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APRIL, MAY & JUNE 2026 • VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2



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- ★ Service Club Pancake Breakfast
- ★ Red, White & Blue Classic Car Show
- ★ 10th Annual FLATS Uncle Sam 5k Run
- ★ Parade

Afternoon @ Forest Llewellyn Cemetery

- ★ Curtain Call Theatre presents
Cemetery Theatre

Evening @ North Park

- ★ Kids Games
- ★ Food Trucks
- ★ Live Entertainment
- ★ Fireworks

(Rain Date - Sunday, July 5, 2026)

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The Architect of Play



How Luke Callaghan and the Kirksville Parks and Recreation Department are rewriting the playbook for Kirksville fun

If you walk into the Kirksville Parks and Recreation Aquatic Center, you might expect the quiet hum of municipal bureaucracy. Instead, you're more likely to run into the whirlwind of energy that is Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Luke Callaghan.

With a quick wit and a visible passion for community building, Callaghan isn't just managing programs — he's crafting the backdrop for the city's childhood memories. Since joining the department six years ago, Callaghan has been part of a radical transformation of what it means to "play" in Kirksville.

"When I came on board, we only had seven or eight programs that they ran pretty consistently," Callaghan said. Today, that number has exploded to over 30

different programs and events throughout the year.

A Legacy of Tradition and Innovation

The heart of Kirksville's programming is a blend of long-standing traditions and fresh, high-energy events. The crown jewel of their calendar is the annual Easter Egg Hunt, a behemoth of an event celebrating its 48th year.

"We spread 12,000 eggs on the Truman State University quad and thousands of people come out" Callaghan said about the completely free event.

But Callaghan isn't one to rest on legacy alone as he and parks department staff have a knack for "one-and-done" magical moments, like the legendary Unicorn Day.

"We magically made a unicorn appear;



it was fantastic," he said. "We had like 400 people show up."

Whether it's the gritty, mud-splattered faces at the Kids Mini Mud Mile — now in its seventh year—or the high-tech precision of the MLB Pitch, Hit, and Run competition, Callaghan's thumbprint seems to be on every flyer and finish line.

Building a Community Without Barriers

What truly drives Callaghan, however, isn't just the number of kids on a field — it's ensuring that every kid has the chance to be there. One of his proudest achievements is the department's establishment of the Scholarship Program, which is now in its third year.

"We finally got it," he said. "We wanted to make it quick and easy for people. We don't want to burden people but we want them to participate in our programs," he said.

The impact has been massive. From distributing just a few hundred dollars in its first year, the fund grew to \$4,000 in year two, helping families bypass financial barriers to participate in baseball, soccer, and swimming lessons. This spirit of accessibility extends to the Equipment Donation Program, where the department collects used cleats, helmets, and gloves to give away for free.

“Parents don’t have to go out and buy \$100 bats or \$100 gloves; they can just come grab one,” he said.

The Logistics of Growth

Managing the sheer volume of participants — which Callaghan estimates to be in the tens of thousands annually when accounting for pool admissions and special events — is no small feat. The baseball and softball seasons alone saw 79 teams last year, with an additional 13 teams for T-ball.

“We do all of the scheduling in-house, and it’s kind of a logistical nightmare, really,” he said with the dry humor of someone who has spent too many late nights looking at spreadsheets. Yet, the results speak for themselves: “We put out soccer last week, and it filled up in three days”.

A Future in Bloom

Looking ahead, Callaghan and the parks department are far from finished. With the recent addition of a splash pad and the ongoing development of the Rock Lake Conservation Area, the city’s footprint for recreation is expanding. He envisions a park system that continues to evolve by simply listening to the people who use it.

“Who knows, five years from now — I assume more



parkland, additional amenities in our park system,” he said. “We just need to continue to listen to the community.”

In a world where digital screens often win the battle for attention, Luke Callaghan is making a compelling case for getting outside, getting muddy, and being part of something bigger. For the kids of Kirksville, he isn’t just an assistant director — he’s the guy making sure the magic keeps happening.

The Evolution of Kirksville Fun

The expansion of Kirksville’s recreation landscape didn’t happen by accident. It was fueled by a dedicated staff effort to diversify offerings and utilize every available resource. Because the city lacks extensive indoor facilities, Callaghan and his team have mastered the art of seasonal adaptation. During the winter months, the department transforms

meeting rooms into hubs effort with organizations



for creativity.

“Most of our programming through the winter months utilizes the meeting room here, whether that’s painting classes and that kind of thing,” Callaghan said, noting that these indoor sessions, such as the Paint the Ville classes, provide a necessary outlet for community engagement when the Missouri weather turns cold.

Once spring arrives, the energy shifts outdoors. The transition begins with Week of the Young Child in early April, a collaborative

like the YMCA and the Adair County Public Library. This week is packed with daily events tailored for children under school age, culminating in a Touch-a-Truck event and a magic show.

Deep Roots in the Community

Callaghan’s effectiveness stems from his deep understanding of the local landscape. Before stepping into his current role, he spent six months at Truman State University and previously served as the program director at the

YMCA. This background provided him with a unique perspective on the community’s needs and the existing infrastructure.

The turning point for the department came with the passage of the half-cent sales tax, which funded the local pool and provided the financial runway to hire Callaghan as a full-time programmer. This investment allowed the city to move beyond basic maintenance and into active community enrichment.

Adult Programming: The Next Frontier

While youth sports and family events are the department’s bread and butter, Callaghan is constantly looking for ways to engage the city’s adult population. Currently, the department runs adult softball leagues in both the spring and fall, typically drawing six to eight teams. Engaging adults presents a different set of challenges.

“Adults are busy and have lots of things going on,” Callaghan said. To address this, many adult-focused programs are designed to be family-friendly, such as Dollar Swim Nights and block parties, where parents can participate alongside their children. However, more specialized offerings are on the horizon, including potential adult soccer programs currently in development.

Measuring Success Through Stories

For Callaghan, the true measure of success isn’t just in the attendance numbers, but in the feedback from the people he serves. “Our programs are really well received... it’s almost non-existent that we run a program and then we don’t operate that program because of low attendance,” he said.

He views the residents of Kirks-



ville not just as “customers,” but as friends and neighbors. This close-knit relationship allows for honest, real-time feedback that shapes future initiatives. “They’re usually not afraid to tell you exactly what they think, and I think over the past five years, it’s been overwhelmingly positive,” he said.

The Power of Partnership

No department is an island, and Callaghan is quick to credit the various organizations that help make their vision a reality. From Truman State University providing the quad for the Easter Egg Hunt to the North Missouri Football Club running soccer programs, these partnerships are vital.

Even when programs are run by outside organizations, the public often looks to Parks and Rec as the central hub for fun. “I think when people think programs and events, I think they think Kirksville Parks and Rec now,” Callaghan said, a testament to the brand and reputation his team has built.

A Vision for 2030 and Beyond

As the city grows, Callaghan’s vision for the future remains anchored in sustainability and accessibility. The development of Rock Lake represents a major step forward, offering new opportunities for fishing, nature trails, and eventually, a playground and restrooms.

His goal is to be part of the creation of a park system that isn’t just a collection of fields, but a dynamic, living part of the community. By continuing to bridge financial gaps through scholarships and equipment drives, he is ensuring that the next generation of Kirksville residents grows up with a sense of belonging and a love for the outdoors.

Luke Callaghan’s journey with Kirksville Parks and Recreation is a masterclass in how passion, coupled with community support and smart logistics, can transform a city. As he looks toward the next five years, one thing is certain: if there’s a way to make Kirksville more fun, Luke Callaghan will find it.

Kirksville Parks & Recreation Program Samples

- The Indoor Triathlon
- Kids Cardboard Boat Race
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Bass N Kids Fishing Tournament
- Week of the Young Child
- Beyond Boundaries Swim Team
- Touch A Truck & Magic Show
- Tiny Tykes Soccer
- Kirksville Baseball and Softball Leagues
- Paint the Ville Classes
- Block Parties
- Kids Tennis Lessons
- Adult Softball
- The Red White and Blue Festival
- Dollar Swim Nights
- North Park Walking Challenge
- Summer Musical
- Kids Theatre Camp
- Swim Lessons
- MLB Pitch, Hit & Run
- Kids Mini Mud Mile
- Country Dance Night
- Little Sluggers Tee Ball
- Halloween Eggstravaganza
- Howl O Ween Dog Costume Contest
- Halloween Town
- Santa Letters
- Breakfast with Santa



Museum display honors local opera legend

The upcoming April issue of the Adair Historian is set to hit mailboxes soon, and it promises a deep dive into the life of a local icon who graced some of the world's most prestigious stages. Phradie Wells (1893-1980), was a remarkable woman who transitioned from the rural landscapes of Missouri to the grand stage of the Metropolitan Opera in New York for 12 seasons from 1923 to 1935. After her professional singing and acting career, she returned to this area to share her talents as a teacher at the local college, where she taught drama and put on various plays. A story written by graduate student Johanna Schramm, provides an intimate look at Wells' life and career. Beyond the pages of the magazine, the museum's primary project to honor

the 250th anniversary of our nation is the installation of a commercial-grade flagpole standing between 25 and 30 feet tall to match the stature of neighboring landmarks like City Hall. The project is estimated at \$7,000, which covers the cost of pouring cement, installing lighting so the flags can stay up at night, and flying both the United States and Missouri state flags. The museum plans to include a plaque to honor those who donate toward the project or wish to dedicate it to someone's memory. The museum is also partnering with Lemmon Landscaping to install the pole and refresh the museum's flower gardens. To read the full story on Phradie Wells or contribute to the flagpole fund, you can contact the Adair County Historical Society or subscribe to their



A display at the Adair County Museum shows a dress and hats worn by opera singer Phradie Wells . quarterly magazine by emailing adair-cohistorical@gmail.com. You can also explore three floors of local history at the museum, which is open Wednesday through Friday from 1-4 p.m., or browse past issues of the magazine which are available on-site.



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Kirkville to Host 2026 Special Olympics Missouri State Summer Games

The eyes of the state will turn toward Northeast Missouri at the end of this May, as Kirkville officially becomes the home of the 2026 Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO) State Summer Games. Scheduled for May 29-31, this high-energy weekend represents the culmination of a rigorous and massive collaborative effort between local leaders and academic institutions.

This success was a testament to the city's collective ambition and its reputation for hospitality. Tourism officials have noted that the current focus is on channeling that community energy into supporting the athletes and their families, ensuring they feel the full weight of the region's encouragement.



Photos courtesy of ATSU

Truman State University will serve as the central hub for the weekend, providing top-tier facilities for the four primary sports: powerlifting, swimming, track and field, and volleyball.

Each venue will showcase athletic excellence, from the raw strength of the lifting platform to the teamwork on the volleyball court. Beyond the medals, the event remains rooted in storied traditions, including a formal opening ceremony featuring the parade of athletes and the official lighting of the torch.

The success of the games relies heavily on the atmosphere created by the fans. Residents are encouraged to show up in force to cheer on the competitors. Updated information regarding schedules and specific campus locations will be available at somo.org/summergames or at kirkvilledailyexpress.com.

This May, Kirkville stands ready to prove that when it comes to heart, the entire community is rooting for the win.



Art, Music, and Community Converge for Kirksville's 12th Annual Downtown Art Walk

Get ready to paint the town! The 12th Annual Kirksville Area Chamber of Commerce Art Walk is returning to the historic downtown Square, and it's shaping up to be the cultural highlight of the season. Mark your calendars for Friday, June 5, from 4:30-6:30 p.m., as the heart of Kirksville transforms into a vibrant open-air gallery. This isn't just a simple stroll through town; it's a full-immersion experience where the community meets creativity.

During the event, you can feel the creative pulse of the city by watching artists of all disciplines showcase their masterpieces. These creators will even offer a rare, "behind-the-curtain" look at their unique creative processes. It is also the perfect time for some urban exploration, allowing you to rediscover the charm of downtown as you wander through unique local shops and grab a bite at one of our many stand-out restaurants.

Admission is free so bring your friends, your family, and soak in an evening of stunning art, community spirit, and live music.



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Earth Day at Thousand Hills State Park

The morning air at Thousand Hills State Park usually carries the quiet scent of oak and lake water, but on Saturday, April 18, it will pulse with the energy of a community coming alive. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., the familiar stretch of the beach parking lot

and the winding paved trail will transform into a vibrant corridor of discovery. Local organizations and community members will be stationed throughout the area, offering unique, hands-on opportunities to reconnect with the environment and celebrate the beauty of the natural world.



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Novinger Heritage Festival Set for Memorial Day Weekend

The historic coal mining community of Novinger is preparing to honor its roots this spring with the Novinger Heritage Festival, scheduled for Sunday, May 24. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and promises a full day of community-centered celebration. While a complete schedule of events is still forthcoming, organizers have confirmed that the festival will feature guided tours, live music, and a variety of food vendors offering local flavors. This annual tradition serves as a tribute to the diverse immigrants who built the town during the early 20th-century mining boom, offering visitors a rare look at the “deep shaft” mining history that once powered the Midwest.

The Novinger Heritage Festival is a highlight of the Memorial Day weekend, providing a family-friendly atmosphere with activities and tours designed for all ages. Residents and visitors are encouraged to save the date and stay tuned for the official itinerary, which will be announced in the coming weeks and be available and at kirksvilledailyexpress.com.

Novinger is located just seven miles west of Kirksville on Hwy. 6.



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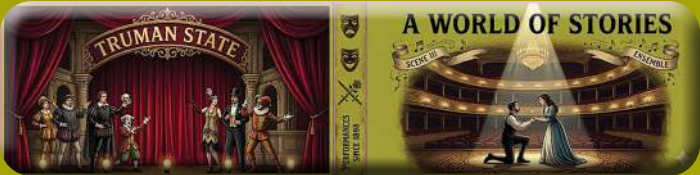
Capstone Exhibitions in the University Art Gallery



Graduating senior art majors will have their work on display. The exhibition for Bachelor of Art students will be available from April 20-26 with a closing reception from 5-6:30 p.m. April 24.

The exhibition for Bachelor of Fine Arts students will be available from April 27-May 1 with a closing reception from 5-6:30 p.m. May 1. University Art Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Art Gallery exhibits are free and open to the public. The University Art Gallery is closed between exhibitions and during all University breaks. Additional information is available at artgallery.truman.edu.



‘She Kills Monsters’ performances at Truman State

Truman’s Theatre Department is set to bring a high-octane blend of fantasy and nostalgia to the stage with its upcoming production of “She Kills Monsters.” This acclaimed dramatic comedy by playwright Qui Nguyen, invites audiences on a comedic romp into the world of fantasy role-playing games, centering on a story that serves as a heart-pounding homage to the geek and warrior in everyone.

Performances are scheduled to take place April 16-18 and again from April 24-25, with all performances beginning at 7:30 p.m. For those preferring a daytime showing, the production will conclude its run with a final matinee performance on April 26 at 2 p.m. This unique theatrical experience offers a high-energy escape that celebrates the power of imagination and the bonds formed through tabletop gaming.



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Exhibits at the Sue Ross Arts Center



Kirksville High School Exhibit

...in the Ellebracht Gallery March 30-April 9, Reception April 2 ,5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Wendy Wentz Collection Exhibit

...in the Gaber Gallery April 1-24, Reception April 2, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Regional High School Showcase

...in the Ellebracht Gallery April 15th-24th, Reception April 23, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Truman Graphic Arts Capstone Exhibit

May 4-8 — Catherine Maloney Art Exhibit in the Ellebracht Gallery May 19-June 30, Reception June 5th 5-6:30 pm
Danielle Yakle Exhibit in the Gaber Gallery May 19th-June 30th , Reception May 21 5:30-6:30 p.m.

A Tea to Remember April 26, 2-4 p.m. at the Sue Ross Arts Center. Tickets must be purchased in advance \$25 for Kirksville Arts members and \$30 for others.

Barn Quilt Painting

...at Sue Ross Arts Center , June 27th 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lots of red, white and blue option to celebrate the 250th birthday of the USA. There will be other designs and color choices, too. Preregistration is required.



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April 7 Aaron Russell Band
VFW, Kirkville, 7 p.m.
April 10 Dirtroad Revival,
Backyard Brewz, La Plata, 8:30 p.m.
April 11 Aaron Russell Band,
Black Diamond Jubilee, Macon, 7 p.m.
April 11 BootCut
Greentop Restaurant and Bar, Greentop
April 18 Shakey Ground
LD's, Economy, 8–12 a.m.
April 25 Aaron Russell Band
Black Diamond Jubilee, Macon, 7 p.m.
May 2 Aaron Russell Band
VFW, Kirkville, 7 p.m.
May 2 Shakey Ground
Jiggs & Giggs, Hamilton, 8–12 a.m.
May 9 Aaron Russell Band
Black Diamond Jubilee, Macon, 7 p.m.
May 16 Shakey Ground
Helm Street Inn, Brookfield, 8–12 a.m.
May 23 Aaron Russell Band
Black Diamond Jubilee, Macon, 7 p.m.
May 23 Shakey Ground
Baring Country Club, Baring
May 23 BootCut
Lake Nehai, Keytesville
June 6 Aaron Russell Band
VFW, Kirkville, 7 p.m.
June 6 BootCut
Zeppelin Bar and Grill, Princeton
June 13 Aaron Russell Band
Black Diamond Jubilee, Macon, 7 p.m.
June 27 Aaron Russell Band
Black Diamond Jubilee, Macon, 7 p.m.
June 27 Shakey Ground
Helm Street Inn, Brookfield, 8–12 a.m.
“No Apology” is no longer performing.

Kirksville Arts Association's Summer on the Square



NEMO Photography

Summer on the Square kicks off June 5 at 7 p.m. with Keota performing on the Courthouse square. The Summer on the Square concert series runs every Friday through August. Visit kirksvilledailyexpress.com for details as on the bands performing as they become available.

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Clear your morning schedule and bounce over to the Truman State University Quad on Saturday, April 4, 2026. The 48th annual Kirksville Easter Egg Hunt kicks off exactly at 10:00 am, and you won't want to miss a second of the action.

This community tradition is a collaborative effort between Kirksville Parks and Recreation, Kraft Heinz, and Truman's Cardinal Key. The event is completely free for children between the ages of 2 and 12 who are ready to race for hidden treasures.

With a staggering 12,000 eggs scattered across the lawn, the "hunt" usually



turns into a whirlwind that finishes in the blink of an eye—punctuality is key!

Make sure to grab your favorite basket and a camera. You'll have the chance to snap some photos with local favorites Spike the Bulldog and Kirk the Bluebird, along with the guest of honor, the Easter Bunny.

Questions? Reach out to the Parks and Recreation Department for additional details.

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Check with one of Kirksville's local churches for Easter Service dates and times

Hamilton Street Baptist Church (660) 665-4633	Mary Immaculate Catholic Catholic Newman Center 660-665-2466	(660) 626-6117 Novinger Baptist Church (660) 216-0956
Rehoboth Baptist Church 660-665-7577	Union Temple Church 16220 Millay Trl, Kirksville	First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (660) 665-4636
First Presbyterian Church (USA) (660) 665-4473	Sugar Creek Baptist Church 25041-26083 MO-3, Kirksville	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (660) 665-4636
Kirksville Church of Christ (660) 627-4003	Hazel Creek Primitive Baptist Church (660) 988-7532	Kirksville First Ward (660) 665-7712
First Baptist Church (660) 665-6477	Meadow Brook Christian Church 602 E Washington St, Kirksville	Kirksville Second Ward (660) 665-8867
Faith United Methodist Church (660) 665-7800	St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church (660) 665-2466	Trinity Episcopal Church (660) 665-6155
Southside Baptist Church (660) 665-0050	Life Church of Kirksville (660) 665-2323	Seventh Day Adventist Church (660) 332-7902
First Church of God (660) 665-3100	Service Community Presbyter- ian (660) 332-4430	United Methodist Church (660) 665-7712
Central Church of Christ (660) 665-2225	Cornerstone Church (660) 956-4480	Trinity United Fellowship Church (660) 665-6155
Faith Baptist Church (660) 665-1622	Countryside Christian Church (660) 627-4261	Shekinah Mennonite Church (660) 665-6126
The Crossing Church (217) 203-6443	Gifford Christian Church (660) 332-7653	Bible Missionary Church 508 S. Main St.
Grace Community Bible Church (660) 665-1615	Lake Road Chapel 749-032-5002	Pentecostal Church 660-988-6249
Free Church of America 660-665-1615	Church of God (Holiness) (660) 665-2324	The Salvation Army (660) 665-7885
First United Methodist Church (660) 665-7712	New Hope Evangelical Church 660-341-0000	Colony Baptist Church (660) 223-3597
Church of God of Prophecy 660-627-1322	First Assembly of God (660) 665-9905	Gospel Outreach Church 209 W. Washington
Fellowship Baptist Church 660-665-0633	First Liberty Full Gospel	<i>This is not a complete list.</i>
Yarrow Methodist Church (660) 264-0050		

Treasure Awaits at the Novinger Area Yard Sales!

Dust off your shelves and sharpen your bargain-hunting skills — the Novinger Area Yard Sales & Flea Market is back! Starting at 8 a.m. on Saturday, April 25, the entire region from Green Castle to Kirksville and Thousand Hills State Park will transform into a shopper’s paradise.

Whether you’re hunting for unique crafts, repurposed treasures, or commercial steals, this massive community event has it all. Want to ensure a crowd at your curb? Get your location on the official map by contacting Novinger Renewal (P.O. Box 24, Novinger, or via Facebook/660-342-6455) before April 18th.

If you prefer a central hub, head to the Novinger Community Center for indoor shopping and FREE spaces on the fairgrounds! While you’re there, fuel your spree with fresh cinnamon rolls and juicyburgers.

They are also seeking quality donations for the Renewal sale; please drop them off at the Community Center on Friday, April 24, after 2 p.m. Don’t miss out on the area’s biggest day of buying and selling—advertised far and wide to bring the crowds to you!



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DONATE: We are entirely dependent on donations for saving dogs and cats. Spay/neuter fees, vaccinations, food and much more quickly add up. We are a tax exempt 501(c)3 charitable organization. All donations stay local!

HELP US TODAY! Go to fodrescue.org or our Facebook page to donate or find more information about us and our adoptable animals.

FOSTER: We can only take in new animals when we have foster homes to place them in. What exactly does fostering mean? It means bringing a homeless animal into your home, caring for them, providing them with affection and socialization, until a permanent family comes along who will love them forever.

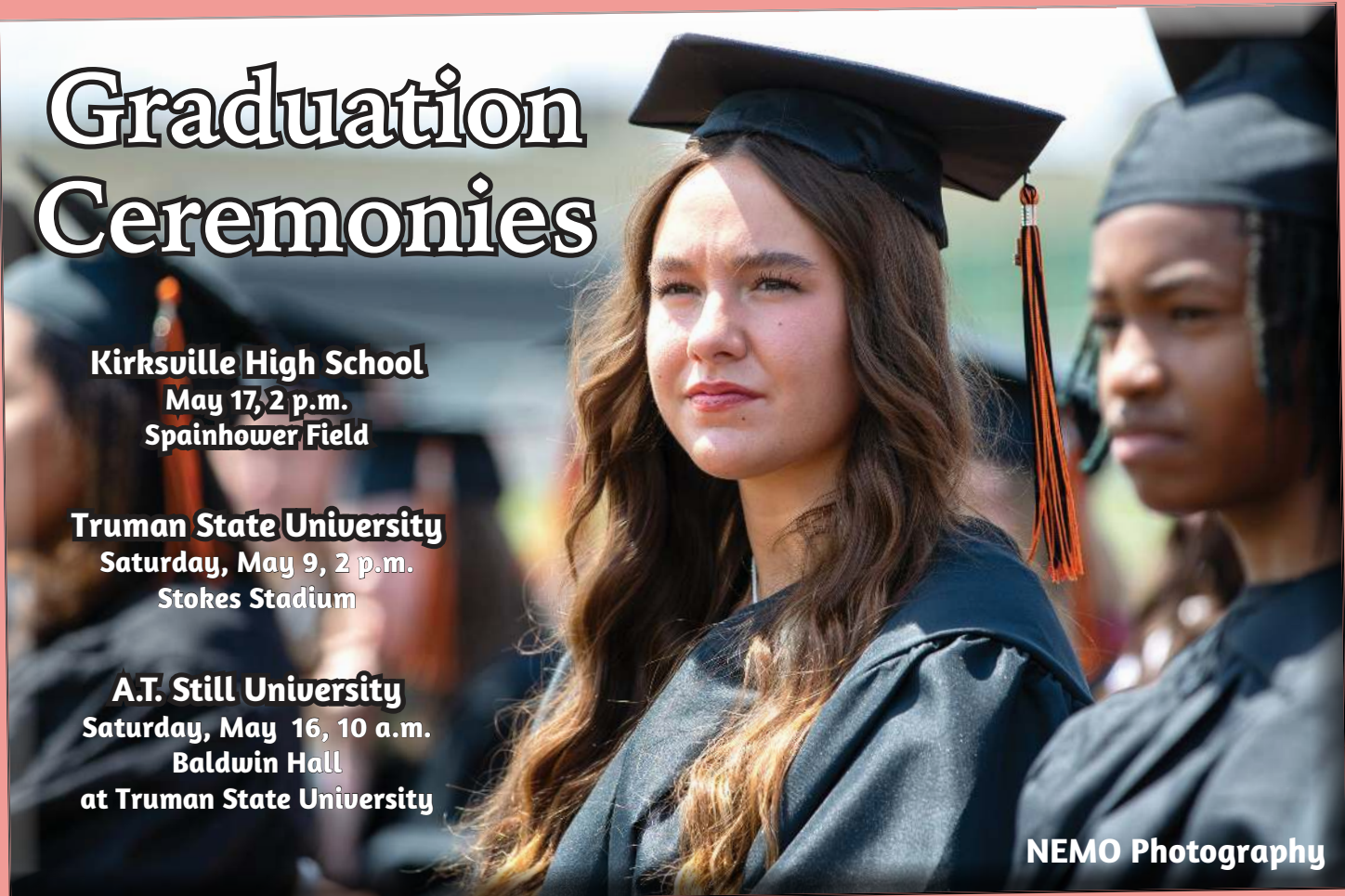
VOLUNTEER: Willing to invest some time with us to help? We have several ways that you can help, such as volunteering at events, transporting animals, or you could even hold your own fundraiser for us! Contact us!

Graduation Ceremonies

Kirksville High School
May 17, 2 p.m.
Spainhower Field

Truman State University
Saturday, May 9, 2 p.m.
Stokes Stadium

A.T. Still University
Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m.
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Thousand Hills State Park Calendar of Events

Jig Tying

Learn how to tie custom fishing jigs and pick unique color combinations from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, April 3. All supplies are provided, and participants will make and keep five jigs. The group will meet at the park office.

Night Sky Painting

Connect with nature through art by learning to paint a night sky scene from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 4. Supplies are provided, though participants may bring their own. Seating is limited; call the park office at 660-665-6995 to reserve a spot. The group will meet at the park office.

Petroglyph Tour

Explore a collection of rock carvings made by ancestors of today's American Indians at 6:30 p.m. Friday, April 10. Park staff will lead the tour to discuss this unique piece of history. The group will meet at the petroglyph shelter located next to the beach.

Learn 2 Aim

Begin an archery journey with a hands-on workshop at 10 a.m.



and 1 p.m. Saturday, April 11. Prior registration is required for this event.

Eyes Up, Lights Down

Celebrate International Dark Sky Week from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. Friday, April 17. Participants can learn about light pollution and explore the stars via provided telescopes. Guests are also welcome to bring their own telescopes, chairs, and binoculars. The group will meet at the Point Shelter.

Earth Day

Connect with nature through activities and educational booths facilitated by community

to 11 a.m. Saturday, April 25. The group will meet at the Redbud Trailhead across from the playground on Big Loop Trail.

Dark Sky

Explore the stories of the night sky from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. Friday, May 1. Telescopes will be available, but visitors are encouraged to bring their own equipment, chairs, and binoculars. The group will meet at Point Shelter.

Amphibian Activities

Celebrate Amphibi-an Day from 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 2. Activities include learning about Missouri amphibians, making origami frogs, and testing your jumping distance against native species. The group will meet at the picnic tables between the playground and the Oak Trail.

Petroglyph Tour

View ancient rock carvings and learn about American Indian history during a staff-led tour at 7 p.m. Friday, May 8. The group will meet at the petroglyph shelter next to the beach.

members from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 18. This free event for all ages will be held at stations around the beach parking lot and paved trail.

Petroglyph Tour

Discover the history of local rock carvings during a guided tour at 6:30 p.m. Friday, April 24. Staff will explain the significance of the petroglyphs at the shelter located next to the beach.

Tree-mendous Oaks

Join park staff for a guided hike of the Redbud Trail to learn about the oak trees that define the local woods. The hike runs from 10

Spring Nature Painting

Paint a spring nature scene with staff and volunteers from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, May 15. Supplies are provided, but personal materials are welcome. Seating is limited; call 660-665-6995 to register. The group will meet in the Special Use Area, located off Highway 157 at the first right after Big Loop Road.

Birding for Beginners

Enjoy a leisurely hike and learn basic birding skills from 8 to 9 a.m. Saturday, May 16. The group will meet at the Beach Shelter.

Dark Sky Astronomy

Learn about the stars and the stories they tell from 9 to 11 p.m. Friday, May 22. Telescopes are provided, but guests may bring their own gear and chairs. The group will meet at the Point Shelter.

World Turtle Day

Celebrate turtles

with park staff and the Truman State University Herpetarium on Saturday, May 23. Learn about turtle adaptations and their role in the ecosystem. The group will meet at the Campground 1 amphitheater.

Petroglyph Tour

Explore historical rock carvings at 10 a.m. Sunday, May 24. Join park staff at the petroglyph shelter next to the beach to learn more about these ancestral carvings.

Fungal Foray

Join Dr. Bob Johnson of Truman State University for a day of exploring local fungi at 9 a.m. Sunday, May 31. Participants will collect and examine specimens. Wear appropriate attire for the woods and bring a collection basket. The group will meet at the parking lot next to the playground.

Petroglyph Tour

Take a guided tour of



the park's petroglyphs at 7 p.m. Friday, June 5. Meet staff at the petroglyph shelter next to the beach to learn about the history of the carvings.

Fishing Day

Take advantage of the Missouri statewide free fishing weekend on Saturday, June 6. More information regarding specific activities will be available soon.

Snake Survival

Discover the unique ways snakes defend themselves at 7 p.m. Friday, June 12. This program may include a chance to meet a live reptile. The group will meet at the Camp-

ground 1 amphitheater.

Petroglyph Tour

Learn about the ancestors of today's American Indians through their rock carvings at 7 p.m. Friday, June 19. The tour meets at the petroglyph shelter next to the beach.

Sunset on the Lake Painting Class

Learn to paint a sunset with water reflections from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, June 20. Supplies are provided. The group will meet in the Special Use Area, taking the first right after Big Loop Road on Highway 157.

Women in Nature

Women are invited to explore outdoor activities and build skills from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, June 27. This event is designed for those looking for a starting point to explore the great outdoors.

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Memorial Day

Memorial Day Ceremonies will be celebrated on Monday, May 25 at 11 a.m. at the VFW.

NEMO Spring Job Fair

The buzz of opportunity is returning to Kirksville this spring as the annual NEMO Job Fair prepares to take over Moberly Area Community College on Friday, April 17.

From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the quiet academic halls at 2105 East Normal Street will transform into a high-energy networking hub where the region's top employers from healthcare, manufacturing, and education gather to meet their next great hires.

In an era of digital applications, this event offers a rare and valuable chance to bypass the online void and make a lasting impression through a simple handshake and a face-to-face conversation.

Whether you are a student nearing graduation or a professional looking for a fresh start in the Kirksville area, the Chamber of Commerce and the NEMO Job Fair Committee have designed this event to be a direct line to career growth. Attendees are encouraged to dress for success and bring plenty of polished resumes, as many local businesses use this window to conduct on-the-spot interviews and fill critical roles that keep the local economy thriving.



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"CHEATING CHEATERS" AT THE CURTAIN CALL THEATRE



Get ready for a night of double-crossing and high-stakes hilarity as Curtain Call Theatre presents *Cheating Cheaters*, a comedy by John Patrick! Whether you're a fan of witty schemes or just love watching a "honest" thief try to stay ahead of the game, this show is a guaranteed riot.

Join them at 512 W. Elizabeth Street in Kirksville for two weekends of fun: April 9–10 and April 16–18.

The curtain rises at 7 p.m., and at just \$15 for General Admission, it's the best deal in town (no swindling required). Grab your tickets at the HyVee Service Desk or pick them up at the door — just make sure you get there before the secrets start spilling!

**MISSOURI & SOUTHERN IOWA
ART GUILD**

MOSI (Missouri-Southern Iowa) Art Guild invites artists to their monthly meeting. The MOSI (Missouri-Southern Iowa) Art Guild encourages any artist, budding artist, and supporter of the arts to join them at their monthly meetings, 5:30 p.m., on the second Thursday of each month, typically at the Adair County Annex Building in Kirksville (March and April meetings will be held at The Crossing). MOSI will also exhibit at the Kirksville Downtown Art Walk on Friday, June 5, 4:30-6:30 p.m. For more information visit facebook.com/mosiartguild, The MOSI Art Guild | An Art Guild for Northeastern Missouri and Southern Iowa or email them at info@mosiartguild.org

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Heartland Task Force to host 26th annual Daddy/Daughter Dance on April 17

Local fathers and daughters are invited to trade their sneakers for dancing shoes this April as a long-standing community tradition returns to the NEMO Fair Event Center.

The Heartland Task Force and the NEMO Fair Board will host the 26th annual Daddy/Daughter Dance on Friday, April 17, from 6:30-9:30 p.m.

The evening is open to girls in preschool through sixth grade and their fathers or significant male role models.

The event features a variety of activities designed to create lasting memories, including a photo booth available from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Attendees can also enjoy free concessions, crafts, and Heartland Task Force giveaways throughout the night.

Organizers encourage participants to dress up and enjoy the festivities, which have become a staple for area families over the past two and a half decades.

Admission is set at \$8 per couple and \$2 for each



additional child, with a total family cap of \$10. No RSVP is required to attend.

All proceeds from the dance support community-wide substance prevention efforts and youth development initiatives facilitated by the Heartland Task Force.

For more information, community members may call 660-785-7256.

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Fresh Roots: Kirksville Debuts Its First Spring Expo

The inaugural Home & Garden Show promises to be the ultimate launchpad for your next renovation — and the Chamber is looking for the pros to lead the way.

As the frost thaws and the first green shoots emerge in Kirksville, local residents aren't just thinking about spring cleaning — they're thinking about transformation. Whether it's a kitchen overhaul, a backyard sanctuary, or a simple interior refresh, the "to-do" list is about to get a lot more exciting.

This season, the Kirksville Area Chamber of Commerce is turning those Pinterest boards into reality with its first-ever Spring Expo Home & Garden Show.

Designed to be more than just a trade show, the Expo acts as a bridge between the region's top experts and homeowners ready to invest in their space, and comes as a di-

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rect response to a surge in local interest in home improvement and the fi-



Rise, Shine, and Shop Local: The Kirksville Kiwanis Farmers' Market is Back!

Get ready to fill your baskets and your Saturday mornings! Starting May 2, the Kirksville Downtown Square (Elson Street side) transforms into a vibrant hub of local flavor and flair. From 7 a.m. to noon every weekend through October, you can hunt for the freshest harvest — think sun-ripened veggies, farm-fresh eggs, and artisanal meats — alongside sugary baked treats, lush plants, and unique handmade crafts. Whether you're a serious foodie or just looking for a lively morning stroll, the Kirksville Kiwanis Farmers' Market is the place to be.

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A Tapestry in the Heartland: The Kirksville Diversity Festival Returns

Spring in Kirksville brings more than just blooming redbuds; it brings a vibrant celebration of the faces, flavors, and stories that make this community whole. On Saturday, April 25, from 1 to 4 p.m., a venue will transform into a global village for the annual Kirksville Diversity Festival.

This free, family-friendly event is designed to showcase the breadth and depth of the local population through a sensory journey of global flavors and live entertainment. Attendees can sample diverse cuisines prepared by local residents, watch traditional dances on the main stage, and participate in hands-on activities designed for all ages.

Visit kirksvilledailyexpress.com for more details as they become available. Admission is free and open to the public.



PURR-FORMING UNDER THE BIG TOP!

This April, the NEMO Fairgrounds will transform into a feline fantasy for Purr-forming Under the Big Top!, a community cat show that proves you don't need to be a jungle cat to be the star of the show.

This high-energy fundraiser is more than just a pageant; it is a full-blown celebration of our favorite local mousers and lap-warmers designed to benefit the Adair County 4-H Cat Project and the Adair County Humane So-

ciety. Attendees can expect to see felines sporting extravagant costumes, lounging in elaborately decorated cages, and competing for titles like Longest Tail or Prettiest Eyes.

There is even a category for the Best Instagram Account, because in 2026, we all know your cat is probably already a budding influencer.

While the whiskers are the main attraction, the heart of the event is about giving back to the com-



munity. By attending, you are directly supporting the hard-working youth of the Adair County 4-H program and providing much-need-

ed resources for the local Humane Society.

Make sure to mark your calendars for April 11, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the NEMO Fairgrounds. Entry at the gate is only \$5, and while parking is free, additional donations to the shelter are warmly welcomed.

Between the "purr-formances" and the delicious bites available at the Tator Wagon food truck onsite, it is an event you won't want to miss. We will see you under the Big Top!

43RD ANNUAL JIM BAKER/JOHN MCCONNELL BASS-N-KIDS FISHING TOURNAMENT

The 42nd annual Jim Baker-John McConnell Bass n' Kids Fishing Tournament is officially back on the calendar for Saturday, May 9, at the scenic Thousand Hills State Park.

This long-standing community tradition invites young anglers to enjoy a day of outdoor fun, skill-building, and friendly competition on the water.

The event kicks off promptly at 8:30 a.m. with an introducto-



ry fishing clinic designed to teach kids the basics. Following the lesson, it's lines in the water until noon! To make the day even more exciting, there will be trophies

for top catches, plenty of door prizes, and a complimentary lunch featuring hot dogs and soda for all participants.

This tournament is open to all children ages 15 and under, and there is absolutely no cost to attend.

This wonderful opportunity is brought to you through a dedicated partnership between the 1000 Hills Bass Club, Thousand Hills State Park, and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Touch a Truck and Kids Magic Show

As Kirksville prepares to celebrate the Week of the Young Child starting April 26, the city is gearing up to prove that the earliest years are the most vital foundation for a child's lifelong development. Local officials and organizations like the Kirksville Child Development Center and the Adair County Public Library have united to champion high-quality, affordable early education as a cornerstone for a strong community and country. This week will honor the dedicated educators and programs that nurture our youngest citizens through a series of engaging, free public events, culminating on Friday, May 1, with the excitement of the Touch A Truck exhibition and the whimsy of the Kids Magic Show.



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