

Table of Contents



Connect with us



@DeKalbLife

www.DeKalbLife.com

4 Food and Drink



7 Sports



8 The Outdoors



10 Entertainment



12 Lodging



13 Local History



14 Worship



15 Public Art



16 NIU

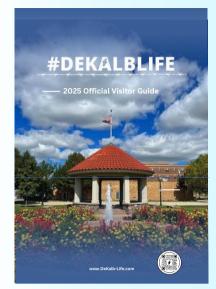


18 Shopping

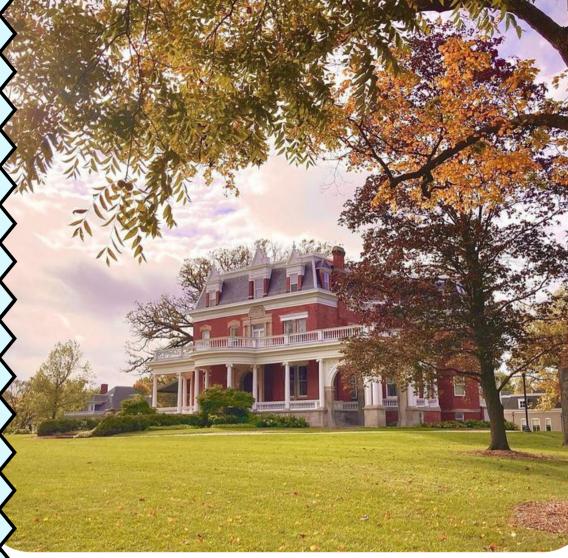


20 Events





On the cover:
DeKalb Square Park
located in downtown
DeKalb.



Historic Ellwood House

Welcome to DeKalb, IL!

#DeKalbLife is excited to present: The 2025 DeKalb, IL Visitor Guide!

This has been a big project in the works for a while now. In this guide we will fulfill your appetite with our local restaurants (p. 4), sports (p. 7), our many parks and greens paces (p. 8), our numerous entertainment options (p. 10), our lodging options (p. 12), local history (p. 13), worship places (p. 14), public art (p. 15), Northern Illinois University (p. 16), shopping (p. 18), local events (p. 20) and so much more!

Every effort has been made to make this guide as accurate as possible. This publication includes businesses in operation as of November 2024. #DeKalbLife assumes no responsibility for errors, changes or omissions.



Dekalb by the numbers



#DEKALBLIFE









A message from #DeKalbLife founder Welcome to DeKalb, IL.

Whether you're visiting for the first time, returning, or you're a long-time resident, we are thrilled to share our vibrant city with you! DeKalb is a place where community spirit thrives, and there's always something new to discover.

Several years ago, I started #DeKalbLife to promote all the incredible experiences this city has to offer. From our rich history and vibrant downtown to our beautiful parks and unique local businesses, there's truly something for everyone here.

We believe you'll fall in love with DeKalb just as many others have.

Welcome, and enjoy your stay!

Owen R. Botts Founder, #DeKalbLife







ROOD AND DRINK

Downtown Favorites

Rosita's Mexican Restaurant

Family owned and operated restaurant serving Greater Mexican food since 1972. Come and experience what has become a Northern Illinois tradition!

Thai Pavilion

The food of Thailand in the heart of DeKalb. We're a bit of Southeast Asia in your own city. Everything from appetizers, salads, fried rices, to desserts.

(815) 756-6445 | 251 E. Lincoln Hwy

El Jimador

El Jimador offers a diverse menu that includes traditional tacos, burritos, enchiladas, even seafood and steaks that have that extra touch that only Mexican food has.

(815) 301-5008 | 260 E. Lincoln Hwy

Burger Naan

Discover the perfect fusion of authentic Indian flavors and street food excitement at Burger Naan. (815) 517-1348 | 121 N. 2nd St

The Grove Tavern

Neighborhood tavern located in DeKalb, IL serving comforting dishes and drinks in a modern space.

(815) 264-2125 | 204 N. 4th St

Date Night

Class VI

Wine, craft cocktails, and charcuterie storefront and bar. Located in the heart of historic downtown DeKalb

(815) 994-9735 | 214 E. Lincoln Hwy

Ellwood Steak

Immerse yourself in a world of flavor and sophistication, where every bite is a journey and every moment is savored.

(815) 901-6445 | 2219 Sycamore Rd

The Flame Greek Grill

Generational recipes straight from Nafpaktos, Greece served in a comforting environment. (779) 270-2000 | 209 E. Lincoln Hwy

Tapa La Luna

Tapas bar featuring international cuisine and an exquisite array of spirits.

(815) 217-0990 | 226 E. Lincoln Hwy

Restaurants in this guide were selected through a process using TripAdvisor, polls, and independent research. A full list of restaurants is available at www.dekalblife.com/food-drink/

Family Dining

The Junction Eating Place

We'd like to personally invite you to stop in today for Greek salads, great burgers, amazing breakfasts, sandwich specials, and more!

(815) 758-5441 | 816 W. Lincoln Hwy

The Lincoln Inn

For over 40 years, the Lincoln Inn has been serving great food and dining experiences to the Dekalb community.

(815) 756-2345 | 302 Grove St

French Toast Pancake House

We are a local owned brunch restaurant with large portions of breakfast classics and modern entree's. We also have our own signature dishes.

Egg Haven Café

Serving our Community the Finest Breakfast, Brunch and Lunch Entrees since 2004.

(815) 748-1200 | 2562 Sycamore Rd

China House

Bring your appetite! China House offers a wide buffet for lunch and dinner featuring Chinese food, hibachi, and sushi.

(815) 748-0032 | 1900 Sycamore Rd

Full List of Restaurants

View our online Food & Drink Guide here!







Include us in your plans!
Stop by for delicious Mexican food served fresh daily since 1972.

(815) 756-1201 | 642 E Lincoln Hwy www.Rositas.com

Pizza

JB's World Famous Pizza

Always offering a variety of types and flavors, this local pizzeria is a favorite among its community. Fresh ingredients and a friendly atmosphere.

(815) 756-8718 | 142 W. Lincoln Hwy

Pizza Pro's

Since 1991 we've loved creating that sense of community in the DeKalb area with our delicious slices. Pizza Pro's is a local favorite for families, college students, and sports lovers alike. (815) 758-4776 | 1205 W. Lincoln Hwy

Pizza Villa

Serving up pizza and beer nuggets in a family friendly unique five level restaurant.

(815) 758-8116 | 824 W. Lincoln Hwy

Vinny's Pizza

Whether it's wings, pasta, sandwiches, or a variety of other foods we have available, we have something to satisfy you and your family.

(815) 787-6200 | 221 W. Lincoln Hwy

Zana's Wood Fire Pizza

All of Zana's signature pizzas are hand stretched 12 inches and baked in our wood fired oven.

(815) 517-1493 | 1406 Sycamore Rd

Local Favorites

Fatty's

Known for World Famous Cajun Fried Potato Salad and with over 110 Different Beers to choose from! (815) 758-7737 | 1312 W. Lincoln Hwy

Lothson's Karry Out

Frying the best chicken in the DeKalb, Il area since 1949.

(815) 756-4303 | 644 E. Lincoln Hwy

Whiskey Acres

Whiskey Acres is an estate distillery located on a family farm known for award-winning vodka, bourbon, and whiskey.

(844) 494-4753 | 11504 Keslinger Rd

Lala's Bagels

We use the finest quality ingredients to make the best tasting bagels and sweets.

(815) 748-7707 | 2205 Pleasant St Unit #2

Fushi Yami

Enjoy a variety of unique sushi dishes at our family owned restaurant. We also serve many more Japanese dishes.

(815) 748-8868 | 822 W. Lincoln Hwy

Barb City Bagels

We offer a wide variety of delicious bagels, sandwiches, soups, and more! BCB is the perfect place to enjoy a delicious meal or a warm drink.

(815) 754-5211 | 118 E. Lincoln Hwy

Drinks

Hometown Sports Bar & Grill

A vibrant sports bar in downtown DeKalb with great food, great drinks, and weekly events.

(815) 217-3325 | 241/249 E Lincoln Hwy

Molly's Eatery and Drinkery

We're the "restaurant near me" for NIU students, offering unbeatable food, regular events, and more.

(815) 517-0335 | 1000 W Lincoln Hwy

Lord Stanley's and The Annex

Stanley's is a great place in DeKalb to watch your favorite sports team with a beer in hand and The Annex is stocked your favorite craft beers.

(815) 754-9031 | 142 E Lincoln Hwy



What are Beer Nuggets?

Beer Nuggets are a food original to DeKalb.
They are soft fried dough pieces typically served with cheese sauce and marinara.
A must try option in DeKalb!

The Top 5

According to the 2024 #DeKalbLife ranking bracket.



Food Trucks

Local food trucks will line the street on Normal Road in front of the MLK Commons on select Wednesdays during NIU's fall and spring semesters from 11am to 2pm



Full List of Restaurants

View our online Food & Drink Guide here!









We're The Junction Eating Place and we've been a community favorite restaurant here in DeKalb, IL since 1969

We'd like to personally invite you to stop in today for Greek salads, great burgers, amazing breakfasts, sandwich specials, and more!

816 W Lincoln Hwy | (815) 758-5441





Teams

Boy's Sports

Baseball Basketball

Bowling

Cross country

Football

Golf

Soccer

Swimming

Tennis

Track and field

Wrestling

Girl's Sports

Badminton

Basketball

Bowling

Cross country

Dance

Golf

Gymnastics

Soccer

Softball

Swimming

Tennis

Track and field

Volleyball

Wrestling

www.dhs.d428.org/athletics

NIU HUSKIES

Teams

Men's Sports Women's Sports

Baseball Basketball

Basketball Cross Country

Football Golf

Golf Gymnastics

Soccer Soccer Tennis Softball

Wrestling Tennis

Track and Field

Volleyball

www.niuhuskies.com

DEKALB COUNTY UNITED

DeKalb County United is an adult men's and women's semiprofessional soccer sides who compete in the MidWest Premier League (MWPL), and the Illinois Women's Soccer League.

www.dkcunited.com



FOREST 🌲 **PRESERVES**

P.A. Nehring 380 Bethany Rd



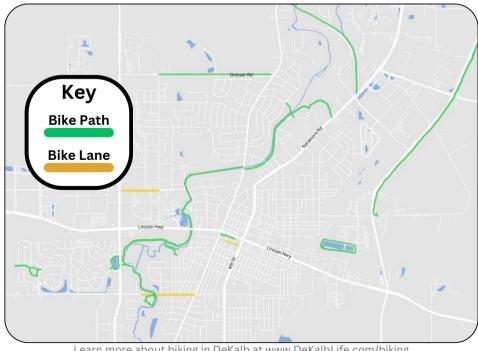
Afton 13600 Crego Rd



Merritt 14401 Keslinger Rd



BIKING &



Learn more about biking in DeKalb at www.DeKalbLife.com/biking

Enjoy biking through DeKalb's many nature trails and bike paths. As you follow the Kishwaukee River you'll encounter wildlife first hand.



DeKalb is home to 44 parks! whether you're looking for a playground, trails, fishing, sports fields, picnic areas, or anything else outdoors, the DeKalb Park District has it in one of their beautiful parks.



Huntley Park





Rotary Park

Rotary Park is a large park tucked behind the train tracks. It offers fishing, a bike path, and a shelter.



Lion's Park

Lion's Park offers many amenities such as an enclosed shelter, picnic shelter, playground, and a wooded path.



DeKalb Square Park

The park on our cover! DeKalb Square Park is located right in the center of downtown and has a beautiful gazebo and fountain.



Entertainment



The Egyptian Theatre

The Egyptian Theatre is an Egyptian Revival theatre that is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. It is a popular venue for performances throughout the year.



Star Worlds Arcade

Star Worlds Arcade offers many classic arcade games from the 1980's as well as newer video games including DDR, Pop'n Music, Mario Karts, and pinball tables. Over 40 games to choose from and titles are frequently rotated.



NIU Art Museum

The Art Museum presents an annual exhibition and events calendar with award-winning, original curated exhibitions and national traveling shows that deeply explore thematic topics of visual culture.



Mardi Gras Lanes

Mardi Gras Lanes offers fun-filled activities for the whole family to have a great time. The MGL bowling center features 32 conditioned lanes for both league and open bowl.



Huskie Den

Open to students, staff, faculty and the general public, the Huskie Den offers bowling, pool, arcade games, and a stage. With plenty of seating for everyone, our perfectly stress-free environment is a go-to destination for anyone spending time at NIU. Stop by and have some fun!



Museum of Anthropology

Special exhibitions promote cultural awareness and solidarity in support of global social justice. Programs and events invite campus and community audiences to explore human and cultural diversity with the museum.



Fargo Skatepark

Fargo Skateboarding is everything skateboarding: a skate shop run by skateboard enthusiasts, and a nearly 10,000 square ft. heated indoor skatepark.



Stage Coach Players

Stage Coach Players began in DeKalb County in the summer of 1947, shortly after World War II had ended. Stage Coach Players is a popular theatre in DeKalb.



NIU Esports Arena

From casual gaming and open play to club competition to varsity teams, you'll find your community at NIU. Located in Altgeld Hall and available for all NIU students with an active OneCard.



THE PERSON

AMC Market Square 10

The DeKalb AMC Market Square 10 has many amenities including relaxing recliners, an extensive food menu, and 10 great theaters!



Wreckroom

Wreck Room, the premier Rage Room Experience in Dekalb, Illinois! Get ready to unleash your inner beast and let off some steam in the most exhilarating way possible.

Full list of Things To Do

www.DeKalbLife.com/things-to-do





Comfort Inn

1314 W Lincoln Hwy (815) 748-7100

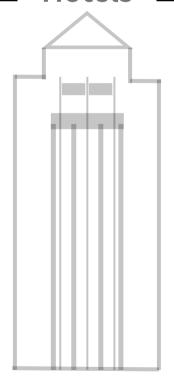
Hampton Inn

663 S Annie Glidden Rd (815) 748-4323

Home2 Suites

575 S Annie Glidden Rd (815) 375-5465

Hotels



Hotel at Holmes

330 Carroll Ave (815) 753-1444

Red Roof Inn

1212 W Lincoln Hwy (815) 758-8661

Super 8

800 Fairview Dr (815) 748-4688

Quick Local History



1856

DeKalb is incorporated as a village.



1874

Joseph F Glidden patents "The Winner." The first practical "barbed wire."



1899

Northern Illinois State Normal School opens with 173 students on the first day.



1935

DeKalb Park District is founded.



1944

The DeKalb Taylor Municipal Airport opens. First the airport was a Navy drone manufacturing site. Now it serves as a refueling and flight lesson airport.



1977

Corn Fest (as we know it) started in downtown DeKalb with music and vendor booths.



2011

A new 400,000 sqft high school building opens for the Barbs.



2023

The Meta DeKalb Data Center opens!
This facility is one of the top in the world.

DeKalb History Museums



J.F. Glidden Homestead

921 W Lincoln Hwy



Ellwood House Museum

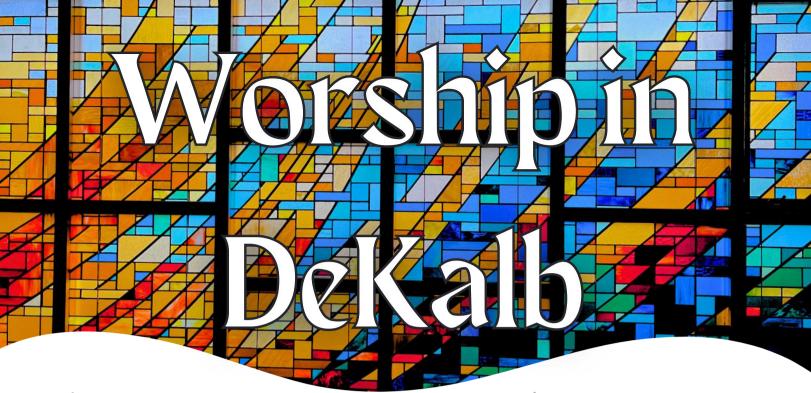
420 Linden Pl



Local Highlight

Jessi Haish LaRue, Glidden Homestead Executive Director

"DeKalb is rich with stories about innovation, progress, agricultural strides, and more. Get out and explore the local museums and historical markers, and enjoy this unique history!"



	Saturday Service	Sunday Service	Weekday and Other Service
Catholic			
Newman Catholic Student Center 512 Normal Rd www.newmanniu.org	4:30pm	8:00am, 10:30am, 8:00pm	12:05pm
St. Mary's Catholic Church 302 Fisk Ave www.stmarydekalb.org	5:00pm	9:00am, 11:00am (Vietnamese) 2nd Sunday 1:30pm (Spanish) Sunday 4:00pm	Mon-Tues 5:00pm Wed-Fri 7:00am (Spanish) Tuesday 6:30pm
Protestant/ Non-Denominationa	al		
First Baptist Church of DeKalb 309 S 3rd St www.firstbaptistdekalb.org		9:00am	
St. Paul's Episcopal Church		9:30am	
900 Normal Rd www.stpaulsdekalb.org			
Bethlehem Lutheran Church 1915 N 1st St www.bethlehemdekalb.org		9:30am	
DeKalb Seventh Day Adventist 300 E Taylor St	11:00am		
Christ Community Church 2350 Pride Ave ccclife.org	5:10pm	9:10am, 11:10am	
First United Methodist Church 2501 N Annie Glidden Rd firstumc.net		10:00am	
Orthodox			
St George Greek Orthodox Church 320 S 2nd St stgeorge.il.goarch.org		9:50am	
Islam			
Islamic Center of DeKalb 801 Normal Rd islamiccenterofdekalb.org	Go to islamiccenterofdekalb.org for more information.		
	1.0		



DeKalb is a city with many public exhibitions of public art including murals, sculptures, paintings, and mosaics. Below are some of DeKalb's most recognizable public art installations.



City Hall Mural 164 E Lincoln Hwy Artist: Danielle Casali Year: 2023



Le BaronCastle Drive
Artist: Alexander Calder
Year: 1965



Its Merits Recommend It...
101 E Lincoln Hwy
Artist: Olivia Gude
Year: 2000



and The Light
200 University Cir Dr
Artist: Boyan Marinov
Year: 2024



Everyone's Everest 550 Lucinda Ave Artist: Barry Hehemann Year: 1999



Balance of Equality 600 Lucinda Ave Artist: Dann Nardi Year: 1991

Learn more about public art in DeKalb at www.DeKalbLife.com/public-art



NORTHERN THANOIS UNIVERSIT

The Top Photo Spots



NIU Letter Sculpture

The NIU Letter Sculpture in the MLK Commons is the most popular picture spot on campus! Visitors, students, alumni, and employees all take pictures with these letters.

NIU Main Gate

The NIU Main Gate is located next to the East Lagoon on Lincoln Hwy (Rte 38) and is a favorite spot to take photos at NIU.

Altgeld Hall

Who wouldn't want to take a photo in front of a castle? Altgeld Hall is a popular picture spot and is the oldest building on campus.



Olive GoyleOlive Goyle Is a grotesque statue originally on top of Altgeld Hall until she was struck by lightning twice in the 1960s and has been in the garden ever since.

East Lagoon

The East Lagoon is a breath of fresh air on campus. Enjoy the peace of nature on-campus as you stroll along the bike paths that surrounds the East Lagoon and be sure to take a few pics of the wildlife.



- 15,000+ Students
- 262,000 Alumni Worldwide
- 17 Varsity Sports
- 40+ Intramural Sports
- Forbes 2023 America's Top Colleges list

- World Report 2025 Best Graduate Schools
- 200+ Students Organizations
- 70+ Buildings
- 5 Residence Hall Complexes





A message from President Freeman

Welcome to vibrant DeKalb, home of the Northern Illinois University Huskies! We're proud of the rich history of both our university and our DeKalb community. For more than 125 years, NIU has been educating students from across our state, nation and world. NIU today is a major research university with expertise in the sciences, humanities, arts, business, engineering, education, health and law. I invite you to tour our beautiful campus, pick a ripe tomato from our Pick-and-Go gardens, visit a museum or gallery on campus, take in a concert or performance, attend one of our many Division I sporting events, or peruse our Huskie gear at the dynamic Holmes Student Center. You'll find that what NIU and DeKalb have in common is a warm and friendly spirit that welcomes visitors from near and far.

Go Huskies!

Lisa C. Freeman

President, Northern Illinois University





Antique & Thrift

This & That Collectibles

520 E Lincoln Hwy

We sell MCM, Primitive, Vintage & Antique furniture, glassware, etc. Old & new jewelry and much more. We are retailers for Dixie Belle Paint Co., 1803 Candles, ReDesign with Prima & Soberdough. New inventory is brought in weekly by our 30+ sellers.

The Country Store

842 W Lincoln Hwy

Thrift store run entirely by volunteers benefiting Senior Services.

found. Home and Vintage

153 E Lincoln Hwy

You never know what you will find at

Perchance Antiques

250 E Lincoln Hwy

Comic books, vinyl records, candles, soaps, primitives, older toys and smaller furniture.

Books

Robin's Nest Bookshoppe

218 E Lincoln Hwy

We are an independent bookstore in downtown DeKalb, IL.

Games & Toys

There's Fun in Store

229 E Lincoln Hwy

We are a locally owned game store that sells board games, video games, collectable card games, Pokémon, toys, and so much more.

Kid Stuff

149 E Lincoln Hwy

We specialize in everything related to children, including Maternity wear. BIG toys; little toys; Baby furniture; Baby equipment; Gadgets for kids/parents; children's clothes preemie to 14.

Affinity for Gaming

811 W Lincoln Hwy

Affinity for Gaming provides the essentials for many types of games like tabletop RPGs, wargames, card games, and board games. Plus plenty of accessories to enhance your experience.

Music

Aurora Music Co.

137 E Lincoln Hwy

We are a music store that carries a range of guitars, basses, keyboards, percussion supplies, and band/orchestra supplies.

Ax-in-Hand Guitars

817 W #B Lincoln Hwy

Iconic guitar shop since 1964 selling instruments, providing lessons, and other music accessories.

Candy

The Confectionery

149 N 2nd St

Dive into our handcrafted favorites – think creamy delights, gooey caramels, crispy toffees, and so much more. Each treat isn't just tasty; it's a flavor-packed adventure waiting to happen!

Alternative Medicine

The Herbal Oracle

143 E Lincoln Hwy

Explore our stash of herbs, teas, farmfresh goodies like meats, eggs, and honey!



Aurora Music Co.

Clothing & Boutiques

Cracker Jax

118 N 3rd St

All senses are delighted as you shop 15 cases of new and vintage jewelry, eclectic clothing, soy candles, oils, incense, gemstones of every kind, unique gifts, and more!

Ducky's Formal Wear

250 E Lincoln Hwy

Trust Ducky's Formal Wear to offer classy tuxedo and stunning dresses. We also sell or rent suits in a large array of colors.

.....

Sports of All Sorts

147 N 2nd St #2

S.O.A.S. is your hometown custom apparel and gift shop in downtown DeKalb specializing in embroidery, screen printing, and iron-on lettering.

Mela's Boutique & Alteration

659 E Lincoln Hwy

Local boutique specializing in formal wear for special occasions including quinceañeras, first communions, birthdays, and more.

Victor E. Threads

325 N Annie Glidden Rd & 1525 W Lincoln Hwy Purchase the latest in Huskie-branded apparel, exclusive products, team-issued gear and novelty items.

Somms Vintage

866 W Lincoln Hwy

Are you looking for vintage clothing? Somms Vintage offers a wide selection of vintage shirts, hoodie, jerseys, hats, and more!

Howers

Willrett Flower Co.

230 E Lincoln Hwy

Fill your home with gorgeous seasonal arrangements or get some delivered to your loved ones to make their day. Willrett also sells plants, gifts, candies, and more!

Glidden Florist

917 W Lincoln Hwy

Glidden Florist is a family-run florist that has been serving the DeKalb area for over 80 years. We provide beautiful flowers for all occasions.

Art and Hand-made

Jubilee Artisans

128 E Lincoln Hwy

Jubilee provides a place for creative people to sell, teach classes and create in our studios. We have all mediums of creation, including print, textiles, pottery, jewelry, clothing, and music.

Hidden Treasures and More

143 E Lincoln Hwy

Local downtown gift store carrying unique, quality and handmade items for home & garden to

metaphysical, stationary, apparel and accessories.

Grocery

Inboden's Meat Market

1106 N 1st St

Full service deli counter with homemade salads, an assortment of fully-cooked deli meats, domestic and imported cheeses as well as homemade and Artisan breads. butcher counter, and wines.

DeKalb Fresh Market

The freshest meats, vegetables, and a variety of delicious options such as tacos, burritos, tamales, and more!

Hardware

Gordon Hardware

514 E Lincoln Hwy

Selling high quality and trustworthy hardware products since 1946.



Maternity Nursing

Tons of Toys

Baby Equipment

149 E. Lincoln Hwy DeKalb II





Recurring events

Music at The Mansion

Summer on select Wednesdays at 6:30pm located at The Ellwood House.

DeKalb Municipal Band Concert

Summer every Tuesday at 7:30pm located at Hopkins Park.

Stem Café

First Wednesday at 6:30pm located at Fatty's Pub and Grille.



Farmer's Market

Thursdays 10am to 2pm June to September in Downtown.

More events!

Check out the #DeKalbLife Local Events Calendar.



















2025

Calendar

Add some of our many local events to your calendar.

There are so many things to look forward to!

February

Polar-palooza Winter Festival Sweet Stroll

March

St. Patrick's Day .1k

April

Breakfast with The Bunny Kid's Easter Egg Hunt Teen's Easter Egg Hunt

May

Cinco de Mayo Celebration Spring DeKalb Back Alley Market Memorial Day Parade

June

Juneteenth Celebration Pride Fest

July

4th of July Celebration









August

Corn Fest NIU Week of Welcome

September

Fall DeKalb Back Alley Market
Kite Fest
DeKalb Corn Classic
Taste of DeKalb
Stem Fest
8 Countries in 1 Day

October

Spooktacular Trick or Treating
NIU 118th Homecoming
KSO Free Halloween Concert

November

DeKalb Day of the Dead Merry Market

December

Santa Comes to Town



DeKalb Life, PO #69, DeKalb, IL, 60115

