



WELLS COUNTY
I N D I A N A



V I S I T

W E L L S C O U N T Y

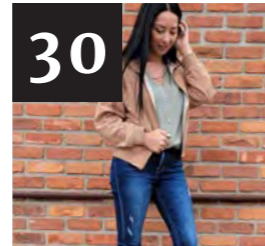
www.visitwellscounty.com

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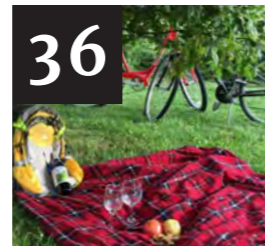
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visit us at: www.visitwellscounty.com

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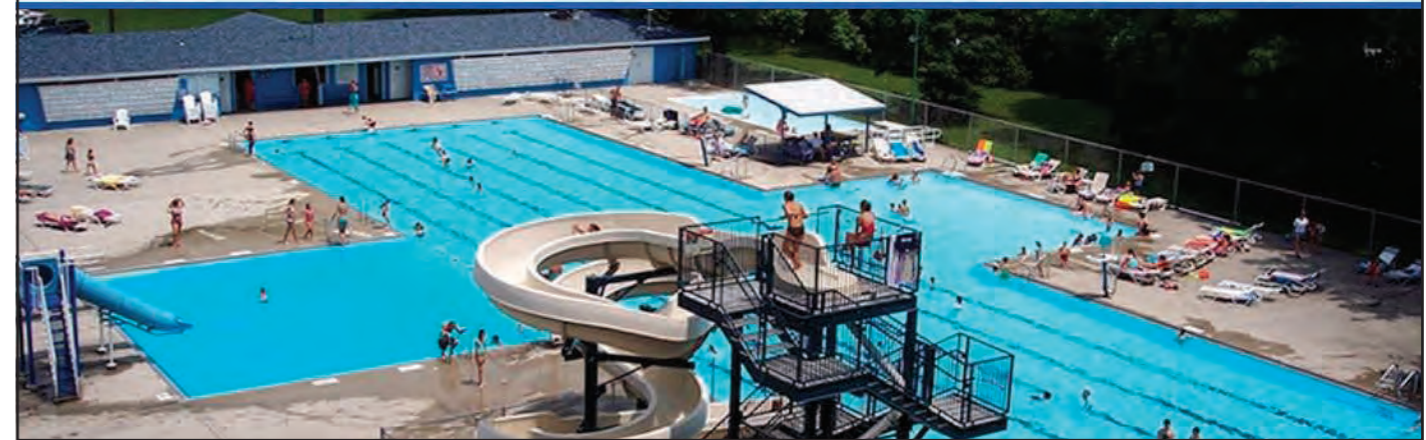
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PLACES TO BE

MR. WEBSTER DEFINES "RECREATION" AS "ACTIVITY DONE FOR ENJOYMENT WHEN ONE IS NOT WORKING." HE LISTS SOME SYNONYMS INCLUDING "FROLICKING," "FUN" AND "SPORT." WELLS COUNTY HAS A LONG LIST OF PEOPLE AND PLACES DEDICATED TO THOSE VERY PURSUITS.

A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE PLACES

ARCHBOLD-WILSON PARK

CAYLOR-NICKEL FAMILY FOUNDATION YMCA

GREEN VALLEY GOLF CLUB

KUNKEL LAKE

MARKLE SWIMMING POOL

OUABACHE STATE PARK FIRE TOWER

TIMBER RIDGE GOLF COURSE

WASHINGTON PARK

WELLS COMMUNITY POOL

WHICKER PARK INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND

For a complete listing visit: www.visitwellscounty.com



PHOTO BY: INDIANA DNR



PHOTO BY: SATWIK KRISHNAN



RIVER GREENWAY TRAIL



WABASH RIVER

Ouabache State Park’s mission is, indeed, to provide recreational opportunities for its visitors. Before it was named a state park, it was the Ouabache State Recreation Area. (It originally opened as the Wells County State Forest and Game Preserve. The park’s iconic buildings were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s.)

There are more than 20 miles of trails in the 1,104-acre park, winding through the native forests and a meadow. The trails will take you around the 20-acre bison pen where a small herd has populated the park since at least the early 1930s. The park’s landmark fire tower was refurbished by local community efforts in 2018. You can climb its 100 steps to take in a wide view of the bison pen and the park.

The park’s trails connect to Bluffton’s Rivergreenway. This will allow park visitors to bike or ride into downtown Bluffton’s events, shops and eateries. The Interurban Trail can then take you as far north as Bluffton’s Walmart, Lowe’s and a Walgreens.

Kunkel Lake, located pretty much in the center of the park, is stocked with game fish; canoe, john boat and paddle boat rentals are available. Kunkel Lake Beach features 215 feet of waterline and more than 2,500 tons of sand.

The park’s staff provide naturalist programs and activities during the summer; the park also offers playground equipment, picnic shelters, and tennis/basketball courts.

Like all communities, Bluffton has a Parks and Recreation Department. But unlike most, Bluffton’s department has won awards too numerous to mention, including being designated as the best parks and recreation department in the state.

The city operates a dozen parks that include miles of trails, with the Rivergreenway — a 2 1/4-mile paved trail along the Wabash River — perhaps being the most popular.

Also just north of White Bride is the Reforestation/Wetlands Project, a 90-acre nature preserve with a 2

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1/2 mile walking trail through the native grasses, shrubs and trees.

The city’s parks offer opportunities for a wide variety of true recreation — from tennis and pickleball courts, to exercise stations, a splash pad, a dog park, both open and enclosed pavilions, quiet places for meditation and of course, ball diamonds and playgrounds. A complete rundown can be found at: www.blufftonindiana.net/parks-department

The Well Community Swimming Pool is also a favorite spot for summer recreation and of course, open to all visitors.

Additionally, Bluffton’s newest playground is the all-inclusive Whicker Park, located on the south side behind Bi-County Services. The award-winning park is specially designed for handicapped children but has proven to also be a favorite for children of all ages and abilities.

The small town of Ossian in northern Wells County boasts that it provides 1,189 square feet of park space for every resident. Those opportunities include a splash pad, a dog park, 1 1/4 mile walking trail, a fishing pond, sledding hill and a disc golf course. The Archbold Wilson Park Pavilion also hosts some summer concerts and yoga classes. For more information visit: www.ossianin.com/parks-and-recreation

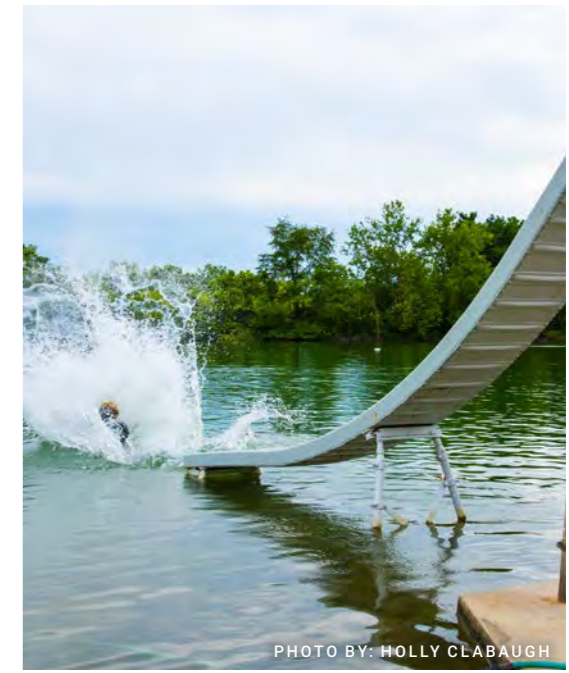
On Wells County’s western edge is the small town of Markle, with the 30-plus-acre Markle Fish and Game Preserve on its western edge. But don’t let the name fool you. It’s main attraction is the “Markle Park Swimming Pool,” which is actually a spring-fed reclaimed gravel pit. The “pool” has a large beach area as well as a spacious grassed area perfect for family gatherings and picnics, with facilities on site. While there are two huge slides in the swimming area, the park also features disc golf, playground equipment and walking trails.

In between Bluffton and Markle on State Road 116 is an ACRES Land Preserve. This northeast Indiana non-profit restores donated land to its natural state, many of which have walking trails ... such as

this one: The “Acres Along the Wabash.”

The county’s other recreational opportunities include a YMCA, which offers an indoor pool and sauna, a wide array of exercise equipment and a gym for the winter pickleball and basketball enthusiasts. Another indoor sport — ax throwing — can be pursued at Bluffton’s Busted Haft.

Bluffton also supports two golf courses: the 9-hole Green Valley and the 18-hole Timber Ridge golf course.



YEAR ROUND



WELLS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

WELLS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

200 W. Washington St. Bluffton

BUSTED HAFT

202 W. Market St. Bluffton

WELLS COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

420 W. Market St. Bluffton

CAYLOR NICKEL FOUNDATION FAMILY YMCA

550 W Dustman Rd, Bluffton

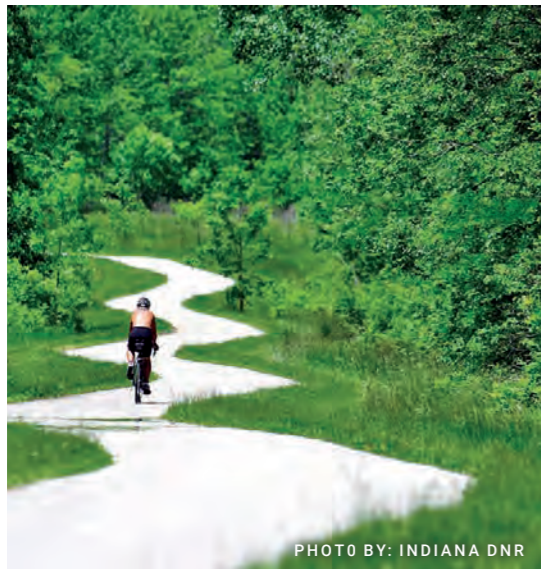


PHOTO BY: INDIANA DNR

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Green Valley Golf Course
For more information Call 260-824-4510
2635 East 150 North Bluffton 2330 E 250 N, Bluffton

DISC GOLF

Ossian: Archbold Wilson Park 3398 E 900 N, Ossian, IN 46777
Markle: Markle Fish & Game Park Club 260 S. Clark St, Markle

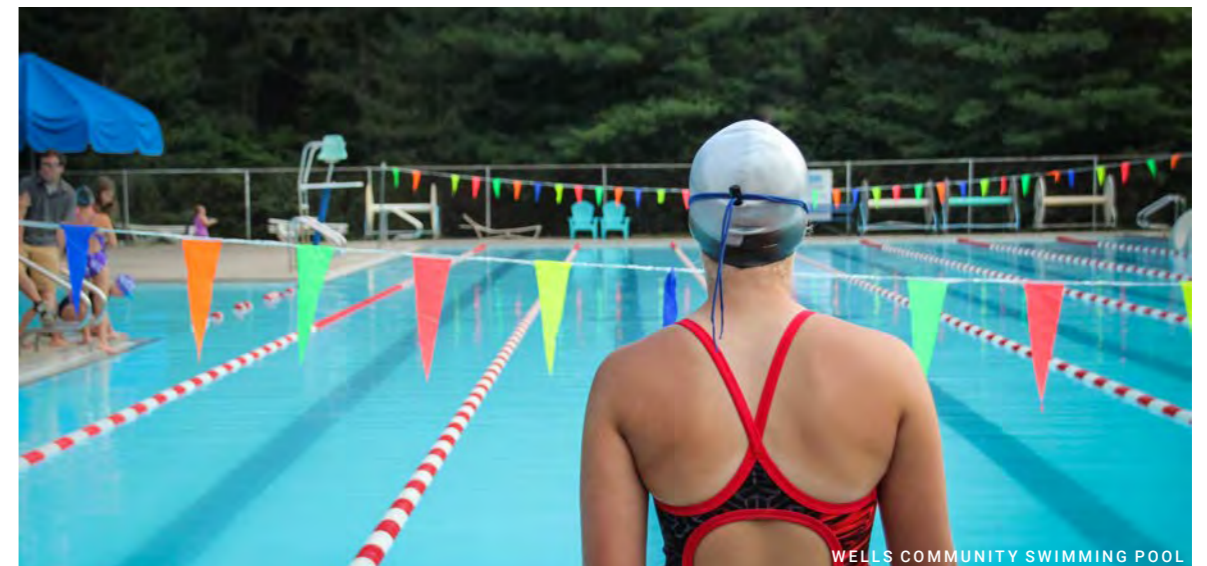
SPLASH PADS

Bluffton:
-304 E Washington Street at Pickett's Run Park, Bluffton
-925 W Silver Street at Roush Park, Bluffton

Ossian:
705 Park Drive at Melching Park, Ossian

SWIM

Wells Community Pool: 310 W Spring Street, Bluffton
Markle Swimming Pool: 100 Park Drive, Markle
Kunkle Lake Beach Front: Ouabache State Park



THINGS TO DO

IF MUSIC MOVES YOU, SUMMERTIME IN WELLS COUNTY IS THE PLACE TO BE. THREE SEPARATE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES — ALL FREE! — POPULATE THE WARM MONTHS, EACH IN THEIR OWN OUTDOOR VENUE.

A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS TO DO

ARCHBOLD WILSON PARK CONCERT SERIES

AXE THROWING AT BUSTED HAFT

BLUFFTON FREE STREET FAIR

CAR SHOWS

CREATIVE ARTS COUNCIL PERFORMANCES

DISC GOLF

GOLFING

KAYAKING & CANOING

KEHOE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

MUSIC ON THE PLAZA

PARLOR CITY MARKET

WELLS COUNTY TRAILS HIKING & BIKING

YOGA IN THE PARK

For a complete listing visit: www.visitwellscounty.com





KEHOE PARK

This natural amphitheater on the “banks of the Wabash” hosts a series of summer concerts and events. The highlight for 2022 is hard to pick out. Take your choice among many offerings. Tribute bands headline four Friday evening concerts, saluting such artists as Aerosmith, Fleetwood Mac, Elton John and the Beach Boys. Each event features a variety of food trucks, including the availability of “adult beverages” — beer, wine and popular wine slushies.

Two Sunday evening concerts will be preceded by cruise-ins — one of the classic car variety, the other has a Jeep theme. Cruisers will indeed cruise on a designated route before returning to Kehoe Park. Bluffton’s Grand Sweet Shop provides some tasty treat options during the Sunday events.

One of the most popular events at Kehoe each summer is a gospel sing that is now called the Community Worship Celebration. More information on the groups and events is on the Bluffton Park & Recreation Facebook page: facebook.com/bluffton.parks/events

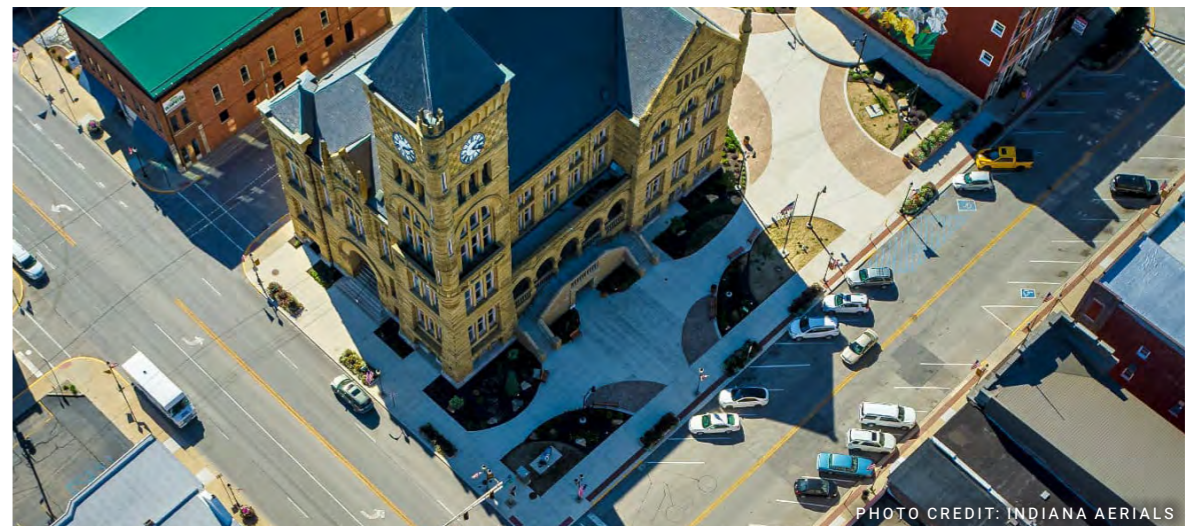
And don’t forget, they’re all free admission.



ARCHBOLD WILSON PARK PAVILION

Located just a few miles south of I-469, in Ossian, sits the new pavilion in the large 62-acre park. The Ossian Parks Department is launching their first full season of concerts, scheduled on the second Saturday of each month from June through October.

The concerts, which feature a variety of local and regional artists and bands, begin at 7 p.m. with food trucks opening an hour prior. ... and did we mention that these concerts are free?



PARLOR CITY PLAZA

In the heart of downtown Bluffton, the new Plaza surrounding Wells County’s iconic courthouse comes alive during the summer with a series of free concerts. These bands are typically more local and the setting is more intimate. Food and drink trucks are handy; bring your lawn chair or blanket and enjoy a weekend evening of FREE entertainment. For a listing of the featured bands and food trucks, visit Bluffton NOW!’s website: www.blufftonnow.org/downtown-events.

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There are several other private venues that cater to music lovers of all kinds, including Timber Ridge's Club 250. Gospel music has a special place the heart of Wells County. While the Gospel Barn is not held in an actual barn, it has earned a growing reputation for the nationally known groups that visit Bluffton. Check the events listings for dates from April through December.

If you'd rather move without the music (such as kayaking and hiking), there are a plethora of choices to keep you going. Move along the trails and the rivers at your own pace, or visit Bluffton for specific events organized by the Bluffton Kayak and Hiking Club. It's easy to keep up with them by joining their Facebook Group. Also for kayakers, the award-winning Bluffton Parks Department hosts the ever popular Wabash River Paddle on June 23rd: the Wabash River Paddles. Visit their website for more information.

And if you move faster than most people, several foot races draw annual crowds to the Parlor City — check the events calendar for the full list. The largest one bears that Bluffton moniker: The Parlor City Trot. You'll have a choice between a 1/2-marathon and a 10K race. If you want hype, inflatable arches, bands, noise, a medal, and a large goodie bag, this is not the race for you. But if you want Hoosier Hospitality and a simple, well-organized flat, fast and scenic race, you can enjoy tradition (now in its 48th year) on the streets and pathways of Bluffton and Ouabache State Park. Veteran runners say the course itself is the main attraction.

Another fun event has its limitations: the Chick Run is just for the "chicks." The annual event — set for June 16 this year — is a "race" that celebrates women of all ages. Of course there are prizes for the "speedy chicks," but also for the best costumes, oldest, youngest and maybe for the nicest chicks. Or maybe for just being there. You can walk or run the 5K course along the Wabash River since it's mainly a day of fun which includes music and refreshments afterwards.

Bluffton races have proven popular enough that a new one is being added for 2022: The "Super Hero 5K" will launch its initial race in July. Costumes will of course be a part of that mix with "super hero contests and challenges" along the way. Put it on your calendar to wander into Wells for this unique event on July 9.

And finally, if festivals and fairs move you, Ossian and Bluffton have their annual events, both in September.

Ossian Days is traditionally held the first weekend after Labor Day with parades, rides, local foods and contests. You'll want to inquire about "Bessie's Movement."

Bluffton's annual Free Street Fair is truly historic. Not only does it date back more than 100 years, but the city fathers got into a showdown with the Indiana governor back in the 1950s as to whether they could hold such a festival on the state's highways that went through Bluffton's downtown area. Spoiler alert: Bluffton won.

It's a festival of rides and games, of course, but the Street Fair adds a nightly parade, musical contests, and car shows to the mix. And what would a fair be like without a junk food alley, which features a number of local goodies, including such things as a ZUM stick. It all gets started on the third Tuesday after Labor Day.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

FORT WAYNE BALLET FIREFLY TOUR
 May 17th- 7:00 p.m. Kehoe Park (no ticket required)

CREATIVE ARTS COUNCIL
 Life Community Church Auditorium

BEAUTY & THE BEAST JR
 June 17th- 7:00 pm
 June 18th- 3:00 pm & 7:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS THEATER PRODUCTION
 December 2nd- 7:00 p.m.
 December 3rd- 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
 December 5th- 3:00 p.m.

For tickets visit www.wellscreativearts.com

PARLOR CITY FINE ARTS DAY
 September 10th at Parlor City Market - 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

ARTIST STUDIO TOUR
 Adams/Wells County, October 1st - 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Visit: Artistsstudiotour.com for participants and map

CLUB 250 EVENT CENTER
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PHOTO BY: WELLS COUNTY CREATIVE ARTS COUNCIL

GOSPEL BARN

April 9-6:00 p.m - The Perry's
 April 30th - 6:00 p.m. - The Lefevre Quartet
 May 7th - 6:00 p.m. - The Booth Brothers
 May 21st - 6:00 p.m. - Tribute Quartet
 June 11th - 6:00 p.m. - The Guardians Quarter
 July 23rd - 6:00 p.m. - The Isaacs
 August 20th - 4:00 p.m. - The Hoppers & BBQ Fest
 September 10th - 6:00 p.m. - Mark Trammell Quartet
 October 7th - 7:00 p.m. The Collingsworth Family
 December 3rd 4p.m.-The Gospel Barn Christmas Banquet with Great Vision

For tickets and more information visit:
www.thegospelbarnofbluffton.com

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June 17th- Fireball Matinee
 July 15th- Jailbreak
 August 19th- Jiggs Hendrixson
 September 16th- Rylie Lynn Band
 October 8th- Roustabout Band

For more information visit:
www.blufftonnow.org

BLUFFTON PARKS - KEHOE PARK
 Located at 300 N. Main St, Bluffton

June 24th- 8-10 p.m.
 Last Child Aerosmith Experience

June 26th 7-8:30 p.m.
 Community Worship Celebration

July 8th 8 -10 p.m.
 Fleetwood Gold

July 10-7-8:30 p.m.
 OK Boomer Band.

July 29 -8-10 p.m.
 Simply Elton

August 5th-8-10 p.m.
 Sail On (Beach Boys Tribute)

August 7th 7-8:30 p.m.
 Sugar Shot

For more information call 260-824-6069 or visit:
www.blufftonindana.net/parks-department

OSSIAN PARKS- ARCHBOLD WILSON PARK
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 Food and Drink available at 6 p.m.

June 11th- Hubie Ashcraft

July 11th- Night to Remember

August 13th- Jeff McRae

September 10th- To Be Determined

October 8th- Whoa Man

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June 11th- 8:00 a.m Race Starts

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BLUFFTON PARKS 5K CHICKS RUN

June 16th- 7:00 p.m., Pickett's Run Park

BLUFFTON PARKS WABASH RIVER PADDLE

June 23rd- 7:00 p.m.

Launch site at the corner of 201 and River Rd (White Bridge Park)

LIGHT THE NIGHT-LATE NIGHT BIKE RIDE

June 30th- 9:00 p.m. on the River Greenway

SUPER HERO 5K RACE & 1 MILE FUN RUN

July 9th- 8:30 a.m, Pickett's Run Park

PARLOR CITY 1/2 MARATHON 10K TROT

Septemeber 3rd- 9:00 a.m., Bluffton City Gym

WOOF 5,10,15 MILE TRAIL RUN

November 5th- 9:00 a.m., Ouabache State Park

BLUFFTON SANTA RUN

December 24th- 9:00 a.m., Bluffton City Gym



PHOTO BY: WHITNEY LAMBERT

CARS, JEEPS MOTORCYCLES, TRACTORS...

RIVERS EDGE CLASSIC 2022

April 24th - 9:00 a.m.

Dutch Mill Plaza 360 N. Main Street, Bluffton

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NATE HILL MEMORIAL ROD RUN

June 12th - 9:00 a.m. -Noon

Advance Auto Parts 623 N. Main Street, Bluffton

Contact 260-824-9828 for more information.

AXOLES CLASSIC CAR CRUISE

July 10th- 5:00 p.m.

Brok'n Axoles Car Club 360 North Main Street, Bluffton

BLUE THUNDER RUMBLE

July 16th- 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Harrison Plaza 155 S. Harrison Plaza, Bluffton

JEEP CRUISE

August 7th -5:30 p.m.

Dutch Mill Plaza 360 N. Main Street, Bluffton

MARKLE WILDCAT CAR, TRUCK & MOTORCYCLE

August 7th -8:30 a.m -Noon

Markle Fish & Game Club Park 100 Park Drive, Markle

Contact 260-273-1447 for more information.

WHEELS OF YESTERYEAR TRACTOR SHOW

August 12-14th - 12:00 p.m.

Wells County 4H park- free admission

TOUCH A TRUCK

August 27th - 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Downtown Bluffton- free admission

MOONPIE MANIA CAR SHOW

August 27th - 8 a.m.-Noon, awards at 4 .p.m.

Downtown Bluffton

8TH ANNUAL SHOW US YOUR RIDE CAR & BIKE SHOW

September 9th- 4:00-8:00 p.m. Awards 7:30 p.m.

Markle Health & Rehabilitation 170 N. N. Tracy Street, Markle

WHEELS OF YESTERYEAR TRACTOR PULL

October 1st

Wells County 4H park- free admission





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FAIRS, FESTIVALS & MARKETS

PARLOR CITY MARKET

June -September 17th (Saturdays) - 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
118 W. Market Street, Bluffton

WELLS COUNTY 4H FAIR

July -16th-21st - 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
1240 4-H Park Road, Bluffton

RIDE TO PROVIDE

July -16th-21st - 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Markle Fish and Game Club Park
Raising money for local families in need

OSSIAN DAYS

September 15-17th, Downtown Ossian

BLUFFTON FREE STREET FAIR

September 20-24th, Downtown Bluffton

STAUFFER FARMS CRAFT FAIR

October 7-8th
3584 IN-116 #90, Markle 46770

ZANESVILLE CHRISTMAS

December 3rd - 3:00-9:00 p.m.
Zanesville United Brethren Church

PARLOR CITY CHRISTMAS

December 10th
Downtown Bluffton

SEASONAL

OUABACHE NATURE LOVER'S LUNCH & LEARN

March-October, 1st Thursday of each month

YOUTH FISHING DERBY

June 4th -At Ouabache State Park

TOWN OF OSSIAN JULY 4TH CELEBRATION

July 2nd -Archbold Wilson Park

JULY 4TH CITY OF BLUFFTON FIREWORKS

July 4th-10:00pm -Bluffton High School

FALL FESTIVAL

October 22nd-4-6 p.m. -Ouabache State Park

AUTUMN ADVENTURE

October 31st-5:00-6:00 p.m. -Bluffton City Hall

WASHINGTON ST MARKET

November 7th-9 a.m.-3 p.m.
610 West Washington Street, Bluffton

OSSIAN HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS

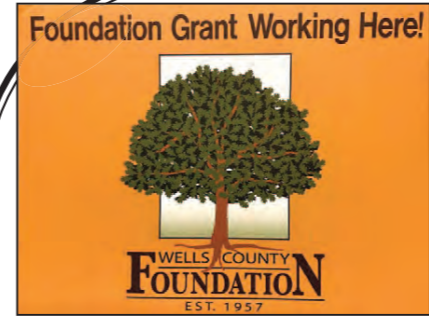
December 1st -Downtown Ossian

WONDERLAND OF LIGHTS

December 2nd-31st -Ouabache State Park

MARKLE ANTIQUES CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

December 3rd-4th -Markle Exit 286 Antique Mall



The mission of The Wells County Foundation, Inc. is to improve the present and future quality of life in Wells County. Through the generosity of our donors, the Foundation invests grant funds in projects and programs

that make Wells County an amazing place to live, work, *visit* and play!



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SWEET TREATS & UNIQUE EATS

WHEN IT'S TIME TO GRAB A BITE TO EAT IN WELLS COUNTY, THERE ARE PLENTY OF TRADITIONAL CHOICES, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF LOCALLY OWNED FAVORITES. BUT IF IT IS SOMETHING UNIQUE OR SOMETHING SWEET, "WANDERING WELLS" CAN INDEED BE A TREAT. WHERE TO START IS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM.

A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE PLACES

BILLY ANN'S SUPPER PUB

BUMMIES DRIVE-IN

CRIMSON HOUSE CAFE

DASH 90 WINES

GRAND SWEET SHOP

HEYERLY'S BAKERY

HIDEAWAY BEER & BOURBON

HUGH'S BAKERY & COFFEEHOUSE

NUTRITION LOFT

PARLOR CITY BREWING COMPANY

STAG BAR & GRILL

SWEET OBSESSIONS

TOPPINGS ICE CREAM PARLOR

TYEGER'S PIZZA PARLOR

For a complete listing visit: www.visitwellscounty.com



CRIMSON HOUSE CAFE

Perhaps the most unique is finding lunch or supper in an antique store. When Kim Minnich and her husband purchased her parents' antique store in Uniondale in 2021, they knew they wanted to add a kitchen and a general store. It is now called Minnich's Antiques and General Store, with a surprisingly extensive menu including 22 specialty pizzas, some of which have gained some fame.

"Someone from California heard about our pizzas while visiting in Canada," Kim says, "and drove 100 miles out of their way just get one of our Wabash (supreme) pizzas on their trip back to California."

Most of their business is carry-out, particularly during the colder months due to some limited — but quaint — seating. "We have an ice-cream-parlor table and a counter with six seats," Kim says. But during the warmer months, they have outdoor seating for 24 and also offer hard-dipped ice cream along



with soft-serve.

What would Ossian be without Heyerly's Bakery? Not too many people have any idea since it has occupied center stage at the corner of Ind. 1 and Mill Street since 1931. That happens to be pretty much the geographic center of town, which may not be a coincidence.

Three brothers — Ray, Luster and Herman Heyerly — were the initial entrepreneurs who set a standard for tasty pastries, cakes and pies. Ray's four sons — Ron, Stan, Lynn and Galen — took over the reins in the 1970s and continued to grow the business. When the time came for them to retire, Gary and Kelly Short brought their baking experience to Ossian and assumed the Heyerly traditions in late 2019.

"We haven't changed any of the recipes," Kelly confirms. "Why would we?"



It is not unusual for regulars to gently knock on the front door before the 6 a.m. opening time to get their Heyerly donut fix.

Melissa Burke did not grow up in Wells County but she's been pleasantly surprised by her warm welcome since opening her Grand Sweet Shop on Bluffton's north side in 2019. Her small eatery features another one of Ossian's famous products: widely known Ossian ham, which is included in many of their breakfast and lunch offerings.

Grand Sweet Shop lives up to its name by also featuring donuts and rolls, cookies, and cupcakes made fresh daily. There's also a wall of Mud Pie merchandise to browse through while taking advantage of her coffee bar, with espressos and specialty coffees to enjoy there or to go.

Speaking of coffee, aficionados will find plenty of options, including Hugh's Bakery & Coffeehouse in Bluffton and the Crimson House in Ossian, both locally owned and operated and both having some sweets and treats to enjoy with their wide variety of coffees.

If your thirst turns to something with even

more kick, Wells County features its own winery and brewery.

Chris Bryant's Parlor City Brewing Company has only been open a few years, but he's been in the hospitality business for 28 years and brewing for more than 15, including a stint working for a small brewery in northern Michigan, before finding his way to the Parlor City. His nano-brewery in downtown Bluffton has 16 varieties on tap, all brewed on site. His kitchen adds a selection of munchies, sandwiches and soups, all made from scratch.

What Chris likes most about his own brewery is the opportunity to get to know his patrons and recommending the best brew for them. Additionally, you can enjoy his brews at the pub or on the go, with growlers and howlers and even some of his creations canned.

The Herr family began making their own wine just six or seven years ago, largely out of curiosity as to whether they could. In April 2017 they planted 500 vines on their southern Wells farm, where they've had a large poultry operation for about 30 years. "Dash-90" is a budding winery in prog-



ress where you can now truly get a “taste of Wells County.”

Their tasting room (a former sheep barn) was getting its finishing touches this spring. They’ve hosted a few weekend “pop-up sales” with plans to have regular hours this summer. Their best-seller is “Farm Wine” a sweet red made from concord grapes so named because “when we were growing up, every farm had a concord grapevine for jams and jellies, and many of them made their own wine as well,” mom Twila Herr explains.

Check them out on facebook or google for pop-up shops and hours of operation open to the public.

If you’re a pizza fan, you’ll want to stop at Bluffton’s Tyeger’s Pizza Parlor. Tye Walton and his wife went “all in” back in 2008 after a prior life working for General Motors full time and other pizza restaurants part time. Their main goal was to offer a unique menu. For example, whoever thought of putting corn on a pizza? It actually comes from their trip to Ireland years ago (they both have Irish heritage) and is just one example of their one-of-a-kind combinations.

Their creations have earned a number of awards in local and regional newspapers’ “Readers Choice” contests. The restaurant critic from northeast Indiana’s regional newspaper out of Fort Wayne once gave them a rare five-star rating and his designation as “the best pizza in northeast Indiana.” Be sure to check their Facebook page for even more unique “POTMs” — their pizza of the month.

Finally, last but far from least, a visit to Wells County would not be complete during the warmer months without a stop at Bummie’s B&K Root Beer drive-in on Bluffton’s south side.

The Baumgartner family is still amazed each spring when their opening creates some temporary traffic jams on South Main Street.



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SATURDAY	4:00 PM – 11:00 PM
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RODS RUSTICS

THE MODERN ECLECTIC

YAYA’S MID CENTURY & MODERN

For a complete listing visit: www.visitwellscounty.com





Several local families provide different experiences — from small shops with hand-chosen treasures to a large mall with seemingly endless choices.

American Salvage Co. in downtown Bluffton lives up to its name. The Bermudez family fill — and re-fill — their downtown Bluffton shop with “unique finds from across our country,” Pam Bermudez reports, “hitting the road” for more than 30 years in their searches.

And if you can’t find what you’re looking for on their sales floor, there’s more in storage upstairs or they’ll launch a special search for their customers.

Just down the street, Joy Addington has assembled a distinctive combination of items by local artisans and retail choices you won’t find elsewhere in her Bijou Gift Boutique.

The name also is meant to define her shop — just look up the definition of “bijou.” Her personally selected purses, soaps and home decor are centered around her own creation ‘Bijou Body Collection’ produced on site.

Like many “antiquers,” what started as a hob-

by became a business. Enthusiasts for most of their 27 years of marriage, Rod and Paris Fetter opened their store in downtown Ossian just four years ago but have quickly gained a solid reputation for finding just the right piece for their growing clientele. With a wide array of primitive and vintage pieces, they keep an eye out for the truly unique.

While they maintain regular store hours of 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Tuesdays to Saturdays, the couple lives just a few minutes away and will do their best to accommodate anyone’s schedule. And if you can’t find exactly what you’re looking for in their crowded but neatly organized 6,000 square feet, they’ll begin a search for you.

Right next door is The Modern Eclectic. While Chris and Tsipporah Harris have gathered a number of “vintage treasures” chosen specifically for their uniqueness, their home decor collection is largely new goodies from both “local and global artisans.” Among those homewares is a carefully chosen collection of “software” — pillows, blankets and napkins with “handcrafted durability.”

A side trip to the small town of Uniondale will find a truly unique combination of antiques and food located in a former church.

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"We've filled every crook and cranny," says Kim Minnich of Minnich's Antiques and General Store. She's talking about antiques, of course, but there's also the varieties of locally made products and an even wider collection of Indiana-made goodies: Wick's Pies, South Bend Chocolates, vintage candies, and more than 70 varieties of Sechler's pickles and relishes. You can also choose from 72 varieties of vintage bottled sodas, with such unique flavors as "Kitty Piddle," "Dog Drool," and "Zombie Brain Juice."

The kicker: Shop while you wait for your order from their kitchen. They have a surprisingly diverse menu, including 22 specialty pizzas (or you can choose your own ingredients, of course). There is limited seating during the colder months and outdoor seating when it's warmer, but most of their food business is carry-out.

"ANTIQUES ARE STILL OUR BIGGEST DRAWING CARD," KIM SAYS.



On Wells County's western border is the Markle Exit 286 Antique Mall, located just east of I-69 (at, you guessed it, Exit 286). The 30,000-square-foot mall includes 100 dealers, but it is anchored by owners Connie and Carol, twin sisters who turned their love for antiques into what they call the "Wunderkammer of the Wabash."

They continue to scour estate sales and farm auctions throughout the Midwest for relics, curios and the "objet d'art," and often call on their gallery of helpers and extended family to restore many of their finds. That might include an oak sideboard or a re-caned chair — even a delicate linen can get a refreshed look.

Bluffton is also home to no less than three clothing boutiques, each expressing the personalities of their proprietors. While Ellie Grace & Co., the Lorelai Lace Boutique and Magnolias & Minis all share the commonality of women's clothing and accessories, each store has their own additions, such as the men's and children's clothing at Ellie Grace, the jewelry and candles at Magnolias or the shoes and choices for the "Munchkins" at Lorelai.

The one constant in all of this "uniqueness" is the personal, small town service.

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PLACES TO STAY

WHILE WELLS COUNTY HAS PLENTY OF COMFORTABLE TRADITIONAL LODGING OPTIONS, CAMPERS WILL FIND SOME EXCELLENT CHOICES TO PITCH A TENT, PARK THEIR CAMPER OR RV OR RENT A SMALL CABIN IN THE WOODS.

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Did you Know...The Wells County 4-H Park has many amenities to offer that fit your needs!

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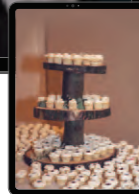
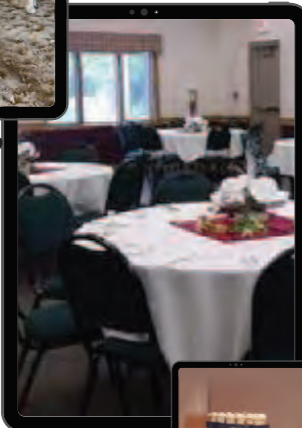
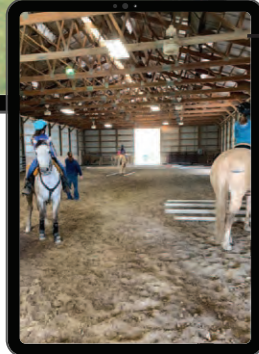
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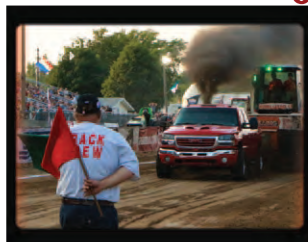


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The park offers a number of recreational opportunities including swimming, fishing and bike and hiking trails. The trails also connect to the Rivergreenway Trail, allowing non-motorized connections to downtown Bluffton's and Kehoe Park's summer concerts. The connection to the Interurban Trail can take you as far north as Bluffton's Walmart, Lowes and Walgreens stores.

The park is perhaps most widely known for the historic fire tower and its herd of bison. Open during daylight hours, you can climb the 100 steps to the tower's observation level that overlooks the bison pen and provides views of the park and surrounding area.

The Bluffton/Fort Wayne South KOA has earned the "Journey" designation by Kampgrounds of America, recognizing the special features of the wooded campground located on Bluffton's west edge. The park also received the 2022 KOA President's Award for meeting exceptional quality standards.

With more than 100 full-service RV sites, five cabins and a number of tent sites, the park also features a heated pool, horseshoe and volleyball courts, walking trails and a playground. During the summer months, planned family and children's activities are also part of the KOA experience. The park is open year-round.

The more traditional lodging options include Americas Best Value Inn and Suites, a Comfort Inn and a Budget Inn — all located in Bluffton. The Washington Street Inn is a Victorian bed-and-breakfast located close to downtown Bluffton's unique shops, boutiques and eateries. Host Kathy

Gardner delights in sharing the history of her inn built in 1896 and receives 5-star reviews for her hospitality and homemade breakfasts. A search on Airbnb will also find a variety of housing options for both short- and long-term stays.

For reservations for Ouabache State Park contact: 866-622-6746 or online as www.camp.in.gov



BISON WANDER WELLS

The small herd of bison at Ouabache State Park is not only a popular feature but links the park to its origins. Originally established as the Wells County State Forest and Game Preserve, records confirm their presence at the park as early as 1933.

Those of the Baby Boomer generation recall park visits that included viewing mountain lions, bobcats, bears and raccoons as well. Only the bison still remain in captivity although deer and raccoons still

populate the 1100 acres.

The park staff takes great pride and care of their charges, celebrating their designation as the national mammal and it's prominent part of the Indiana State Seal. During the warmer months, the staff offers bison hikes, feedings and interpretative walks around the 20-acre pen. With a mixture of both males and females in the small herd, it is not unusual for a calf to be born — always an interesting and captivating event.



PHOTO BY: INDIANA DNR



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