Holiday Markets, Christmas Lights and Community Giving Fill Thanksgiving Weekend

by Riverbender Staff
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Thanksgiving weekend brings holiday markets, Christmas lights, community giving and family activities to the region Nov. 27-29. Explore these upcoming events, and visit RiverBender.com Events for the complete calendar.

Village Dispensary

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REQUIREMENTS

- 6-7 Items
- Non-Expired
- Sealed Packaging
- Non-Perishables

Holiday giving continues at the Village Dispensary Annual Food Drive in Godfrey. Running Nov. 13-30, the collection benefits Crisis Food Center in Alton. Community members can contribute six to seven nonexpired, sealed, nonperishable items. Qualifying donors receive a penny pre-roll and a raffle ticket toward two gift baskets, limited to once per day per customer.



Artists and crafters will gather indoors at Belle-Clair Fairgrounds in Belleville for the Thanksgiving Weekend Art & Craft Show. The 46th annual market offers three days of shopping, opening Friday, Nov. 27, from 3 to 8 p.m. and continuing Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 28-29, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.


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Alton Refrigeration &

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Shoppers can support a family business during Small Business Saturday at Alton Refrigeration on Nov. 28 at Alton Refrigeration and Home Furnishings in Alton. The event highlights Christmas shopping, Black Friday savings offered throughout the month and opportunities to enter to win prizes.


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Holiday Tradition
Wood River

655 N. Woo

10am

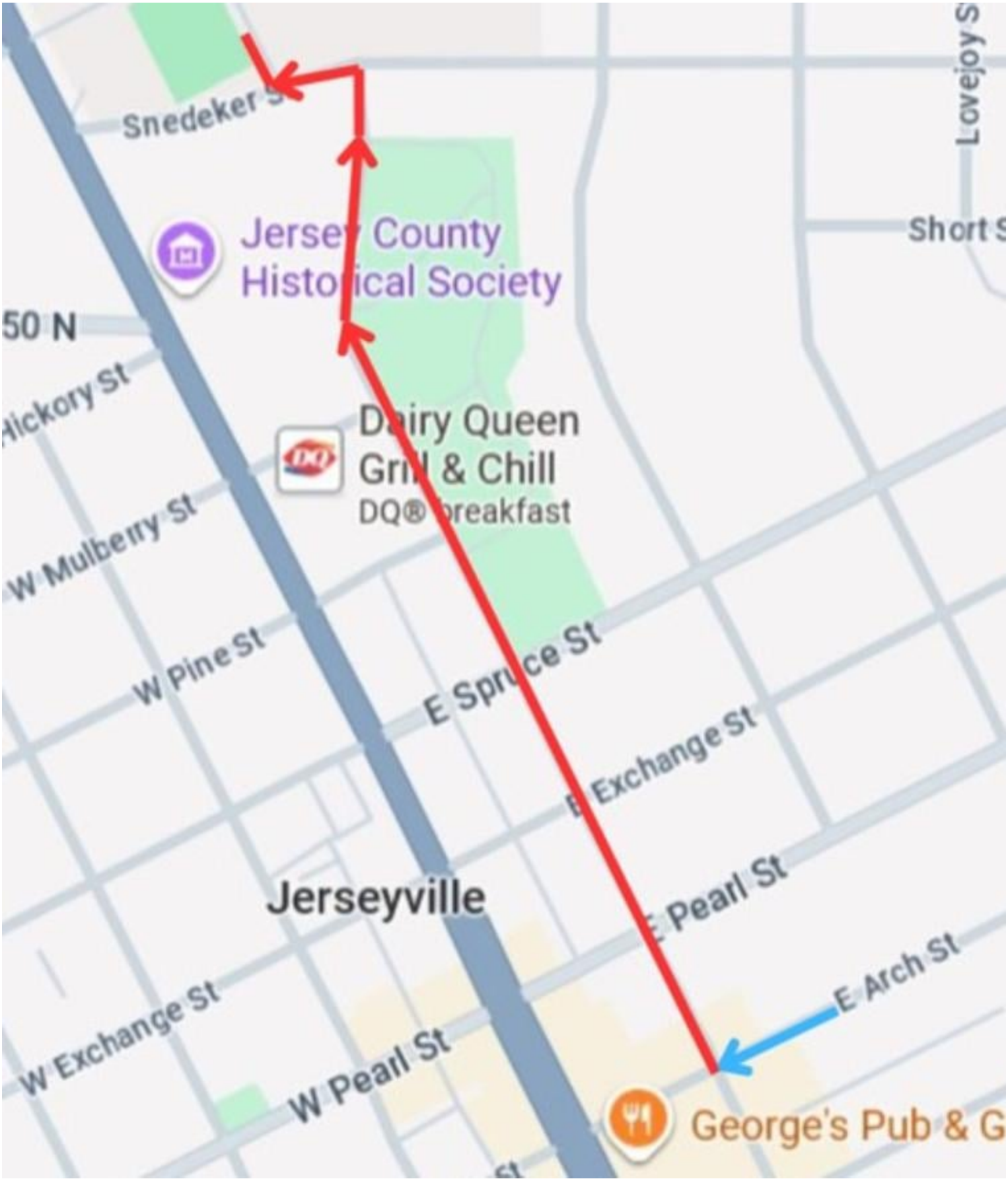


Cake pops and chocolate-dipped treats will be among the offerings at Sweeten Your Holiday Shopping with Scoop's Sweets, part of the Indoor Holiday Market at the Wood River Recreation Center. The women-owned business will join local makers and holiday vendors Saturday, Nov. 28, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visitors can also see Santa and have gifts wrapped by Santa's Elves. Admission is $3 per person or $5 per family, with free admission available by shopping at a participating downtown Wood River business.


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Jerseyville will welcome the season with the Downtown Country Christmas Festival 2026 on Saturday, Nov. 28. A craft bazaar runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Holy Ghost Gym, and the Stadium Theater will show “Klaus” free at 11 a.m. At City Center Plaza, Santa arrives by helicopter at 1 p.m., followed by free activities until 4:30 p.m., including hayrides, ornament-making, inflatables and photos with Santa at Royal Banks. An ugly sweater contest is scheduled for 3 p.m., followed by the Kringle Award presentation at 4:45 p.m. and the official Christmas tree lighting at 5 p.m. Food trucks and live wreath and Christmas tree sales add paid options. The Bright Nights displays will shine nightly from 5 to 11 p.m. Nov. 28-Dec. 31 at locations around Jerseyville.



Illuminated entries will take to Jefferson Street during Rudolph's Red Nose Parade in Jerseyville on Nov. 28. Lineup begins on East Arch at 4:30 p.m., and the parade steps

off at 5:15 p.m., traveling north on Jefferson, crossing Snedeker and ending in the high school parking lot. Entry is free, but registration closes Nov. 25 at 4 p.m. Each entry must include an illuminated element; Santa representations are not allowed on floats. A $50 cash award will be presented in each of two categories, Rudolph's Choice and Brightest.

Friday, Nov. 27

Library Closed for Thanksgiving reminds patrons that all locations of The Hayner Public Library District in Alton will be closed Nov. 26 and 27 in observance of Thanksgiving.

The CLOSED – Archival Library and Museum listing notes closures at the Madison County Historical Society in Edwardsville on Nov. 27 and Nov. 29.

The Alton Block Party for Good brings free groceries, health care services and meals to Soulcial Square from 2 to 4 p.m. Soulcial Kitchen's gathering includes the St. Louis Area Foodbank's Food on the Move grocery trailer, OSF HealthCare Community Outreach Teams and the Big Meechie Food Truck, with meals available while supplies last.

More than 4 million lights will illuminate Christmas Wonderland in Rock Spring Park in Alton from Nov. 27 through Dec. 27. Hours are 6 to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and 5 to 9 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Visitors can drive through the display, stop at Santa's Village for photos and see trees decorated by local businesses and schools. Admission is free; suggested cash-only donations are $10 per vehicle or $1 per person for vehicles carrying 10 or more passengers, benefiting local charities and organizations.

Cosmic Bowling Night at Airport Plaza Bowl offers an evening outing in Bethalto from 7 to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 27-28. Bowling costs $20 per person, including shoes, and Classic's Bar & Grill offers another option for those ready for a break from Thanksgiving leftovers.

Saturday, Nov. 28

Young readers can take part in the Gobble Up a Good Book Reading Challenge at Hayner Library in Alton, listed for Nov. 28 and 29. Separate bingo cards serve children from birth through age 5 and ages 6-11, with activities involving books, library programs and exploration. Each completed bingo earns a prize, and finishing a card earns entry into a grand-prize drawing. Children from birth through age 3 can select a Baby Prize Bin reward for each bingo.

The 67th Annual Great River Road Run offers a 10-mile race and a 5K along an out-and-back course in Alton, welcoming runners, walkers and stroller pushers. Race-day registration and packet pickup begin at 8 a.m. at Mac's Time Out Lounge, 315 Belle St., with racing scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. and the 10-mile race starting first. A virtual option allows participants to complete their distance at their own time and place and receive a shirt and medal after race day.

Small Business Saturday at the Pink Elephant Campus brings shopping and treats to the Pink Elephant Antique Mall in Livingston. Participating booths will offer 20% off individual items priced at $20 or more, excluding firm and already-reduced items. Mother Road Fudge-N-Candy Shop will offer two free pieces of fudge with the purchase of four, while Twistee Treat Diner will take $2 off any ice cream with a meal basket purchase. The campus is at 908 Veterans Memorial Drive.

Sunday, Nov. 29

Orange Sunday! brings holiday shopping to 31art gallery in St. Louis from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The gathering features art discounts, purchasable "Artnaments," free holiday snacks, complimentary drinks courtesy of 4 Hands Brewing Co. and a visit from Santa. Guests are invited to wear ugly holiday sweaters.

Explore the brewing process during Behind the Glass Brewery Tours at Old Bakery Beer Company in Alton at 3 p.m. The 40-minute guided tour covers the company, its historic 1800s Colonial Bakery building and beer production. Admission is $10 per person and includes a pint and samples from the tank. Preregistration is not required, but groups of eight or more are asked to call to reserve space.

Have an event to promote? Sign in now and add it free to the RiverBender.com Events Calendar.