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NEWS FROM WABASH & ERIE CANAL PARK
Presented by Delphi Properties LLC

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July 2025

Canal Days Recap

Gator Has Arrived!

Delphi PD Saves the Day

A GRAND FESTIVAL FOR ALL





Earlier this month, Wabash & Erie Canal Park hosted its largest annual festival, Canal Days! It was a fantastic time for visitors, volunteers, and even for the special guest mules. Check out the photos above from Autumn Tetrault that highlight some of the happenings from the day!





We are indebted to all the people and animals that made the festival such a success, and we would be hard-pressed to list them all here. The Delphi High School Band played a selection of patriotic favorites, plus the Bum Ditty Barn Dance played some instrumental classics of the 1800s! Tom Baugues showcased his new handmade street organ, to the delight of children and adults. Joe Newlin treated visitors to the Reed Case House with soothing tunes on the pump organ, too!

Joe Reed visited all the way from Northwest Indiana to teach young pioneers how to make rope, and Jared Nally from the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma shared Myaamia culture and history with visitors throughout the festival. Local Percheron mammoth mollies, Hedy and Ada, led visitors in the mule-drawn wagon as their humans Kris and Bruce shared about the role of mules and towing animals on the Wabash & Erie Canal.

Of course, this isn't even mentioning the many vendors, the incredible volunteers who shared a host of historic trades and crafts throughout

the park! Even with the sweltering weather, we were proud to welcome hundreds of visitors from near and far to learn about Indiana's canal heritage and have an unforgettable history experience!



And of course, we are so pleased to have the support of some incredible festival sponsors this year, Duke Energy and the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission. Without their help, we wouldn't be able to roll out the red carpet and offer such a wide variety of activities and attraction for the community!

We Got A Gator!

Thanks to the support of donors of all contribution levels, Canal Park has the vehicle we need to cover a lot of ground as we care for this special place. The expense was unexpected, but the generosity of the community helped bridge the gap to bring the vehicle home! Our Grounds and Maintenance Manager, Carlos, is grateful to have a way to scoot around miles of trails efficiently.

A special thanks also goes to Alex Ayres, who has been scouring auctions and online marketplaces to locate the ideal vehicle for the past months. When the right vehicle appeared, Mr. Ayres drove across the state to inspect and pick up the Gator. He then proceeded to service the vehicle, deliver it Canal Park, and all of these services he handled completely free of charge! It is a special gift to see such a generous spirit of volunteerism, regardless of age--but it's quite impressive for an enterprising teenager like Alex!

Delphi PD Saves the Day



On July 19, Canal Park was caught in the middle of some huge rainstorms, but a huge thanks to Officer Wilson with the Delphi Police Department for his assistance to save the day. Our intrepid boat, crew, and passengers were caught in the downpour, encountered engine troubles, and they were forced to dock at the boathouse. This meant we had a couple dozen stranded people a ways up the canal from the main park. Officer Wilson happened to be on the premises and volunteered to help ferry passengers back! We are thankful he was there to lend a hand, and some lucky visitors enjoyed a bonus ride in the squad car. We're proud to offer hospitality and service to visitors near and far, and it's only possible because we have a community that cares!

Welcome, EmmaRose!



A hearty welcome to Wabash & Erie Canal Park's summer intern, EmmaRose Milburn! EmmaRose is entering her senior year at Purdue University majoring in History and Anthropology. She is pursuing a Museum Studies certificate, and she will be working in our Archives to handle incoming donated artifacts and documents. In addition, she will work on curating some of the museum's rotating exhibits and updating our online archival resources. After graduation, she would like to pursue a career working in museums and sharing history.

And one of the best parts: EmmaRose grew up in Delphi! She said, "I always liked going to the Canal for field trips, so I wanted to do more at

the Canal while I'm earning more knowledge of and experience in museums."

It's exciting to see the generational impact of historic preservation efforts! More information about the Archives and donating canal-related history books, historic artifacts, or documents can be found on our website: <https://wabashanderiecanal.org/archives/>

Inns and Outs

From Allen County Historian Tom Castaldi's series, "Canal Notes"

In the mid-1800s, it took a Wabash & Erie Canal boat days to go the 100 or so miles from Fort Wayne to Delphi. Packet passengers could overnight on the boat since canal travel was a four-mile an hour leisurely made trip. Once travelers passed a town, there were precious few inns along the way for dining or sleeping.

Each inn has its unique story to tell, in the days when the population was sparse and accommodations were austere. West of Peru is a two-story house, the only one of its size between Fort Wayne and Logansport when it was operation along the old canal. Near Delphi, Samuel Grimes built an inn he never opened later known to history as "Grimes Folly." Just north of Delphi at the Carrollton Bridge, the Mentzer Tavern stood astride the singular location where the Wabash & Erie Canal crossed the mighty Wabash River.



Between Fort Wayne and Roanoke, the Vermilyea House stood as a veritable palace and can be seen to this day from Redding Road. From the old canal landing, passengers walked up to the house to secure food and lodging. Built in 1839 by Jesse and Maria McTaggart Vermilyea, they opened their mansion to travelers during the years he served as either: canal surveyor, road builder, bank director, mill operator or postmaster.



Lambdin P. Milligan's house, west of Huntington, across U.S. 24 from Victory Noll was another stop for canal travelers. Condemned to hang for treason by a military tribunal, Milligan appealed his post-Civil War era case to the U.S. Supreme Court resulting in a landmark decision. His victory ensures that civilians may not be tried by military court martial while civil courts are open and protects your rights to this day. Back then, it saved Milligan's neck from being stretched.

Many of these old structures can be seen in quiet out of the way places where little attention is paid to a colorful canal past. Yet in their day, they were eagerly awaited respites of Hoosier hospitality and comfort by travelers in and out of a wilderness country.

Need More Canal History?

The **Canal Society of Indiana** is an amazing resource for all things related to the stories of Indiana's canals. On their website, you can explore historic canal routes laid over modern maps, you can read numerous biographies, and you can browse a wealth of research materials that are top-notch and engaging! Click the button below to visit, and be sure to sign up for a membership!

[Canal Society of Indiana Homepage](#)

Camp at the Canal

Enjoy a peaceful getaway while also getting hands-on with Indiana history! We have options for all camping needs, including rustic cabins if you would rather not bring your own shelter!

Winter camping is available for self-contained RV's, or you can book your future adventure today!

[Reserve Now](#)

Plan an Event with Us!

You can hold your wedding, birthday celebration, corporate meeting, or family reunion in the beautiful reception hall at the Canal Center in Delphi! We offer a variety of options to custom-fit your needs, and we can accommodate events up to 300 guests. Click below to get started with your event!

[Book Now](#)

Volunteer with Us

Join a group of incredible people doing amazing things! There is a place for you, whatever your skills and interests might be.

Volunteer Today

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