

Rolla, Missouri Special Events & Celebrations

The "small town" of Rolla, Missouri hosts a number of celebrations and social events that add to the community atmosphere. From University of Missouri-Rolla's St. Patrick's Day celebration to the Route 66 Summerfest (with its beginnings downtown) to the Central Missouri Regional Fair, Rolla boasts a variety of special activities to entertain the whole family.

These special events begin in March with a celebration of all things green. Because St. Patrick is known as the patron saint of engineers, and UMR is first and foremost an engineering school, the residents of Rolla hold a number of events to honor St. Patty's Day. Adults and children alike participate in a ceremonial street-painting, where 12 blocks downtown are painted a lovely green hue. Then, Saturday morning's main event features a fabulous parade, complete with original floats made by local organizations. These events are just a couple of the things your whole family can do to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. But if you plan to attend the festivities, make sure you wear green!

What you wear to the Route 66 Summerfest depends on what you have chosen to participate in. Summerfest takes place the first weekend in June, offering a wide variety of events and vendors (most of which are downtown Rolla) that appeal to virtually every age group. The morning begins with a number of sporting events held in a variety of locations, like a bike ride to the river and a 5K run. Then, there are other events held downtown. For example, the sand volleyball tournament is played on a sand court that is put together right next to the band-shell! Throughout the day, kids can play in the spray from a fire truck, dig in the mound of sand brought in just for them, or bounce in any number of inflatable toys. Vendors offer a variety of homemade crafts as well as tasty delicacies (last year we tried a deep-fried oreo), and the night finishes with a car cruise-in and a free concert in the band-shell. Route 66 Summerfest truly offers something for every member of the family.

Lion's Club Carnival also offers family-style entertainment. The carnival is held on and around July 4th, with a number of rides available for the whole family. Certain afternoons and evenings offer wristbands for the rides, and there are always plenty of booths to check out and drawings to win. Last year, a 2007 Solstice was raffled off with the drawing held right after the fireworks... speaking of fireworks, the fair culminates in a splendid fireworks show. Oh, and did I mention that admission to the carnival is free? Although you do have to pay for any "extras" at the carnival, there is no charge at the gate. Check out the following link for pictures of last year's carnival:
<http://www.rollalions.org/~lions/carnival/>

Rolla also hosts the Central Missouri Regional Fair, which includes everything from livestock shows and auctions to rides for the kids. One entire building is dedicated to original exhibits, both from local 4-H clubs and local residents. The first night of the fair, the Central MO Regional Fair Queen is crowned, and she presides over the rest of the festivities. Other activities include a lip-sync competition, live concerts, and numerous other games.

As the weather cools, Rolla residents can attend an Arts & Crafts Festival held in October. Located downtown, the homemade goodies at Arts & Crafts span many blocks, lining both sides of the street. Last year's festival featured such items as hand-carved marshmallow guns, hand-painted magnets customized with a name of your choice, and much more.

Rolla wraps up the year with a Christmas parade in early December. So, lest anyone try to convince you that there is nothing to do in a small town, remember all of the events happening every year in Rolla, Missouri!