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NEWS FROM THE WABASH & ERIE CANAL • DELPHI, INDIANA July 2024



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IN THIS ISSUE

- [Canal Days Recap](#)
- [TCHA Presentation](#)
- [Trails Team Callout](#)
- [Historic Classes](#)
- [WRHCC Meeting](#)
- [Canal Archaeology](#)
- [Spy Run Bluff](#)

Lafayette Canal History

Wabash & Erie Canal Park is excited to partner with the Tippecanoe County Historical

A Super Canal Days Festival

This summer has been bustling, but Canal Days 2024 marked a high point in the season! If you were unable to attend Canal Days this year, let us share a brief recap. Thanks to Autumn Tetrault for sharing her photos from the event in this article.



The *Delphi* was busy from start to end, with seven canal voyages booked solid throughout the day. It is a special treat to see new visitors discover the wonder and beauty of the canal by riding aboard our replica packet boat, and this year brought hundreds of passengers to experience a canal cruise. Many thanks to our intrepid crew for keeping the dock departures on a tight schedule!

Association on August 8 to present "Lafayette's Hidden Highway," an overview of the canal story in the Lafayette area.



Mike Tetrault, Canal Park's executive director, will share about how the Wabash & Erie Canal transformed Lafayette in its early days, setting the stage for the city to become a hub of industry and commerce in Indiana.



The presentation will begin at 6PM and last approximately an hour, including some time for questions and answers. This event is free to the public and will take place at the TCHA History Center at 522 Columbia Street in downtown Lafayette.



Our friends at TCHA will also be livestreaming the presentation through their channels. You can find more



The Pioneer Village was buzzing with activity throughout the day, and a huge part of that was from the amazing vendors and food options available. The French/Lawson family served up delectable treats in the Summer Kitchen, and guests enjoyed a variety of offerings throughout the village.



A special thanks to volunteers like organ grinder Tom Baugues, pictured above, who created experiences for all ages to enjoy. It takes dozens and dozens of incredible volunteers to host Canal Days, and we are so fortunate they share their talents and time with visitors far and wide!



The Hoosier Leather Guild was quite busy in their booth as visitors

details at the [link to this Facebook event](#). Please join us and learn more about the canal that established Lafayette as an industrial and commercial powerhouse!

Calling All Trails Lovers

Do you use and enjoy the historic trails around Delphi? Do you enjoy volunteering and working outdoors? If so, Wabash & Erie Canal Park could use **your** help!



We are on the lookout for an individual who can take on the role of Trails Team Leader. This individual would help oversee trail maintenance and upkeep in conjunction with Canal staff, and we would love to hear from you!

Interested individuals can email:

director@canalcenter.org, or you can call our office: 765-564-2870.

Since the inception of Delphi's Historic Trails, volunteer efforts have gone a long way to building something special for Delphi's residents and visitors. Help us keep this tradition continue strong!

[VOLUNTEER TODAY!](#)

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tried their hand at leather stamping. The best part of visiting Wabash & Erie Canal Park is experiencing hands-on Indiana history, and we believe history is best learned through immersive experiences!



The Loom House was a popular destination throughout the day as guests learned about textiles and even tried weaving on historic looms. The Wabash Weavers Guild has done amazing work this season to interpret 19th century history for guests, including new interpretive panels and even a dye garden!



It was a special honor to welcome the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma to Canal Days, and Jared Nally hosted an informative and interactive exhibit to share about traditions of the Miami and the story of Miami removal in 1846. We hope to interpret more of this history for visitors in the [Delphi Bayou exhibits](#), along with modern efforts to preserve and share Miami culture.

Indiana Fun

Wabash & Erie Canal Park is a proud founding member of INfields, a new nonprofit organization promoting rural tourism in our part of the state. You'll want to check it out: [visit INfields.org today!](https://infields.org)



Please be sure to [sign up for the email newsletter](#) so you can keep up to date with all the happenings of member organizations. You can also follow INfields on social media! Keep up to date with opportunities for enriching and fun experiences for all ages and interests.

WRHCC at the Canal

The Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission (WRHCC) held its July meeting in Carroll County, and it was a smashing success.



The WRHCC is a body appointed by county commissioners among all Indiana counties that border the Wabash River. This body is



We wish to thank our event sponsors, [Duke Energy](#) and [Mustangs to Fear](#), for their support of this wonderful festival. Community support and volunteers truly make the difference in sharing Indiana's canal history with visitors from across the country!

Historic Classes: Fall 2024



Historic classes are set for fall 2024, and we couldn't be more excited about it! We are offering some favorites from the catalog along with some new twists to appeal to newcomers and veterans alike!

funded by royalties from oil and gas wells on the Wabash River, primarily in the southern parts of Indiana. The WRHCC uses these funds to sponsor activities that promote and preserve the Wabash River, along with providing grants for cultural projects and trails.



For the July meeting, the team had to contend with the remnants of Hurricane Beryl, but our intrepid canal boat crew was able to run the boats on time! We cannot say for certain that this is the *first* instance of an Indiana canal boat navigating a hurricane remnant, but we are definitely among elite company!



In addition to the canal boat ride, the WRHCC enjoyed a narrated tour through the Canal Museum with David McCain, plus a lunch from Stacks Barbeque and a productive meeting hosted in our conference center.

It is a privilege and honor to host such events.

Commissioners from across the state commented that the day's program was enlightening and deepened the appreciation for how the



You can visit our [Classes page on the website](#) to get class listings and register for your top choices today. Sessions will run from August through October, and they include classes like broom making, basket making, wool felting, coopering, hearth cooking, weaving, and more!



For instance, the hearth cooking class with Becky Crabb will feature new recipes, and the weaving classes will incorporate new creations like table runners. If you have visited the Pioneer Village and thought, "Maybe I could do that," these classes are for you!

You can register online at the linked page above, and you may also download a mailable form on the same page. We look forward to seeing you at the canal this fall!

Archaeology at the Park

If you happen to be passing through Wabash & Erie Canal Park in the next week or two, you might notice a special guest we are delighted to have in the neighborhood!

Wabash River has shaped Indiana's history across centuries.

We wish to thank the many supporters of Canal Park who enable us to share this vital history through group tours and also through new exhibits like the [Delphi Bayou project!](#)

Upcoming Events

Here are some ways you can experience Wabash & Erie Canal Park for yourself in the coming weeks!

August 3: Kids' Day, 1-4PM. Consider this like a "regular" Canal Season Saturday, but with an amped-up assortment of activities for kids to enjoy! Be sure to visit the park and let your young explorers discover something new and engaging!

August 8, 6-7PM. "Lafayette's Hidden Highway," hosted by the Tippecanoe County Historical Association. Learn about Lafayette's canal history at this free event at the History Center at 522 Columbia Street in historic downtown Lafayette.

August 10, 17, 24, and 31: Canal Season Saturday, 1-4PM. Ride the canal boat, explore the Pioneer Village, and tour the museum and the Reed Case House! It's the full canal experience all in one place.

August 31: Broom Making Class, 9AM-1PM. Make a whisk broom under the direction of Bev Larson, an expert broom-maker! You will get to take home your creation



Dr. Christopher Moore, archaeologist with the University of Indianapolis, is conducting a survey of the field in Canal Park where new exhibits will be installed in the coming years. Thanks to Dr. Moore's efforts and generosity, this survey will provide matching funds towards the completion of the Delphi Bayou project.



This type of survey is crucial to ensure that new construction won't damage or destroy any artifacts that may be present on the exhibit site. According to Dr. Moore, there are items of interest worth exploring, including a scatter of brick and limestone remnants, plus an assortment of other items, as shown by the small, bright-colored flags in the field.

and have a great time learning. You can visit [the class webpage for more details](#), and you can even register online!

Did you know...?



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



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 Sponsors!

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



Dr. Moore is a busy man indeed. He is helping with this survey at Canal Park, but he is also completing a survey of the Wabash & Erie Canal route from Carrollton Bridge north of Delphi to Logansport in Cass County. You can also [read about these explorations from local news outlets](#), and we can't wait to see what this archaeological fact-finding will turn up!

Spy Run Bluff

Note: This series originally aired on WBOI FM public radio of Northeast Indiana. Thanks to Tom Castaldi for allowing and facilitating its reproduction.



Spy Run Extended, the Fort Wayne roadway that follows the Saint Joseph River to Johnny Appleseed Park, was not always a level, winding and pleasant roadway. In the 1830s, it was a bluff overlooking the river and in the path of a channel being dug to feed water to the Wabash & Erie Canal's main line.

recommend you reach out to them! They are all wonderful organizations who care about the community they serve!

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- *The Andersons, Inc.*
- *Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette*

If you'd like to add your business to this list, please email:
director@canalcenter.org and check out the [Sponsorships Brochure on our website.](#)



Image from interactive canal map at indcanal.org

Think of the job it would be for bulldozers and road graders to move a bluff as big as a hill out of the way. In 1833, they did it with shovels, mules, picks and buckets.

Hundreds of immigrants from Ireland came to this country taking on the job of cutting through bluffs, swamps, trees, roots and bogs. Grit, beasts, and hand tools led the way cutting through a vast wilderness from Fort Wayne to the Ohio River at Evansville.



The canal had its day in the sun for a few short years, but it began drying up after the railroads made tracks alongside the waterway in the mid 1850's.

Spy Run's bluff was just one obstacle, hundreds of tons of earth, that had to be moved without the help of machines. The work was done by hand and with sheer determination.



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

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A modern view of Spy Run Extended. Note the raised elevation on both sides of the road where the canal channel cut through.

Now power lines hang gracefully from towers standing on the towpath where mules once pulled on long towlines. Spy Run Extended serves fast moving car and bus traffic where once passengers and cargo boats moved slowly along, because hard working canal diggers shoveled away a bluff that stood in the way.

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