking tour that winds through Downtown Effingham, with a stop at City Hall.

Pause here at 201 E. Jefferson Avenue to view the piece that started it all...
the Flame of Hope by artist,
Leonardo Nierman.

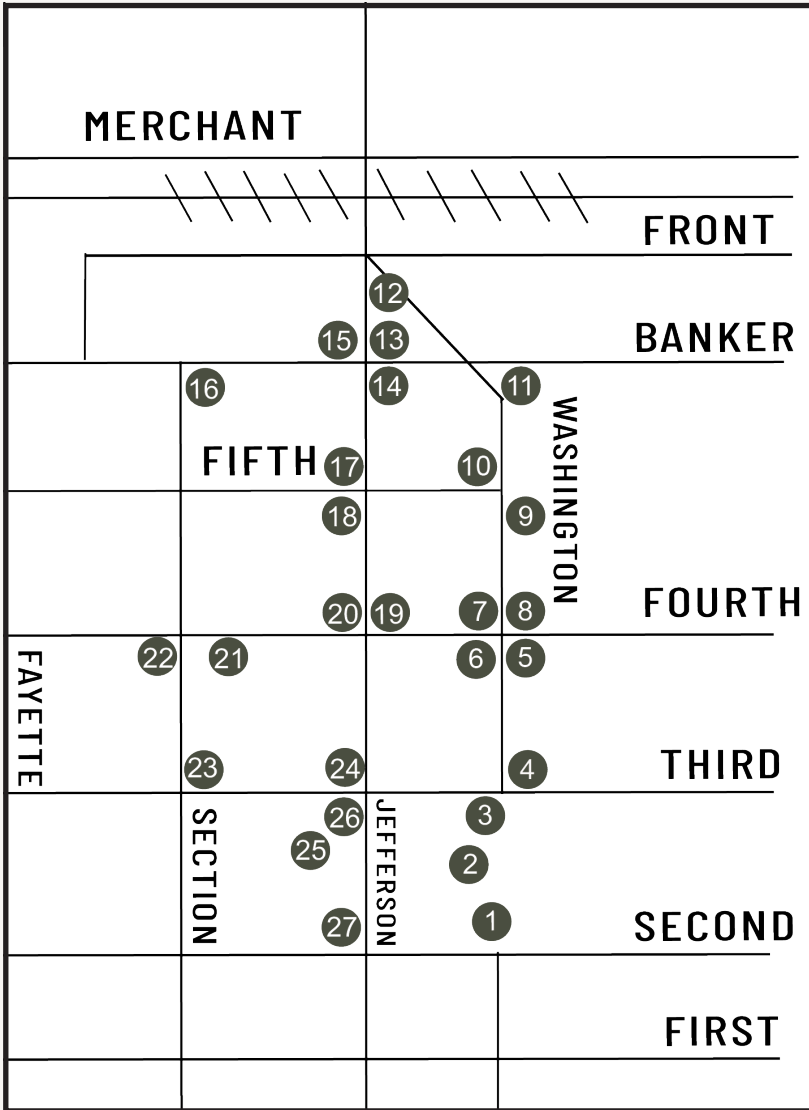
We invite you to explore and discover the sculptures that have transformed the City's avenues into an open-air, walkable public art gallery.



the flame of hope

In 1997, the Effingham Community Committee for the Arts commissioned Leonardo Nierman's "Flame of Hope," which continues to be the focal point of the sculpture exhibition.

take a tour...



BEGIN YOUR TOUR AT:
THE EFFINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
200 N. THIRD ST.

SCULPTURES

- 
1. NEST SERIES I & II
 2. SPIDER MUM
 3. THE LADY OF THE LAKE
 4. TALOS
 5. TOTEM STOP
 6. A SACRED TREE
 7. FLASH 5
 8. ORBIT HOUR GLASS
 9. UNTITLED 2
 10. OCEAN DAYDREAM
 11. OLDER PERSON'S
THINKING
 12. FOR THOSE WHO
 13. SEYMORE?
 14. HOME SPUN
 15. MOSAIC LILIES
 16. KOMETES
 17. FIN PUMP
 18. BORE PUMP
 19. RED TAILED LANTERN
 20. SINGULARITY
 21. "LEAVE A MESSAGE"
 22. RED WRITING FIGURE
 23. ROOSTER
 24. CHICKEN
 25. FLAME OF HOPE
(PERMANENT)
 26. BALANCING BOY & JOY
(PERMANENT)
 27. BEST FRIENDS
(PERMANENT)

NEST SERIES: I & II
TODD KINGERY | EDGEWOOD, IL



The Nest Series invites visitors to settle into nature itself...
Handcrafted chairs woven from branches and twigs that are as sturdy as they are sculptural. Kingery's signature use of organic materials transforms the ordinary into something imaginative...
and distinctly local.

Designed as a pair, one nest cradles a child or smaller sitter while the other welcomes an adult, creating a shared moment of connection.



Spider Mum

LORELEI SIMS, OF CHARLESTON, IL

Spider Mum by Lorelei Sims transforms rugged, utilitarian farrier files into a striking floral form in **full bloom**. Layered and forged with precision, the piece captures the delicate complexity of a spider mum while honoring the strength of its materials.

Drawing from her practice as a contemporary blacksmith in Charleston, Sims brings new life to found objects - where industry and artistry meet in unexpected ways.

"The Lady of the Lake"



E. HOLLINSHEAD STEAD | NEWTON, IL

The Lady of the Lake brings a touch of the fantastical
to the everyday landscape...

A sea dragon imagined simply for the joy of its existence!

Constructed from countless cut wooden blocks and sealed in epoxy,
she balances whimsy with craftsmanship, inviting passersby
to pause, photograph and interact.

TALOS

GREGORY MENDEZ | DECATUR, IN



Talos draws from Ancient Greek mythology, where the figure - crafted by Hephaestus - stood as a vigilant protector of Crete.

Depicted in legend as both a towering bronze man and a bull-like guardian, Talos is often considered one of the earliest imaginings of a mechanical being. This interpretation bridges myth and invention, reintroducing an **ancient 'robot'** into the present with a sense of enduring strength and story.



Totem Stop

LORELEI SIMS, OF CHARLESTON, IL

Totem Stop by Lorelei Sims stands tall and expressive, a figure assembled from found objects that feels both grounded and alive. With outstretched 'arms,' hair rising on end and a face formed from a repurposed headlight that catches the afternoon sun, this piece shifts with the light and invites a second look.

Sims' intuitive use of salvaged materials transforms the ordinary into something quietly radiant...

Angular lines echo ancient growth.



A Sacred Tree

ALEX MENDEZ
DECATUR, IN

FLASH 5

NIK ALWERDT | ALTAMONT, IL



Flash 5 by Nik Alwerdt shifts with the light, revealing a second life after dark through bands of vivid reflective tape.

Crafted from found objects, this piece invites viewers to experience it not just in passing, but in changing conditions.

As night falls, color and reflection take over... turning the sculpture into something dynamic, unexpected and alive in its surroundings.



Orbit Hour Glass

MATT BOONSTRA - CENTRAL IL

Orbit Hour Glass by Matt Boonstra is a sculptural work inspired by the traditional hourglass form, referencing the passage and **measurement of time** through its structure. The piece reflects Boonstra's interest in clean, intentional form and balanced composition.

Based in Central Illinois, Boonstra is an artist and educator whose work has been exhibited in galleries and sculpture parks nationwide.

"Untitled 2"



*"We are all searching for something.
The problem is knowing when you've found it."*

Untitled 2 reflects Aldon Addington's continued exploration of stainless steel and form, shaped by decades of experience.

Now in his nineties, he remains actively engaged in his practice, creating work driven by curiosity and available materials.

ALDON ADDINGTON
CARBONDALE, IL

OCEAN DAYDREAM

DARIN SHUMAKER | CHARLESTON, IL



Ocean Daydream, like many of Darin Shumaker's creations, began as a discarded tool. From the head of a shovel, a jellyfish emerged... delicate yet resilient.

In landlocked Illinois, the ocean exists as memory or imagination, and this piece drifts between the two. It speaks to quiet strength, **moving gently through life's currents** while daring to dream beyond the horizon.

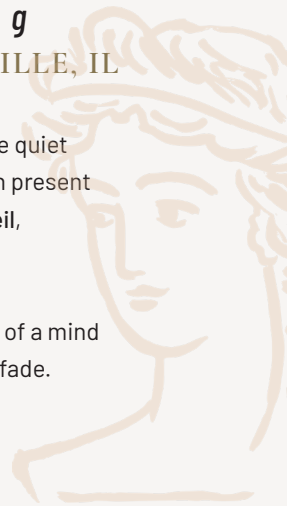


Older Person's Thinking

GARY AUERSWALD, OF ST. FRANCISVILLE, IL

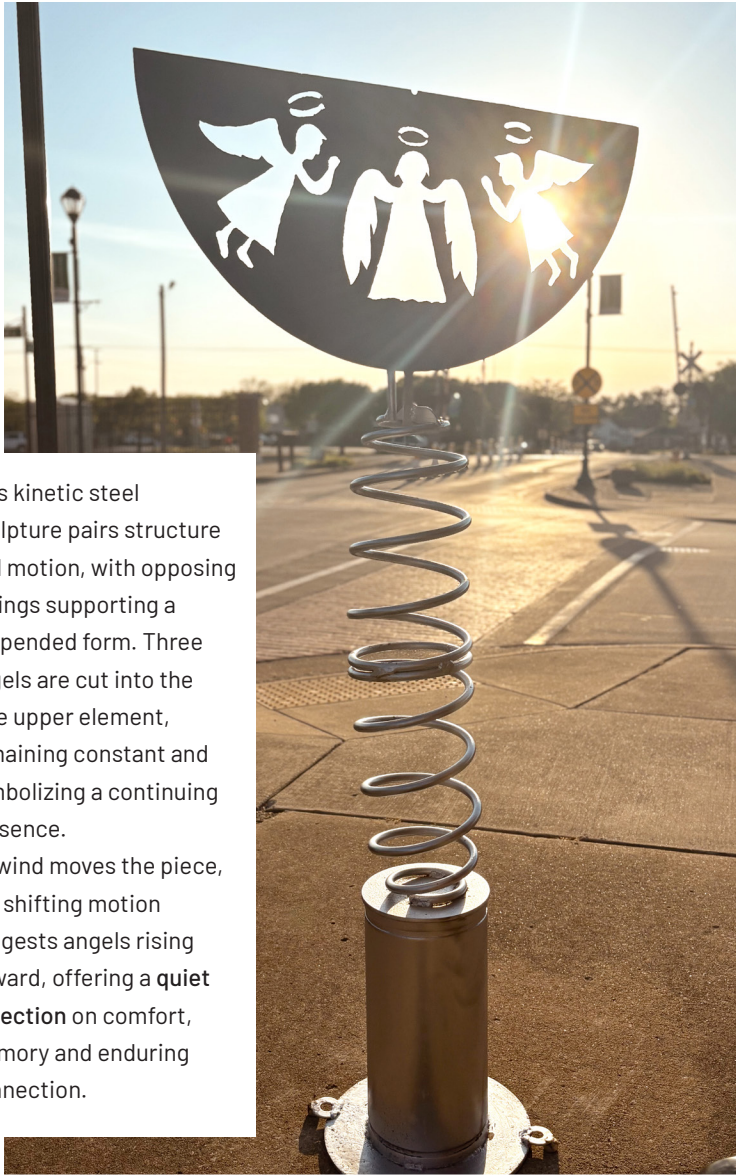
In *Older Person's Thinking*, Gary Auerswald reflects on the quiet frustration of aging, where thoughts and memories remain present but just out of reach. Like words hidden behind a veil, they can be seen but not spoken.

The piece reflects on aging, memory and the unseen depth of a mind that remains active... even when expression begins to fade.



For Those Who

GARY AUERSWALD
ST. FRANCISVILLE, IL



This kinetic steel sculpture pairs structure and motion, with opposing springs supporting a suspended form. Three angels are cut into the blue upper element, remaining constant and symbolizing a continuing presence. As wind moves the piece, the shifting motion suggests angels rising upward, offering a **quiet reflection** on comfort, memory and enduring connection.

SEYMORE?

DARIN SHUMAKER | CHARLESTON, IL



In *Seymore?*, Darin Shumaker transforms
grief into something living.

Created in honor of his mother, the piece reimagines a discarded rim as a blooming form - reflecting her love of art, science and nature. The question in the title invites personal interpretation, reminding us that meaning, like memory, continues to grow.



ANDREW ARVANETES | KANKAKEE, IL

Andrew Arvanetes creates narrative-driven sculptures that invite viewers to form their own personal connections and interpretations.

Using familiar visual details and symbolic forms, his work balances precise fabrication with playful scale, whimsy... and *a touch of the absurd.*



Mosaic Lilies

LEAH HANFLAND, OF EFFINGHAM, IL

Inspired by the lilies found in the work of Czech artist Alphonse Mucha in the early twentieth century, Leah Hanfland's *Mosaic Lilies* embraces the flowing elegance and decorative spirit of Art Nouveau. The fragmented mosaic form enhances these organic shapes, creating **movement and delicacy**.

Rather than framing portraits or theatre scenes as Mucha once did, these lilies are meant to live within the rhythm of Downtown Effingham - offering a quiet reminder of beauty woven into the energy of everyday life.

K O M E T E S

GREGORY MENDEZ | DECATUR, IN



Drawing from the ancient Greek word *kometes*, meaning “long-haired,” Gregory Mendez’s *Kometes* captures the energy and motion of a comet blazing across the night sky.

Sweeping forms evoke the glowing trail of gas and debris left in its wake, transforming a fleeting celestial phenomenon into a striking sculptural moment suspended in motion.

Fin Pump



MATT MOYER | COLUMBIA, MO

Matt Moyer's *Fin Pump* draws attention to the overlooked machinery quietly woven into everyday life. Found beneath streets, inside homes and throughout factories, pumps serve essential roles in both convenience and emergency, yet often go unnoticed.

By transforming these **utilitarian objects** into sculpture, Moyer highlights the beauty, history and human reliance embedded within the industrial forms we so often discard or forget.



Hidden machinery that quietly powers everyday life.



Bore Pump
MATT MOYER
COLUMBIA, MO

RED TAILED LANTERN

GREGORY MENDEZ | DECATUR, IN



Blending industrial history with natural symbolism, Gregory Mendez's sculpture pairs an early railway lantern with the watchful presence of a red-tailed hawk.

Reminiscent of an antique ring knocker, the piece evokes themes of passage, protection and connection to the past.





Viewers are invited to consider the power of a single defining moment.

Singularity
ALEX MENDEZ
DECATUR, IN



Leave a Message

DREW HANFLAND, OF EFFINGHAM, IL

Inspired by bathroom stalls, bus stops, and graffitied road signs, this work reflects the human impulse to leave a trace and share something without consequence.

Viewers are invited to “leave a message” - a love note, a quote, a doodle or something they’ve always wanted to say. Over the year, the audience will have created the final piece... not only physical, but emotional, too.

Please, leave a message.

Red Writing Figure



V. SKIP WILLITS | CAMANCHE, IA

Skip Willits' *Red Writing Figure* incorporates written language as part of its evolving surface, often drawn from songs in the studio or poems he admires. Markings are layered and occasionally rewritten in a **palimpsest-like process**, creating a record of shifting thoughts over time. The result is a work that reflects both material form and the quiet accumulation of memory and meaning.

Rooster

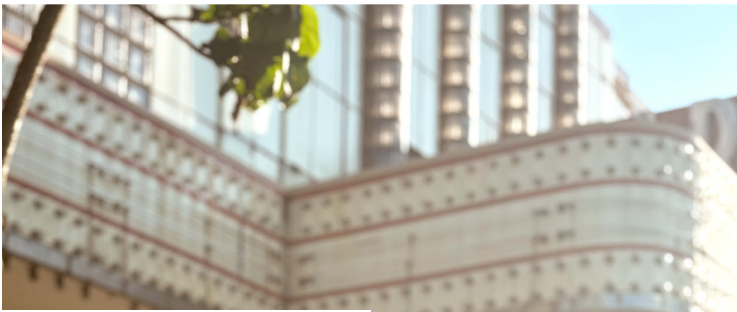
GARY MITCHELL
ST. LOUIS, MO



Mitchell's sculptures are designed to inform, **delight** and beautify.

Chicken

GARY MITCHELL
ST. LOUIS, MO



Crafted from aluminum sheet metal,
inspired by the aircraft industry.



T H E L E O N A R D O N I E R M A N A W A R D

Each year, the City of Effingham invites residents and visitors to take part in celebrating public art through our Sculptures on the Avenues program.

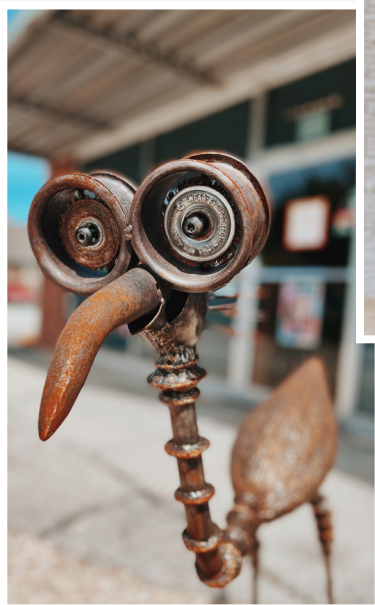
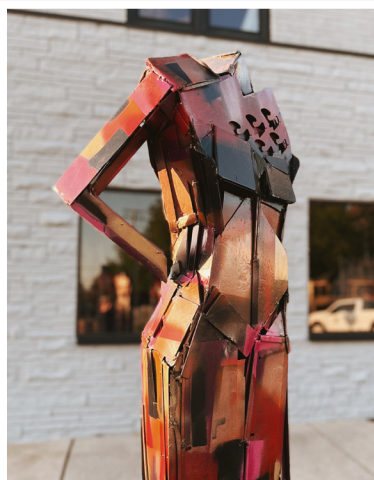
Throughout the exhibition, the community is encouraged to explore the installations and cast their vote for their favorite work.

At the close of each year's display, the artist receiving the most votes is honored with the Leonardo Nierman Award, recognizing their impact on this year's collection.

To participate in this year's voting process, please scan the QR code below:



2023



2025



2024



"you hold peace"
by Drew Stanfland

FESTIVALS, MARKETS & DATES

you won't want to miss!

EFFINGHAM FARMERS MARKET

May through October 2026 | Downtown Effingham

See page 36 for more detail.

MOCCASIN CREEK FESTIVAL

June 18-21, 2026 | Lake Sara

An annual 4-day music festival focusing on "Americana" music and bringing together musicians, festival families, craftspeople, tradespeople and music-lovers of all types.

EFFINGHAM ARTISAN FAIR

July 10 & 11, 2026 | Tuscan Hills Winery

See the adjacent page for more detail.

HOBNOB HARVEST MARKET

September 4 & 5, 2026 | Effingham County Fairgrounds

Shop handpicked vintage, handmade and boutique vendors to cozy up your home & wardrobe for Autumn.

SUMMER SUNDOWN MUSIC FESTIVAL

September 11-13, 2026 | Lake Sara

An annual 3-day music festival focusing on the music makers and music lovers of Central Illinois and beyond.

NEXT YEAR'S SOA INVITE

January 1, 2027 | Visit Effingham

Send in your entries to be considered for the 2027-2028 Sculptures on the Avenues exhibition!



EFFINGHAM ARTISAN FAIR



Photo by Astrid Johana Photography

*July 10 & 11, 2026
Tuscan Hills Winery
Exit 162*

The Annual Artisan Fair will include work from 40 unique regional artists and makers!

This year, at its scenic location - Tuscan Hills Winery - you'll find everything from ceramics to macrame, paintings, jewelry and more!

These artisan goods will be displayed both for purchase and for viewing.

Enjoy live music, kids' activities, food trucks and, of course, fine wines and spirits!

Bring the entire family to this vibrant event, and soak in a beautiful weekend, celebrating the arts in Effingham.

For more information and an updated schedule, visit www.effinghamartisanfair.org.



Photo by Astrid Johana Photography



Effingham Farmers Market





**Effingham Farmers Market
Downtown Effingham
Exit 159**

The Effingham Farmers Market provides our community with fresh, locally-grown food, locally-made artwork, live music and quality artisan goods.

Everything at the market is produced right here in our region!

Support our community -- and your health -- by buying local at the Effingham Farmers Market!

Visit every Saturday morning from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Downtown Effingham on the courthouse lawn, from May through October.

For more information, email effinghamfarmersmarket@gmail.com.

PHOTO CREDIT: ASTRID JOHANA PHOTOGRAPHY



Heartland Health Food

Heartland Health Foods exists to serve those who seek healthier and more nutritious products than you can find at most grocery stores.

Heartland carries a wide array of natural and organic items, including: produce, snacks, nuts, juices, entrees, baking goods, vegetarian + vegan meat replacements, gluten-free items, gelatin-free supplements + vitamins, cleaning supplies and more.

Find locally-grown, fresh produce here, when in season, as well! Visit www.heartlandhealthyfoods.com for more information, and be sure to follow them on Facebook and Instagram at: [@heartlandhealthfood](https://www.instagram.com/heartlandhealthfood)

FIREFLY GRILL

ILLINOIS MAKER



"Firefly Grill is like that much-loved relative who is always in charge of throwing the family dinners for extended family - except the food tastes better."

Firefly Grill is an award-winning, eco-friendly roadhouse on the shores of Lake Kristie. Chef Niall Campbell and his wife Kristie own and operate this oasis of farm to table cuisine in the heart of the Midwest.



Firefly's ever-changing menu boasts soulful, American-fresh cuisine. Firefly is so passionate about sourcing the best ingredients that they grow many themselves in their on-site, beyond-organic farm.



What they can't grow themselves, they source locally from artisan farmers and foragers. Reserve your table at www.ffgrill.com/reservations.



J O E S I P P E R S C A F E
ILLINOIS MAKER



"In a culture where convenience is king, quality is often sacrificed. While efficiency is important, Joe Sippers Cafe has a high regard for craftsmanship and tradition."

Enjoy a hand-brewed coffee or tea or perhaps a local favorite, Blackberries & Cream Latte.

In the kitchen the team at Joe Sippers Cafe makes, bakes, and creates what they can with quality ingredients like local stone-ground flour, local free-range eggs, all-natural deli meats, and lofty portions of nutritious produce.

Joe Sippers Cafe invite you to stop in, check out the goods, and enjoy your cafe experience!

WWW.JOESIPPERS.COM

"The world's most celebrated chefs do their best carving and chopping on hardwood boards handcrafted in Effingham, IL."

Known for their BOOS BLOCKS cutting boards, crafted of solid quality American Hardwoods (maple, walnut and cherry), John Boos products can be seen on major cooking shows, including Chopped, Masterchef and The Kitchen, and they are used by chefs and celebs, too!

John Boos & Co. is a leader in manufacturing butcher block prep surfaces for celeb chefs and foodies (cutting boards, butcher blocks, countertops, kitchen carts and prep tables), as well as custom fabricated stainless steel equipment for the food service industry (chef counters, compartment sinks, work tables and more).

John Boos is the only company in the U.S. that has a wood and metal facility on location. Boos has been in continuous business since 1887 and is the oldest industry in Effingham.

Find out more at www.butcherblockspecialist.com.



J O H N B O O S & C O .

ILLINOIS MAKER

EFFINGHAM ART GUILD

The Effingham Art Guild is home to dozens of award-winning artists. The Art Guild has traveling exhibitions that are open to the public at different locations in the community. The exhibits change every four months and can be found at the locations, listed below. Email effinghamart@gmail.com for more information.

SARAH BUSH LINCOLN
BONUTTI CLINIC
1303 W. EVERGREEN
AVE.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY
COURTHOUSE MUSEUM
100 E. JEFFERSON AVE.

EFFINGHAM SURGICAL
ASSOCIATES SC
900 W. TEMPLE AVE. #101

HEARTLAND HUMAN
SERVICES
1200 N. 4TH ST.

EFFINGHAM
PERFORMANCE CENTER
1325 OUTER BELT WEST

EFFINGHAM
PUBLIC LIBRARY
200 N. THIRD ST.

JOE SIPPERS CAFE
114 S. FOURTH ST.

Effingham is home to a vibrant collection of murals that bring our Midwestern culture to life.

From colorful tributes to local heritage, to whimsical photo ops, share your mural moments with us by tagging @visiteffingham on social media. Your photo might just be featured in next year's guide!

Downtown Effingham,
Exit 159

Murals in Effingham





Alwerdt Artworks Sculpture Park

3238 E. 800th Ave. | Altamont, IL

Life-long artist, Nik Alwerdt, (featured on page 14) is the founder of Alwerdt Artwork Sculpture Park.

Founded in 2017, near a newly-renovated one-and-a-half acre farm pond, the Alwerdt Artworks Sculpture Park is open to the public, from sunrise to sunset, year-round. Enjoy a relaxing outdoor experience, viewing 33 sculptures (and growing!) from local and Midwestern-based artists while walking the half-mile path around the pond.

Featured artists include: Aldon Addington - IL, Nik Alwerdt - IL, Jim LaPaso - TX, Todd Kingery - IL, Thomas Horn - IL and April Luchtefeld - IL.

618.322.5798 | www.alwerdtartworks.com

EFFINGHAM PERFORMANCE CENTER

1325 Outer Belt West, Exit 160

The Effingham Performance Center is a 1,518-seat, live performance theater that hosts more than 30 performances a year. Several nationally-recognized performers have taken the stage at the theater, including Tracy Lawrence, Theresa Caputo, Lonestar, Rodney Carrington and Pauly Shore.

Each year, like the years before, the EPC brings amazing acts and incredible talent... Come see a show soon!

217.540.2788

www.the-epc.org



F.A.C.E.

F.A.C.E. is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to enrich, educate and entertain our community by providing superior theatrical, musical and choral experiences for both participants and audiences. Visit www.effinghamface.com for more information!



Celebrating 250 Years

1325 Outer Belt West | Effingham, IL

In honor of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the **Effingham Performance Center** in connection with the **Illinois Arts Council** has commissioned a sculpture commemorating the country's celebration.

Local artist **Drew Hanfland** (featured on pages 28 & 33), who is multi-disciplinary artist and woodworker based in Effingham, will create the sculpture that will be displayed in the courtyard at The EPC. The sculpture represents how our country has joined cultures and united together for the pursuit of freedom and liberty. The figure represents unity, freedom, and diversity with respect paid to the statue that welcomes visitors to the United States – The Statue of Liberty.

The project was made possible through *Illinois' America 250 Celebration public art grant program*. The EPC project will be one of 22 projects throughout the state focusing on this message and this celebration.

The unveiling of the sculpture is tentatively scheduled for **July 1, 2026**. The sculpture will be a permanent installation and available for public viewing.



DESIGN YOUR OWN SCULPTURE & SHARE
IT WITH US @VISITEFFINGHAM FOR A CHANCE
TO BE FEATURED IN NEXT YEAR'S GUIDE!

Made in Effingham

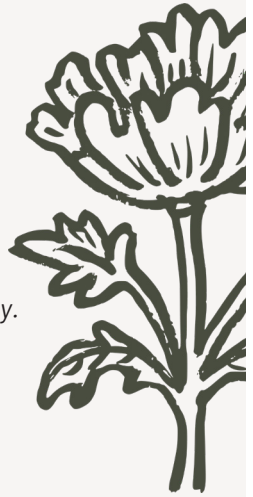
#MadeinEffingham highlights the makers of our community... artists, craftspeople, chefs and creators of all kinds who use local inspiration and resources in their work.

We're proud to celebrate those who help make Effingham a vibrant and extraordinary community. If you are a local maker and would like to be featured in our annual guide, email us at visit-us@effinghamil.com.

Not a maker? You're still part of the story! Share your experiences with local talent using #MadeinEffingham on social media.

We love seeing how you connect with the people and places that make this community so unique...

Thank you for exploring Effingham!



SPIDER MUM
ARTIST: LORELEI SIMS



Effingham
CONVENTION &
VISITORS BUREAU