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NEWS FROM THE WABASH & ERIE CANAL • DELPHI, INDIANA December 2023



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Exploring Trails Together

Last weekend, we hosted the traditional Day After Christmas Walk, and what a day it was!

A Merry Christmas for All



Earlier this month Canal Park held its merriest event of the year: Christmas at the Canal. Hundreds of visitors enjoyed a variety of options, from shopping to enjoying Indiana history! The weather was quite pleasant and allowed guests to stroll throughout the park, including stops throughout the Pioneer Village. Above we can see a young visitor greeting Santa Claus in the Kuns Cabin.



With dozens of eager walkers, guides David McCain and Carl Seese had to split into two separate groups to accommodate everyone!



Both groups stayed close to Canal Park and the Red Bridge Settlement. David highlighted much of the natural wonder of the trails, pointing out notable plant and animal inhabitants of the canal's ecosystem.



Carl shared the historical significance of Canal Park landmarks, including the restored Leiters Ford Railroad Depot and the replica guard lock gates on the south end of the park.



Our 4,300 square foot reception hall was filled with vendors and all sorts of handmade goodies. Crafters came to us from surrounding counties and as far as Indianapolis. While many visitors checked off their shopping lists, there was also delicious lunch served by ALLBQ's.





At the end of the walk, all groups converged back at the Interpretive Center for hot cocoa, coffee, and tea. This portion of the day was perhaps most popular with the younger hikers, but even the older crowd enjoyed the chance to rest and chat about the fun experiences of the day.

We are grateful to David and Carl for leading groups on this walk, because this event encapsulates much of what we strive for: education, recreation, and a chance to bring the community together. Be on the lookout for future nature walks coming up in 2024!

VOLUNTEER
TODAY!

More Canal Resources

Did you know the **Canal Society of Indiana** is a treasure trove for all things related to Indiana's marvelous canal history?

If you haven't already visited, be sure to [check out their website at this link!](#) In addition to a collection of helpful maps and links, you'll find biographies of notable

In the Pioneer Village, there were demonstrations and activities in all the historic cabins. One popular destination for children was the Carpenter's Shop, where volunteer John Aebi was spinning toys on the lathe and handing them out for free.



Not only was the Pioneer Village bustling, as we see with Martin Mears above, but the interactive canal museum and the Reed Case House were open to the public **free of charge**. This meant that every visitor could spend a day immersing themselves in Indiana history and making precious Christmas memories.

canal figures and an astonishing index of their past newsletters and tours. These all contain a wealth of history for both amateur and seasoned researchers!



They also host a variety of educational events and even multi-day tours that highlight different segments of state history. Last fall they hosted a tour through Fountain, Parke, and Vigo Counties, and next fall they will be traveling through Paulding, Ohio to explore the canal story in the Buckeye State.

If you're interested in learning more about the Canal Society of Indiana or becoming a member, be sure to email president Bob Schmidt: indcanal@aol.com.

Did you know...?



You can hold your wedding, corporate meeting, or birthday celebration at the Canal Center?



As always, we have to credit the amazing volunteers who made this festival possible. We also wish to thank our 2023 festival sponsor, Horizon Veterinary Service, for helping make our big events a reality this year with their generosity!

Memberships for 2024

Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal is excited to celebrate its **50th Anniversary** in 2024, and we want to invite you to join us as a canal supporter for the year!



Reflecting on the past 50 years, it is amazing what has been accomplished and the stories that have been saved through the efforts of this resourceful and brilliant group. To quote historian and author Tim Harford: "To lose our grip on the past, we just need to stop paying attention." Preservation work is not for the faint of heart, and it carries a cost, but it is a duty to carry on the



We offer a variety of options for each different type of event. We offer free wifi and can accommodate up to 300 guests!

[Save your date today!](#)



Thanks to Our Business Supporters!

We are fortunate to have many generous businesses in the community who place great value on preservation, education, and recreation.

If you have need of any services offered by the businesses below, we strongly recommend you reach out to them! They are all wonderful organizations who care about the community they serve!

Festival Sponsors (\$1000)

- *Horizon Veterinary Service*

Bronze Supporters (\$500)

- *Camflo*
- *Carroll-White REMC*
- *Indiana Packers*
- *H&R Block*

stories of the past for future generations to enjoy and learn.

Help us continue in those efforts to save Indiana's incredible canal story to share with all our visitors by becoming a supporter of the Canal! We have a variety of giving levels to match your budget, and we've also got some special gifts in store!



HOGGEE Level (donations under \$149): You'll receive a recognition letter as a Canal supporter and a free postcard set with Wabash & Erie Canal Park photos.

STEERSMAN Level (donations \$150-\$299): You'll receive the above gifts PLUS free museum entry for 2024 for yourself and three guests. Note: these guests can be any three people you bring with you and can change from visit to visit!

LOCKMASTER Level (donations \$300-\$467): You'll receive the above gifts PLUS free Case House entry for yourself and three guests in 2024. In addition, you will receive a free T-shirt, and a free one-night stay in the Lockmaster's Airbnb cabin! The cabin stay will depend on availability, but we can arrange those details when you're ready for your rustic cabin experience.

468 MILE CLUB Level (donations \$468+): You'll receive the above gifts PLUS a free hat, four free canal boat tickets, and a VIP tour of Canal Park with executive director Mike Tetrault with all-access to the historic buildings. This elite level of membership can also be arranged with automatic \$39 monthly giving.

There are also annual giving levels for corporate sponsors, and if your business might be interested in partnering with us, we would love to hear from you. Please send a message to director@canalcenter.org and we'll get the ball rolling!

We will be mailing out letters soon, and if you'd like to be on our mailing list please reply to this email with your mailing address and we will put you on the list!

Community Supporters

(\$100+)

- *Brick & Mortar Pub*
- *Collisions Unlimited*
- *D-K Construction*
- *Deiwert Insurance*
- *Fieldings Jewelry & Time*
- *Helms Lawn Specialists, Inc*
- *Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance*
- *Pizza Hut Delphi*
- *Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette*

If you'd like to add your business to this list, please email: director@canalcenter.org for information about sponsorships.



For a complete list of activities please visit us at www.wabashanderiecanal.org

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If you would like to donate today, you can do so conveniently and securely online through our online giving platform. [Click here to go directly to that portal.](#) or you can also point your smartphone camera at the QR code below and follow the link to get there.



Outside of Delphi there is no other site where you can experience the engineering marvel of the Wabash & Erie Canal so completely, and it is only possible because our generous community sees the value in preserving this story. Please help us continue our mission of **preservation, education, and recreation** as you're able this holiday season. And keep your eyes open for 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2024!

Purdue's Canal Connections



When most people think of our region of Indiana, the first institution to come to mind is Purdue University. And for good reason! Purdue is a driver of innovation, industry, engineering, and it brings untold numbers of new people and businesses to our part of the state. There is also the pride of Purdue's sporting legacy, including their current dominance in college basketball. We won't talk about how things went with football this year. But did you know that John Purdue, namesake of the school, has strong canal connections?



John Purdue was born to Charles and Mary Short Purdue in Pennsylvania, and he was the only boy among eight sisters. Sometime after 1813, the Purdue family moved to Ohio, where John was apprenticed to a merchant in Adelphi.

He learned much and succeeded in business, eventually teaming up with Moses Fowler and purchasing land in remote Lafayette, Indiana in 1838-1839. Back then Lafayette was far less developed, although it had a promising future with an incoming canal being built through the Wabash Valley.

Just a few years later in 1844, Fowler and Purdue ended their business partnership, but they both went on to achieve great wealth through their respective dealings.

Purdue became a multi-millionaire in the dry goods wholesale business, and this business was facilitated by having a superhighway pass right through his city. In 1845, he built the first business block in Lafayette, part of which still stands today! At the time, it was said to be the largest brick business house west of New York City, and it was located just near the canal itself.



Over time, John Purdue evolved his business to match changing market conditions and infrastructure, and he helped finance education and even a toll bridge across the Wabash River. He donated \$150,000 towards founding a land grant school in the Lafayette area, and one of the conditions of that donation was attaching his name to the school.

So the next time you walk around Purdue's beautiful campus or watch a Purdue game, you can think back to the Canal Era tycoon John Purdue who helped transform Lafayette with the help of the Wabash & Erie Canal!

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Delphi Properties, LLC

111 East Main Street, Delphi, IN 46923
Telephone: 765-564-2165/Fax: 765-564-4919

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