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Designed with tour groups in mind, Bicycle Street Inn makes arrivals seamless and free time effortless; your guests can explore at their own pace without transportation hassles. For more information, visit BicycleStreet.com or scan the QR code.

Contact Maddie Halsor at mhalsor@grandhotel.com to plan your next tour group and enjoy special pricing when you mention this ad.



Thank you to our sponsor of this digital issue

Bicycle Street Inn, Mackinac Island

Buses, Ferries & Horses, Oh My! Welcome to Mackinac Island

Step into a destination, unlike any other, where time slows down, cars disappear, and every journey becomes part of the adventure. For over a century, Mackinac Island, Michigan has remained car-free, inviting guests to explore by horse, bicycle, or on foot. Set in the sparkling waters of Lake Huron, this timeless destination blends historic charm with vibrant energy. Consistently ranked among the best summer travel destinations in the United States, Mackinac Island offers the perfect backdrop for unforgettable group experiences. From iconic fudge shops and lively boutiques to diverse dining and outdoor adventure, every visit is filled with discovery.

Stay in the Heart of It All

Welcome your group to Bicycle Street Inn, where comfort and convenience meet in the center of downtown. Ideally located just steps from the docks, shops, restaurants, and island attractions, the inn makes every arrival seamless and every moment effortless.

Guests are free to explore at their own pace, enjoying the charm of a walkable island with everything right outside their door. Whether overlooking the scenic beauty of Lake Huron or the vibrant downtown streets, each stay offers a memorable sense of place paired with modern comfort.

Savor the Experience

At Winchester's Whiskey & Bourbon Room, our onsite restaurant, every visit is an



experience to savor. Indulge in thoughtfully crafted cuisine, signature cocktails, and curated flights of whiskey and bourbon in a warm, inviting setting.

Start your day with a freshly made treat from the Donut Counter, then gather with friends or family to unwind and enjoy exceptional flavors.

As evening sets in, the atmosphere comes alive with an interactive piano bar experience. Guests take the lead, requesting songs that transform into a high-energy, laughter-filled performance. It's spontaneous, engaging, and completely unique, no two nights are ever the same.

Plan Your Next Group Escape

With its blend of history, hospitality, and one-of-a-kind experiences, Mackinac Island is the perfect setting for your next group getaway.

To start planning, contact Maddie Halsor at mhalsor@grandhotel.com.

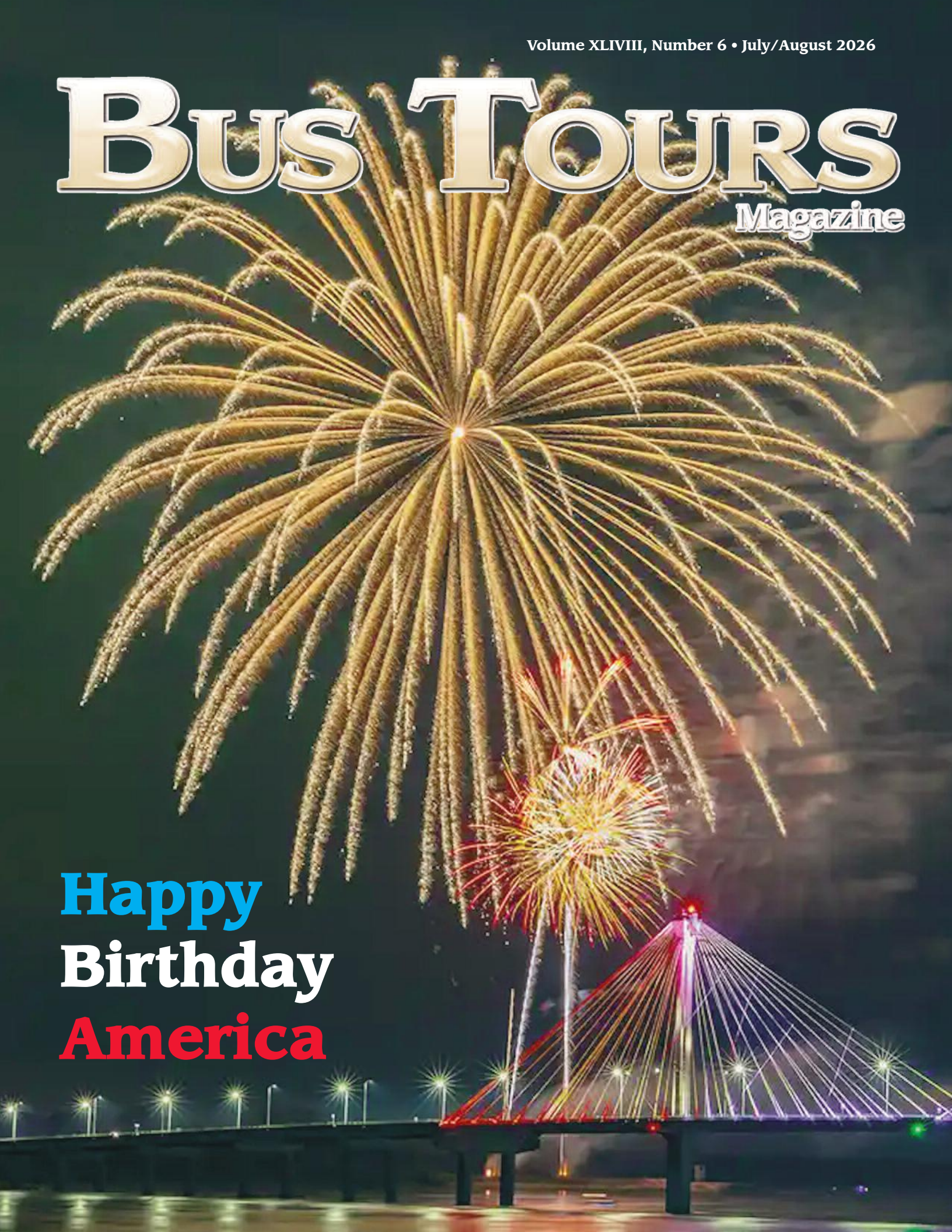
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COVER PHOTO

Fireworks light up the skies over Alton's Clark Bridge which spans the Mighty Mississippi River during the city's Fireworks Spectacular held annually on July 3. SCOTT EVERS AND GREAT RIVERS & ROUTES TOURISM BUREAU OF SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS.

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The editorial staff at BUS TOURS MAGAZINE are always looking for news items and editorial material on places that want bus tour groups to stop. Phone (815) 946-2341 or send material to editorial@busmag.com.

Historical Attractions & Museums



George Bush Presidential Library & Museum

George Bush Presidential Library & Museum

College Station, Texas

Visit the George Bush Presidential Library & Museum in College Station; this summer 250 years of American Independence is celebrated. In honor of America's semiquincentennial, the newest exhibit *E Pluribus Unum: Celebrating the American Experience* will explore all the different areas of culture that are distinctly American. From music, food, art, recreation, to symbols of this nation, the exhibit will inspire visitors with a sense of the important facets that unite blended culture into something greater than the sum of its parts. The exhibit will be open through May 16, 2027.

The community is invited to the exhibit ribbon cutting in the rotunda with the Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce on July 2 at 11:30 a.m. in the Rotunda. On Saturday, July 4, the commu-

nity is invited to celebrate the 250th Independence Day during the 4th of July Celebration. Enjoy bounce houses, crafts, refreshments, balloons, face painting and interact with local Veteran Service Organizations from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Participate in a special bell ringing as part of the nationwide "Let Freedom Ring" ceremony at 1 p.m. on the plaza. Admission to the Bush Library and Museum and the James A. Baker, III Pavilion will be free all day on July 4 from 9:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Service members, veterans, first responders and their family members are invited to join for a documentary screening and seminar *Brothers After War* on Saturday, July 18 in the theater. From Executive Producer Gary Sinise, and Director/Producer Jake Rademacher, in *Brothers After War*, Rademacher reunites with his brothers and the elite soldiers and marines he embedded with during the Iraq War. Intercutting footage

past and present, he leads us on an insightful, humorous and moving journey as service members explore loss, meaning and hope on their path from warfighter to veteran. On behalf of the Gary Sinise Foundation, join for a free lunch, free movie, free journal and free seminar.

For more information about the museum, admission, exhibits and all the events above, visit the new Web site Bush41Library.gov.

Tri-State Museum & Visitor Center

Belle Fourche, South Dakota

Smack-dab in the middle of the United States is Belle Fourche, South Dakota – and that is where you will find the Tri-State Museum and Visitor Center. The complex includes not just the museum and visitor center but also the beautiful granite compass rose Center of the Nation monument, noting the town's distinctive status, and the fully

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ARTS CENTER This program made possible in part through Hotel Tax Revenue funded from the city of College Station through the Arts Center of the Brazos Valley.

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Ronald Reagan
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Tri-State Museum and Visitor Center

furnished Johnny Spaulding Cabin, one of the few two-story pioneer cabins to have survived since the 1870s.

Surrounded by lawns dotted with flower gardens and only steps away from the city's River Walk in front of the historic Belle Fourche River, the Tri-State Museum and Visitor Center is a great place to stop on the road between Mt. Rushmore and Devil's Tower, for a tour of sites as well as a picnic lunch.

The museum proper includes exhibits on pioneers, ranching, rodeos, the sheep industry and local business history. Natural history exhibits include geologic and archaeological finds, as well as some dinosaur fossils unearthed from nearby paleontological dig sites.

Significant exhibits include photos and information on Belle Fourche WWII hero Don Smith, one of the pilots in the Doolittle Raid. The museum also includes the less than heroic story of the most bungled bank robbery ever, which occurred in 1897 and involved an extremely inebriated Tom O'Day.

In addition to permanent collections, the museum also features three temporary exhibits and three mini exhibits which change throughout the year. Exhibits for the 2024 season include those on clubs and societies, menus, the police force, maps, libraries, fairy houses and the world of bats.

The town of Belle Fourche is a little one big in history. The name comes from the river that flows here, visited by the famed

French fur trappers of the early 1800s. The town itself was founded by Seth Bullock, a larger-than-life western character who was featured in the TV series, *Deadwood*. It soon became the place for the internationally-known Black Hills Roundup, now in its 104rd year of showcasing classic rodeo action.

The Old West lives on in the middle - and at the Tri-State Museum and Visitor Center.



Smack dab in the middle.

The Tri-State Museum and Visitor Center in Belle Fourche, SD is at the middle of the nation - and we have a spectacular monument to prove it! Visit us for exhibits on rodeos, ranching, pioneer life, bank robbers, dinosaurs and more.

Take a photo at the Center of the Nation compass rose monument; step back in time with a visit to our Johnny Spaulding Cabin; shop in our store full of books, jewelry, western memorabilia, puzzles, smart toys and games. Then have a picnic on our spacious lawns!

Meet us in the middle, in Belle Fourche!

415 Fifth Avenue in Belle Fourche
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www.thetristatmuseum.com

National Museum of Nuclear Science & History Albuquerque, New Mexico

The National Museum of Nuclear Science & History was established in 1969 as an intriguing place to learn the story of the Atomic Age, from early research of nuclear development through today's peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Visitors can explore how nuclear science continues to influence our world.

The museum strives to present, through permanent and changing exhibits and dis-



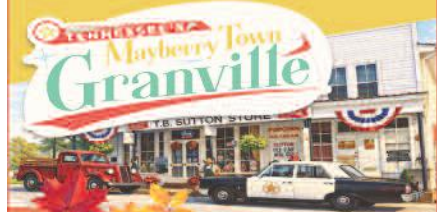
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USS LST Ship Memorial

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The National Museum of Nuclear Science & History is a Smithsonian Affiliate and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

The Museum is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed only on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day and Easter. Visit at nuclearmuseum.org.

USS LST Ship Memorial Evansville, Indiana

While the Evansville Shipyard produced more LSTs (167) than any other shipyard

in the country, LST 325 was built in Philadelphia and is the last operational LST still sailing in the world. It was commissioned on February 1, 1943.

The LST could deliver 20 Sherman tanks, plus 30 or so other vehicles such as jeeps, trucks, LVTs, DUKWs and halftracks to any unimproved beach in the world. This was critically important during WWII since

Where to stop in Evansville, Indiana



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Hours dependent on season; Guided tours only.
Admission: Adults \$20, Youth 6–17 \$10,
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Guide: Historical Attractions & Museums

functional port facilities were not available at most of the invasion sites of WWII.

LST 325 saw action in North Africa during Operation Torch, Sicily during Operation Husky with General Patton's forces and others, Salerno during Operation Avalanche and Operation Overlord, the D-Day invasion at Normandy France. There were 229 LSTs in the Overlord armada and 25 of those were from Evansville.

Most of the LSTs were scrapped after the war. These ships were built in three months and were not something built for longevity. LST 325 was transferred to the Greek Navy in 1964 and so it survived during the period when the U.S. was scrapping these vessels. Greece decided to scrap the ship in 1998, but it survived when a group of veterans from the U.S. went over, got the ship in a sailable condition and brought

it back to Mobile Bay in 2001. LST 325 found its home in Evansville in 2005. □

**The Trivia Question
for this issue is located
on page 30.**

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Photo Credit: Pikes Peak - America's Mountain





Starved Rock Lodge & Conference Center

Places for Summer 2027

Starved Rock Lodge & Conference Center Oglesby, Illinois

Escape to nature and wake up with adventure at Starved Rock Lodge. Nestled in the heart of Starved Rock State Park, just 90 minutes southwest of Chicago, Starved Rock Lodge offers a one-of-a-kind getaway that blends rustic charm with modern comfort. As the only lodging located within the park and open 365 days a year, it provides guests with unparalleled access to scenic trails, waterfalls and the natural beauty of Illinois' most iconic state park. Whether you are plan-

ning a family vacation, a romantic escape or a special celebration, Starved Rock Lodge delivers an unforgettable experience.

Guests can choose from charming lodge rooms or cozy cabins that evoke the warmth of a classic retreat. Each accommodation combines rustic touches with modern amenities, creating a welcoming space to relax after a day of adventure. For added leisure, the lodge features a swimming pool and sauna, perfect for unwinding or enjoying quality time with family.

Starved Rock Lodge offers an array of unique activities designed to immerse visitors

in the park's beauty. Guided hikes reveal seasonal waterfalls, stunning canyons and the park's rich history, while trolley and boat tours provide a fun, scenic perspective of the park and surrounding areas. Guests can also enjoy tribute shows, seasonal events and holiday celebrations that bring the park to life for visitors of all ages.

For weddings and bus tour groups, the lodge offers stunning venues both indoors and outdoors. Scenic spaces can accommodate up to 200 guests, while intimate outdoor settings are perfect for micro weddings surrounded by natural beauty. Every celebration

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STARVED ROCK
LODGE & CONFERENCE CENTER





The Springs Resort

is enhanced by the lodge's attentive service and picturesque surroundings, making it a truly memorable location for exchanging vows or hosting milestone gatherings.

Dining at Starved Rock Lodge is a highlight of every stay. The Main Dining Room serves chef curated menus that feature seasonal, locally-inspired dishes in a welcoming setting, while the Back Door Lounge offers a casual, comfortable atmosphere for drinks, small plates and relaxation. Guests can also enjoy treats from the on-site café and gift shop, including homemade ice cream, fudge, popcorn and candied nuts, perfect for a sweet snack during a day of exploring.

Seasonal celebrations and holiday gatherings come alive at the lodge. Summer events can take advantage of patios and open-air seating with refreshing breezes, while winter celebrations are cozy and inviting indoors. The staff works with every guest to ensure each occasion is seamless, allowing hosts and attendees alike to focus on enjoying the moment.

Whether you are strolling the park trails, paddling along the river, enjoying live music or savoring a chef prepared meal, Starved

Rock Lodge offers a warm, welcoming escape that combines adventure, relaxation

and memorable experiences. It is more than a lodge; it is the gateway to the natural

Award-winning Colorado Hot Springs

Southwest Colorado's premier hot spring resort offers group-friendly lodging, signature restaurant, immersive wellness, and 24-hour soaking access to over 45 mineral pools & water features.



Guide: Places for Summer 2027

beauty, history and charm of Starved Rock State Park.

The Springs Resort Pagosa, Colorado

Now booking group tours for 2027, The Springs Resort in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, is a fully immersive destination where guests never have to leave the property. With 45+ mineral-rich soaking pools and cold plunges, on-site dining outlets, a panoramic sauna, thermal spa and a full suite of wellness offerings – all just steps from your room – it is the ideal stop for tour operators seeking a memorable, turnkey experience.

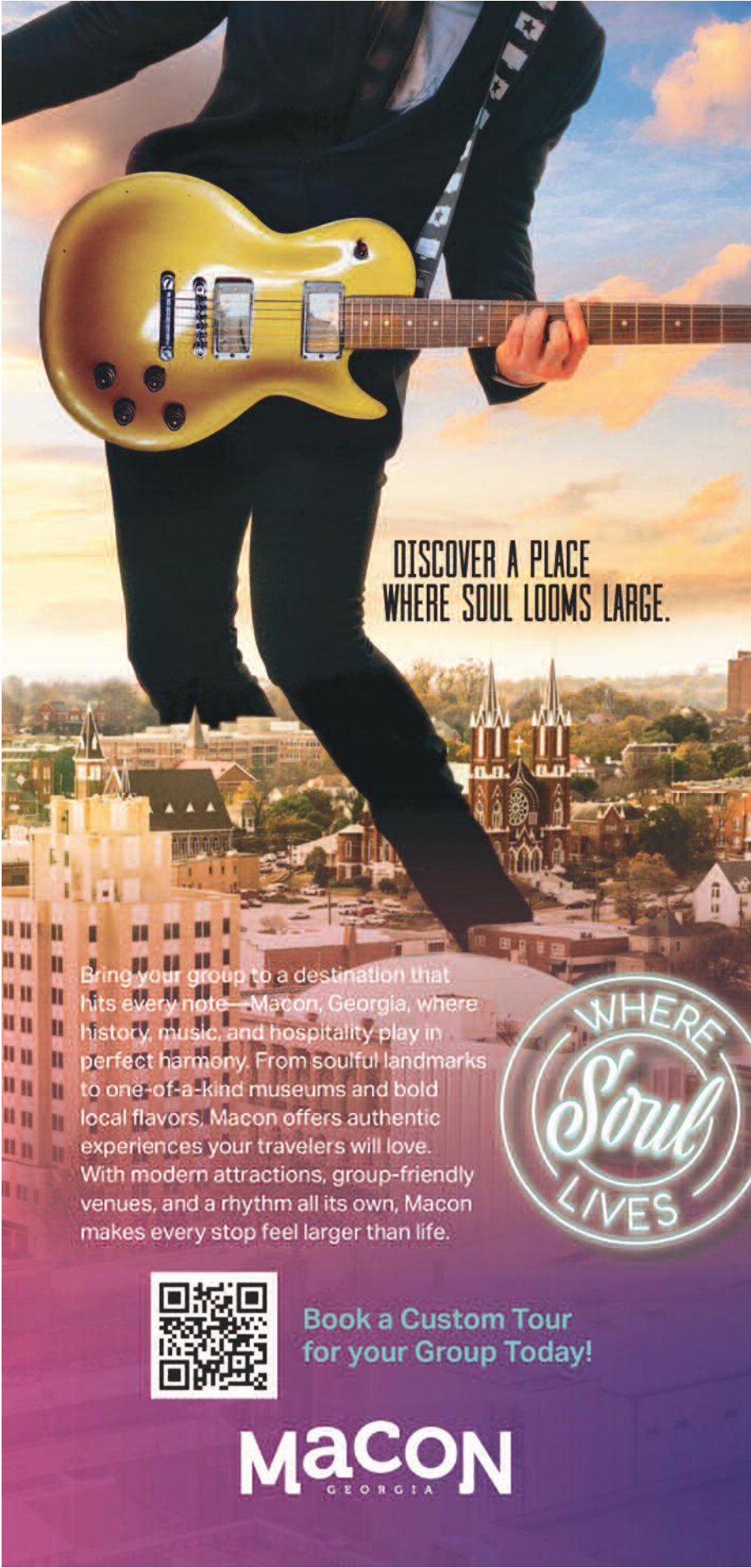
The newly expanded resort features 157 guest rooms and complimentary access to immersive, accessible wellness experiences, including in-water sound bathing and in-pool meditations. Special classes can also be arranged to align with your tour schedule. Hotel guests enjoy 24-hour soaking and breathtaking views of the river and surrounding San Juan Mountains.

Dining options range from fast and casual to refined and flavorful. Enjoy poolside favorites at Barefoot Grill or a sit-down experience at Wild Finch, the new signature restaurant led by Chef Daya Myers-Hurt. Her elevated, seasonal menu brings globally-inspired cuisine with locallysourced ingredients to the heart of our resort.

Voted *USA Today's* Best Spa Resort in 2023, 2024 and 2025, and home to the world's deepest geothermal hot spring, The Springs Resort is a must-stop destination for any 2027 itinerary.

Located just 30 minutes from Chimney Rock National Monument, three hours from Santa Fe, and five hours from Denver, Pagosa Springs is an easy and scenic addition to any Southwest tour route.

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Sonnenberg Gardens

Located in the heart of the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion State Historic Park in Canandaigua is a step into the late 1800s. Built in 1887 by Mary Clark Thompson and Frederick Ferris Thompson, the Victorian mansion and intricate gardens continue to welcome visitors seasonally, operating May 1 through October 31.

Sonnenberg Gardens spans 54 acres for guests to explore, featuring a carriage house, an aviary, nine formal gardens, antique Lord & Burnham greenhouses and more. Guests will be taken on a two-hour guided tour around the property, not only covering the architecture of the gardens but also the rich history of the Thompson's estate. Gardeners,

architects and history buffs will all especially enjoy the beauty that is Sonnenberg.

Philanthropists praised in their community, Mary and Frederick were born and raised in upstate New York and married in 1857, enjoying more than 40 years together. Sonnenberg was their summer home, named after the German word for "Sunny Hill."

Originally more than 200 acres, the gorgeous property lives up to its name, with the sun shining on the mansion's south lawn every afternoon. From the upstairs window in Mary and Frederick's room, visitors can catch a beautiful view of Canandaigua Lake, one of the iconic Finger Lakes. Frederick and Mary spent most of their summers here, while their main residence was on Madison Avenue in New York City.

Frederick Ferris Thompson was a prominent American banker and railroad president who co-founded the First National Bank, which is now Citibank. He was also an early amateur photographer, known for glass plate and stereoscopic photography. Frederick's photographs were a large part of his life, and many of his materials and photographs can be found in Sonnenberg Mansion today. Guests can enjoy a peek into the early days of photography through Frederick's lens.

Frederick and Mary were a generous couple who donated a large amount of their fortune to their community, especially in Canandaigua. When guests travel around Canandaigua, they have Mary and Frederick to thank for Sonnenberg Park, F.F. Thompson Hospital, Clark Manor House and much

more. Without their philanthropic endeavors, Canandaigua would not be the city it is today.

When Frederick passed away in 1899, Mary ensured his legacy would live on. Mary donated the Frederick Thompson Memorial Chapel to Williams College in his honor. President Theodore Roosevelt attended the dedication of the Frederick Thompson Memorial Chapel. She also continued building the gardens at Sonnenberg. Today, guests can still see the Japanese, Italian, Rock, Rose, Sub-Rosa and many more gardens that continue to stand as a living memorial to Frederick and their love. There is so much more to the Thompson's story; guests will have to come visit to learn more.

Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion have taken on a new life since the Thompsons lived there more than 100 years ago. Now owned by New York State Parks and operated by a non-profit, Sonnenberg has become one of the top tourist attractions in Ontario County, welcoming guests from all over the world to enjoy the Thompson's legacy. While not originally built for tours, Sonnenberg is the perfect place for groups.

- ADA Accessible, Sonnenberg is proud to say that anyone can enjoy the estate. Tram tours are available for guests with limited mobility.

- Walking Tours are approximately a mile long and include several stops at the nine different gardens. This walk is easy, – even for seniors. Tram and walking groups will receive the same two-hour tour.

- Restrooms are never far away, with multiple locations across the grounds. Sonnenberg also added a new restroom facility in 2026, built to accommodate even the largest groups.

- A discount on admission is offered for groups of 15 or more.

For visitors who like to take a piece of their travels home, Sonnenberg has the Bay House Gift Shop. For food and drink, guests can check out the Gardener's Cafe on-site or join volunteers in the wine cellar for a wine tasting. Sonnenberg offers many exclusive wines, only sold on-site.



Visit Sonnenberg.org to learn more about the historical estate and whether a tour is right for your group. Learn more about our

many events and programs, including Civil War Days, Father's Day Car Show and Arts At The Gardens. □

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Step back in time in the Route 66 community of **Litchfield** where the Mother Road is celebrated year-round. Follow the neon signs and dine at the historic **Ariston Café**, the oldest continuously operating restaurant on Route 66. Visit **Jubelt's Bakery & Café** and don't miss the **Litchfield Museum and Route 66 Welcome Center**. Take in an outdoor movie at the **Route 66 Skyview Drive-In**, one of the few operational drive-in theaters left on Route 66.



ENTERTAINING EDWARDSVILLE

Route 66 has left its footprint on this historic city located just east of downtown St. Louis. Full of delicious dining destinations. Check out the famed **Wildey Theatre** which once hosted national Vaudeville stars and is now home to weekend live music events. Not far from the theatre sits the newly renovated **West End Service Station**, once a popular stopping point for Mother Road travelers.



STANDING TALL

Soaring high above Route 66 in Collinsville stands the **World's Largest Catsup Bottle Water Tower**. It's a great spot for a photo op. Speaking of tall – the **Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site** also calls the city home. The remains of this prehistoric settlement is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and houses the archaeological remains of the ancient Mississippians. Climb to the top of Monk's Mound, the largest man-made mound north of Mexico for unparalleled panoramic views of the region.



NEON MAGIC IN GRANITE CITY

Route 66 ghost neon signs have found new life in Granite City at the **It's Electric Neon Sign Park**. Three restored neon signs from Granite City's past now have a home in the park and they shine brightly from dusk to dawn. Be sure to visit the nearby **Chain of Rocks Bridge** where you can literally walk across the Mighty Mississippi River. The bridge has an unusual and quirky 30-degree bend in the middle!





Gone With the Wind Museum

Gardens & Estates

The Gone With the Wind Museum & Brumby Hall & Gardens Marietta, Georgia

The Marietta Gone with the Wind Museum has been a mainstay in downtown Marietta since April 2003 when it opened in the historic Old Thomas Warehouse Building. In 2018, the iconic collection moved to its current home at Brumby Hall and Gardens on Powder Springs Street, just a quarter mile off the Square.

Brumby Hall has a rich history – one that is equal to the “Gone with the Wind” story. The house was built in a Greek Revival style in 1851 for the first superintendent of the Georgia Military Institute (GMI), Colonel Arnoldus Brumby, adjacent to the GMI where the Hilton Marietta Conference Center stands now.

During the Civil War, it was repurposed as a makeshift hospital when General William T. Sherman’s troops occupied Marietta in

1864. Remarkably, it survived Sherman’s infamous “March to the Sea,” possibly spared out of respect for Colonel Brumby, who graduated West Point alongside Sherman.

The Howell Trezevant family purchased the home in 1925 and had it restored as nearly as possible to its original condition, with all the modern conveniences. The house remained a private residence until 1995 and is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Museum’s Treasured Collection

When the Museum needed a new home, Brumby Hall seemed to be the perfect solution. Brumby Hall is the perfect “Tara- like” backdrop for the Gone with the Wind Museum with the six large columns and expansive front porch. The current collection is owned by Vicky Rogers who also owns the Gone with the Wind Remembered Museum in Cleburne, Texas. Jessica Gian-

cola was appointed executive director of the Museum and Gardens in November 2024. The Museum is home to hundreds of artifacts related to both the novel and cinema versions of *Gone with the Wind*, including letters written by the book’s author, Margaret Mitchell; an original script from the movie; the actual Bengaline honeymoon dress that actress Vivian Leigh wore in the film and the newest addition, the Green Drapery Dress Bonnet wore in the film when Scarlett visits Rhett in jail.

The collection features several original pieces as well as items that are extremely rare, such as the actual mourning bonnet worn by Scarlett in the film and the original Dan Sayre Groesbeck painting which hung in the Loews Grand lobby during the premier on Dec. 15, 1939. The Museum also is home to six original Walter Plunkett costume sketches, including the iconic green BBQ dress.

Visitors embark on an immersive journey, beginning in a room dedicated to Mitchell before exploring exhibits on the film's premiere, its elaborate costumes and its celebrated cast. "'Gone with the Wind' is still the highest grossing film of all time when adjusted for inflation," Giancola said. "People resonate with the film and come from all over to view the collection." The *Gone with the Wind* novel was translated into 43 languages in 53 countries and is popular worldwide.

Beyond the Museum: The Historic Gardens and Carriage House

The museum's grounds extend beyond Brumby Hall itself. The Carriage House features an exhibit showcasing pieces of the actual Tara façade used in the movie's production in Culver City, California. Beyond the Carriage House, visitors will find the meticulously maintained Historic Gardens of Brumby Hall. While the Gardens were an integral part of the estate since 1851, the current layout

was designed in the early 1930's by Hubert Owens, the founder of the School of Landscape Architecture at the University of Georgia in Athens. His design included a parterre garden, rose garden and perennial garden.

Today, the perennial garden is a picturesque spot for brides and grooms to exchange vows, then the party can celebrate the union in any of the other impressive gardens. Brumby Gardens has been home to many celebrations, including showers, parties, bar mitzvahs and corporate events. The Gardens are a versatile space that can be tented year-round and even heated, if needed. Plus, if your guests are coming from out of town, the Hilton Marietta Hotel and Conference Center (and golf course) share the same ample parking lot. "It's the perfect location really," Giancola said.

A Cultural Landmark in Marietta

Brumby Hall and the *Gone with the Wind* Museum continue to be a cherished part of

the Marietta community. With its rich historical significance, world-class collection and commitment to engaging programming, the museum remains a destination for history enthusiasts, film buffs and literary fans alike.

Whether you are a lifelong fan of *Gone with the Wind* or simply looking to experience a piece of Southern history, the museum offers an unforgettable journey through time. From historical exhibits to vibrant community events, Brumby Hall and Gardens truly stand as a testament to the enduring legacy of Mitchell's masterpiece.

The mission of the *Gone with the Wind* Museum is to preserve, celebrate and share the cultural and historical significance of Mitchell's iconic novel and its lasting impact on literature, film and American history.

The Museum and Gardens are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. More information regarding admission, event rentals etc., can be found at gwtwmarietta.com. Tours and buses are very welcome.



The Book
GONE WITH the WIND
MARGARET MITCHELL

The Film
GONE WITH THE WIND

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Guide: Gardens & Estates

Huntsville Botanical Garden

Huntsville, Alabama

Naturally delightful journeys await you in Huntsville, Alabama – a place where the Southeast's quiet charm meets a world of vibrant color, immersive landscapes and pure, refreshing escape.

At Huntsville Botanical Garden, every visit feels like stepping into a living postcard, one painted with Alabama's lush plant diversity and framed by the warm, welcoming spirit of the region. Tucked in the heart of Huntsville, Alabama, and just down the road from the U.S. Space and Rocket Center, this 118-acre haven is more than a stop along your journey – it is an invitation to slow down, breathe deeply and discover something new around every bend.

Wander through curated display gardens, cross into the serene Lewis Birding Trail, or step inside the nationally-renowned Purdy Butterfly House, where hundreds of delicate wings drift through shafts of sunlight during butterfly season. Families will find adventure



in the Wicks Family Garden, where imaginative play and nature collide, and guests of all ages will marvel at *Mama Zelda*, the 18-foot-tall troll (created by artist Thomas Dambo) seated at the heart of the Mother Earth Troll Garden maze.

What truly makes the Garden shine within the Charming Southeast is the way it blends natural beauty with meaningful connection. Here, vibrant blooms and peaceful pathways become places to reconnect – with yourself, with loved ones

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Guide: Gardens & Estates

and with the wonder of the natural world. The Garden's mission is simple yet powerful: to connect people to plants, enriching life through environmental stewardship, education and delight.

Season after season, the Garden transforms – each visit offering a fresh perspective, a new discovery, a moment worth savoring. Whether you are chasing the gentle quiet of a morning stroll, exploring immersive exhibits or joining in beloved

seasonal festivals, there is always something naturally delightful to experience here.

As you map out your journey through the Southeast, make room for a stop that feels like coming home to nature. Let Huntsville Botanical Garden welcome you, delight you and refresh your spirit – one blooming moment at a time. □

Correction

The link to the online ad for The Crossing Resort was incorrectly listed.

It should read thecrossingresort.com.



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The Crossing Resort is a primary gateway to the heart of the Canadian Rockies, strategically positioned in world-famous Banff National Park on the Icefields Parkway at the junction with Alberta's #11, the David Thompson. The Parkway, Canada's second-most-visited destination and a World Heritage Site, follows the Continental Divide.

Breathtaking views of the majestic mountains and hundreds of glaciers culminate at the Columbia Icefield, the most significant icefield south of the Arctic Circle. The Crossing Resort, Hike & Attraction Central for the Icefields Parkway, is centrally located within this natural grandeur, equidistant from the national park towns of Banff and Jasper, and only 50 minutes north of the famous Lake Louise. It is the perfect base for your Canadian Rockies Adventures.

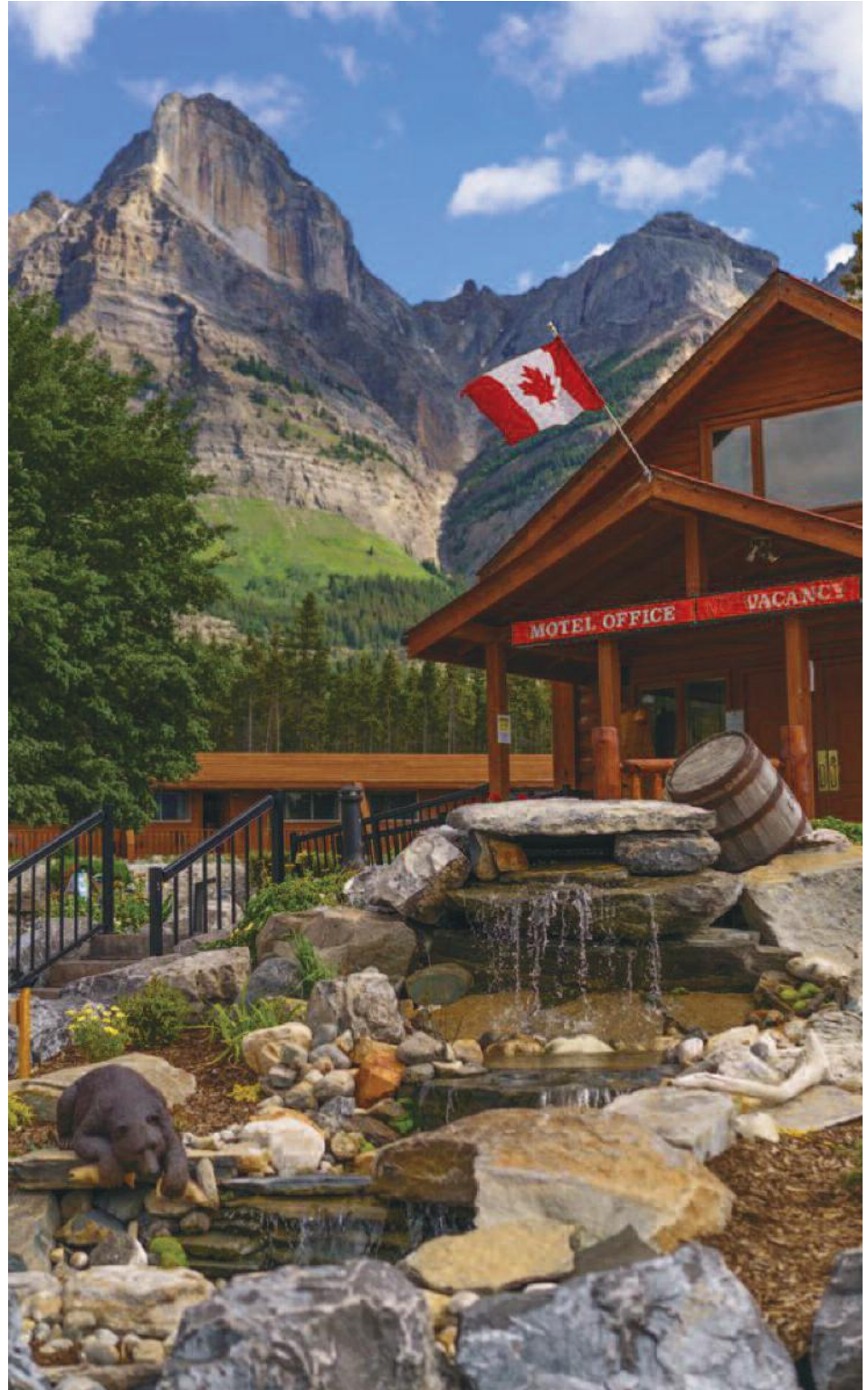
The Crossing Resort is the ideal place to stay if you want to be close to all the breathtaking sights the Icefields Parkway has to offer. In the heart of Banff National Park, the rustic yet modernly appointed motel, with double queen and king rooms, accentuates the mountainous environment. Every room features a private bathroom, hypoallergenic duvets, luxurious linens and a semi-private deck with bench seating for relaxing and enjoying the stunning mountain views.

Food stops are of prime importance to tour planners. The Crossing Resort offers a variety of dining options for breakfast, lunch, dinner or relaxing over drinks, including the Mt. Wilson Family Restaurant, The Crossing Café and the Parkway Pub.

The Mount Wilson Restaurant

- Book and/or modify your dining reservations with our online group reservation system.
- Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, featuring an "all you can eat" lunch and dinner buffet, with a salad bar and classic hot entrees. The lunch buffet is styled to serve tour groups. The 300-seat capacity is tastefully divided into six 50-seat dining areas, offering group privacy. The Crossing is the preferred group-tour luncheon stop on the

The Crossing Resort



Parkway, only 30 minutes from the Columbia Icefield Centre.

- Evening dining is casual, with a full-service a la carte menu, bar and expansive dinner buffet.

The Crossing Café

Turn to The Crossing Café for quick dining options for your group.

- Serves a variety of menu options, cafeteria-style, from coffee, muffins, pastries, soups, salads, chili and sandwiches to classic lean ground beef burgers, French fries and fish and chips.
- Box lunches and picnic fare may be ordered in advance to enhance your Canadian Rockies adventure.

The Parkway Pub

- The Pub and Deck overlook the most spectacular sights in the Canadian Rockies.
- Full bar, draft beers and pub grub, including wings and nachos.
- The famous indoor grill, where you can be the chef and cook your own steak or burger, includes a soup and salad bar.

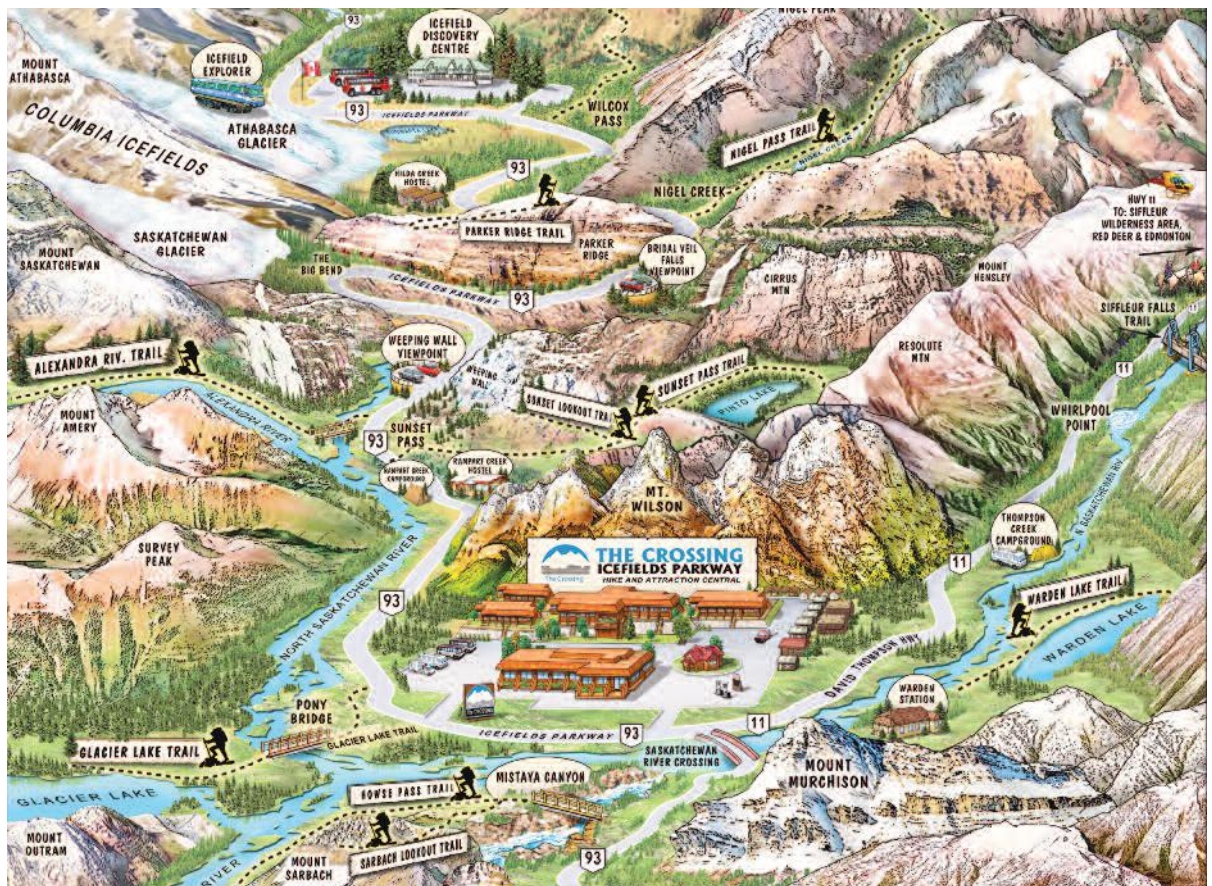
Step out of our back door, and you will be immersed in the top attractions and sightseeing opportunities in the Canadian Rockies.

- Thirty minutes north lies the Columbia Icefield, home to the snowcoaches of the Athabasca Glacier Ice Explorer Adventure, and the Glacier Skywalk. Twenty-five minutes south along the Parkway lies Peyto Lake, Bow Lake and the Crowfoot Glacier. Twenty-five minutes east is the base for Rockies Heli-Seeing and McKenzie's Trails West Horseback Adventures.
- The Crossing Resort is within 30 minutes of most major attractions on the Parkway.

For detailed group tour information, menus, policies and a photo gallery, visit the Web site at thecrossingresort.com. Click on "About," then on "Tour Operators." Required password is: TCRtours. □

Looking for more information?

Fill out and send the Reader Service Card at the back of the magazine.



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St. Lawrence Cruise Lines Canada

Planning a vacation can be stressful; too many factors quickly add up to an overwhelming number of decisions. A cruise takes away much of the guesswork, but large ocean cruises with their crowded and busy ships can generate too much stimulus, making it difficult to relax.

Thankfully, St. Lawrence Cruise Lines offers the tremendous beauty of nature in an intimate personal, and one-of-a-kind setting. The *Canadian Empress* is an exceptional small ship that pairs historical charm with modern conveniences, top-notch Canadian hospitality and some of the world's most breathtaking vistas. This makes river cruising with St. Lawrence Cruise Lines a charming and meaningful experience that will last long after the vacation is over.

Family built and operated, St. Lawrence Cruise Lines draws from its 45 years of industry experience to provide guests with an unforgettable experience. The *Canadian Express* is a one-of-a-kind vessel, designed to give visitors the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and history of Canada's rivers in an immersive, comfortable setting.

The 32-stateroom ship holds a maximum of 64 passengers, allowing for a relaxed and intimate atmosphere. By pairing present-day technology with a classic riverboat style, the vessel offers guests a glimpse back through time without having to sacrifice any modern conveniences. Two decks of river-facing staterooms, a sun deck, indoor and outdoor lounges, and a charming Grand Saloon will ensure that guests never run out of spaces to gather and relax while on board.

St. Lawrence Cruise Lines offers a full slate of overnight cruises from May to October with departures from Kingston, Ottawa and Quebec City. The variety of cruise options is designed to allow group planners to choose the length of cruise, season, ports and itineraries that best suit their needs. The end result should be a travel experience that incorporates the majestic beauty and vibrant history of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, in addition to up-close encounters with some of Canada's most prominent cities.

2027 group and travel bookings are now available and tour operators and travel planners are urged to contact St. Lawrence Cruise Lines to begin planning a future vacation full of wonder, relaxation and warm hospitality.

Phone (800) 267-7868 for booking availability or to request the schedule and group rates for the 2026 or 2027 season. View StLawrenceCruiseLines.com for additional information.

Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad Titusville, Pennsylvania

Looking to unplug and enjoy meaningful family time – or simply spend a day outdoors? Crawford and Venango counties offer trails, state parks and year-round museums. One of the most memorable ways to experience the region is aboard the Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad.

Now in its 40th year, passengers are invited to step back in time and travel “through the valley that changed the world.” This three-hour round-trip journey follows the historic rail line through Oil Creek State Park, where scenic views of Oil Creek meet the remarkable history of the region’s role in the birth of the modern oil industry. Guests ride in restored historic passenger cars, pulled by a vintage diesel locomotive, experiencing the landscape much as early travelers once did.

Education and storytelling are at the heart of the experience. During the 2025 season, more than 1,300 student and teacher passengers and more than 20,500 total guests from across the United States, Canada, Great Britain, India and beyond were welcomed – each drawn to the region’s unique blend of history and natural beauty.

Among the most distinctive onboard features is the operating Railway Post Office (RPO) car – the only functioning Railway Post Office in the continental United States. Guests can send a postcard from aboard the train and receive it in their mailbox at home bearing a unique “OC&T RPO” cancellation mark, a lasting memento of the journey.

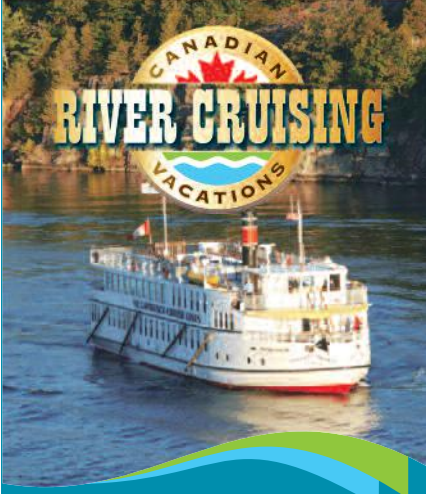
As a nonprofit organization, the railroad is sustained by a small year-round staff and a dedicated community of volunteers whose passion helps preserve both the rail experience and the history of the Oil Creek Region.

Located at 409 S. Perry Street in Titusville, Pennsylvania, group discounts for parties of 20 or more are offered on excursions running June through October. .



The 2026 schedule is available at octr.org. you are invited to join for a journey

through history, scenery and story. For bookings or information, phone (814) 676-1733.



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Day two begins with breakfast and time to explore the architecture, shopping and history of Iowa's oldest city. Admission is included to Iowa's #1 attraction, the must-



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Guide: Rail & Sail

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One-Day Cruise

This cruise heads north from Dubuque through one of the most beautiful areas of the Mississippi River. It includes continental breakfast, two snacks, full lunch, historical narration, great scenery, eagles, live music and more relaxation than you have allowed yourself in years.

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The cruise travels north taking in the wildlife and river towns of Port Byron Illi-

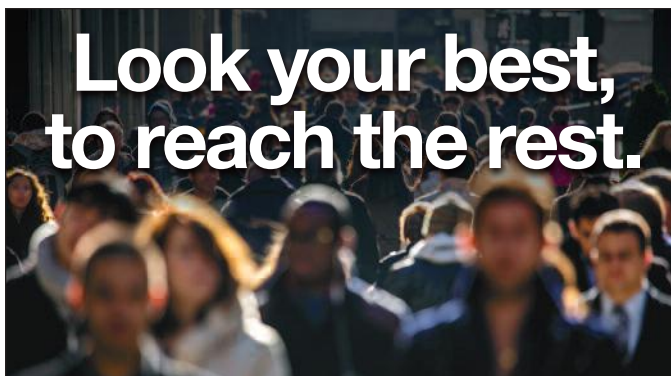
nois, Princeton, Iowa and Cordova, Illinois. The Captain provides history and interesting facts about the river and its commerce. There is plenty of time to relax, enjoy a complimentary glass of iced tea or lemonade or to purchase a beverage at the full-service bar. □



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Military & Space

Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum Washington, D.C.

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Museum in Washington, D.C.

Located in the heart of the National Mall, the museum's main building is celebrating its 50th anniversary. It is home to the largest collection of historic aircraft and spacecraft in the world and sits alongside some of the nation's most iconic monuments and museums.

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Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Vega. You will also find a World War I-era Sopwith Camel and a P-51 Mustang from World War II. Two galleries are set to open later this year, adding to discover.

For an immersive visit, catch a show at the IMAX® Theater or enjoy a journey through the stars in the Northrop Grumman Planetarium. Groups of 10 or more receive discounted admission to these experiences.

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Feature: Military & Space

can walk among the actual aircraft and spacecraft that made aviation history.

The center houses more than 200 aircraft and more than 3,000 artifacts, including Space Shuttle Discovery, the B-29 Superfortress Enola Gay and the sleek SR-71 Blackbird. The wide-open hangars give visitors a chance to appreciate the scale and beauty of these engineering marvels.

Admission is free; the center offers convenient amenities like bus parking and guided tours, making it an easy and enjoyable stop.

Both locations are open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed December 25).

Timed-entry passes are required for the Museum in Washington, D.C., and can be reserved online in advance at s.si.edu/nasm-group-passes. Reservations are NOT required at the Udvar-Hazy Center, although advance notice of your visit helps to ensure a top-notch experience.

Visit airandspace.si.edu for more information. □

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Trivia Question for The July Issue

What popular bus tour attraction in the southeast states offers an extensive collection of memorabilia from a best selling novel and an award-winning film that tells the story of an epic historical romance during the Civil War?

For the answer go to:

[https://bustoursmagazine.com/
trivia-jul-aug-2026](https://bustoursmagazine.com/trivia-jul-aug-2026)



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**Spruce Forest
Artisan Village
Grantsville,
Maryland**

Step back in time and experience yesterday today at Spruce Forest Artisan Village, located on the historic Little Crossings campus along the legendary National Road. Rich with stories from the French and Indian War and the travels of George Washington, this unique destination offers visitors a chance to explore history while enjoying the creativity and hospitality of the present.

The Village is home to eight resident artisans who practice and preserve traditional crafts while offering their work for sale. Guests can watch pottery take shape on the wheel, see metal transformed by the forge, and discover the artistry behind weaving, painting, and other timeless trades. Each artisan shares not only their finished pieces but also the knowledge and techniques that have been passed down through generations, giving visitors a deeper appreciation for these historic crafts.

A visit to Little Crossings also offers exceptional dining experiences. Penn Alps Restaurant is well known for its hearty meals and popular buffet, serving classic comfort foods in a warm and welcoming setting. Just steps away, Mountain Grape Tavern offers a more contemporary menu featuring steaks, pasta and a carefully selected wine list. Whether you are looking for a casual meal or a relaxed evening out, the campus provides options that complement the charm of the Village.

Art enthusiasts will also enjoy the on-site gallery, hosted by the local Arts Council. This space features rotating exhibits from guest artists, adding another layer of creativity to the campus. Nearby, the Penn Alps Craft Shop – one of the largest craft shops in the region – features Appalachian and Pennsylvania Dutch crafts, showcasing the rich cultural traditions that define the area.

History continues at Stanton's Mill, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and still producing wheat flour today. Visitors can also explore the Granary, a restored stagecoach station now serving as a beautiful artisan studio.

A visit to Spruce Forest Artisan Village and Little Crossings offers a memorable blend of history, art, craftsmanship and hospitality – where the past is preserved and shared for generations to come. □



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Aboard the ship, passengers have the freedom to roam spacious outside decks, dine at two eateries, shop in the gift shop, catch free movies or play a popular game of Badger Bingo. When pre-ordered, convenient box lunches are also available. The *Badger's* unique atmosphere transports travelers to a simpler time, providing a fascinating glimpse into mid-20th-century maritime engineering. As the last operating coal-fired passenger steamship in the United States, the *Badger* even holds the prestigious designation of National Historic Landmark, appealing greatly to history buffs and sightseers alike.



Furthermore, the *S.S. Badger* provides exceptional value and convenience for tour planners. The ship readily welcomes group travel, offering dedicated group discounts for parties of 10 or more to ensure itineraries remain affordable. The sailing seamlessly links with U.S. Highway 10, allowing buses to easily roll right on and off the vessel.

By avoiding urban traffic jams and granting travelers a chance to experience a living piece of maritime history, the *S.S. Badger* provides a relaxing retreat. Tour operators who add this crosslake voyage to their schedules ensure a stress-free journey and a highly unique, memorable highlight that will delight tour groups year after year. Visit ssbadger.com/grouptrips/ page for full group fare and schedule details.

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Designed with groups in mind, Dellshire Resort offers 208 luxurious guest rooms, complimentary motorcoach parking, convenient luggage assistance, and customized group dining options. Whether you're planning a senior getaway, reunion, special interest tour, or holiday excursion, our experienced team makes every step effortless. Dellshire makes an ideal overnight stop for groups traveling to the Warrens Cranberry Festival, visiting Circus World Museum in Baraboo or enjoying a dinner show in Wisconsin Dells or concert at Crystal Grand Theater.

Dining is an experience all its own. At Blade & Barrel, our signature dining destination, guests can dine like royalty in the King's Room, where a grand feast-worthy setting creates a memorable gathering experience, or discover the charm of our cozy hobbit-inspired booths tucked away throughout the restaurant.



Step back in time at Dawn Manor, a beautifully restored 1855 estate. Dawn Manor was originally built in 1855 by Captain Abraham Vanderpoel, a signer of the Wisconsin Constitution and a friend of President Abraham Lincoln. This elegant speakeasy supper club where classic Wisconsin favorites, vintage cocktails, and timeless ambiance create a memorable evening.

Guests can relax in our indoor and outdoor pools featuring a swim-up bar or simply unwind with a handcrafted cocktail while taking in the resort's one-of-a-kind atmosphere. Located in the heart of Wisconsin Dells, Dellshire also provides easy access to the area's celebrated attractions, scenic beauty, shopping, and entertainment.

We invite tour operators and group leaders to discover why Dellshire Resort is quickly becoming one of Wisconsin Dells' most distinctive new destinations. Gather your travelers, step through the castle gates, and prepare for a legendary adventure where every guest is treated like royalty.

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