

Welcome from Visit Champaign County

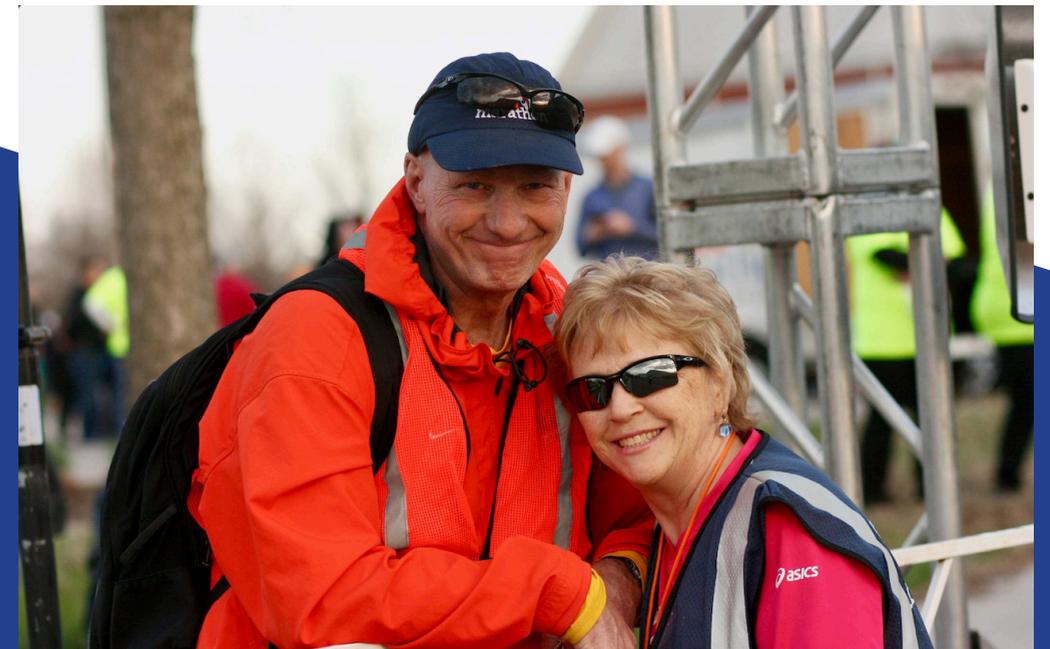
We are excited to welcome all participants of the Criss-Cross Virtual Challenge to the greater Champaign County Area! Our community is situated on the crossroads of the North-South and East-West challenges, where you'll discover the many destinations that make us Outside of Ordinary. As home to the University of Illinois, we have a rich history to share alongside the latest in research and technology that has kept our community safe during COVID-19. We offer many safe ways to explore our outdoor spaces, our downtown districts filled with local restaurants and boutiques, our vibrant arts and culture scene, and the many agricultural destinations that feed our area. No matter which direction you're heading, we can't wait to see you get your miles here while discovering all we have to offer. Welcome from all of us at Visit Champaign County!



Welcome from Co-Directors Jan Seeley and Mike Lindemann

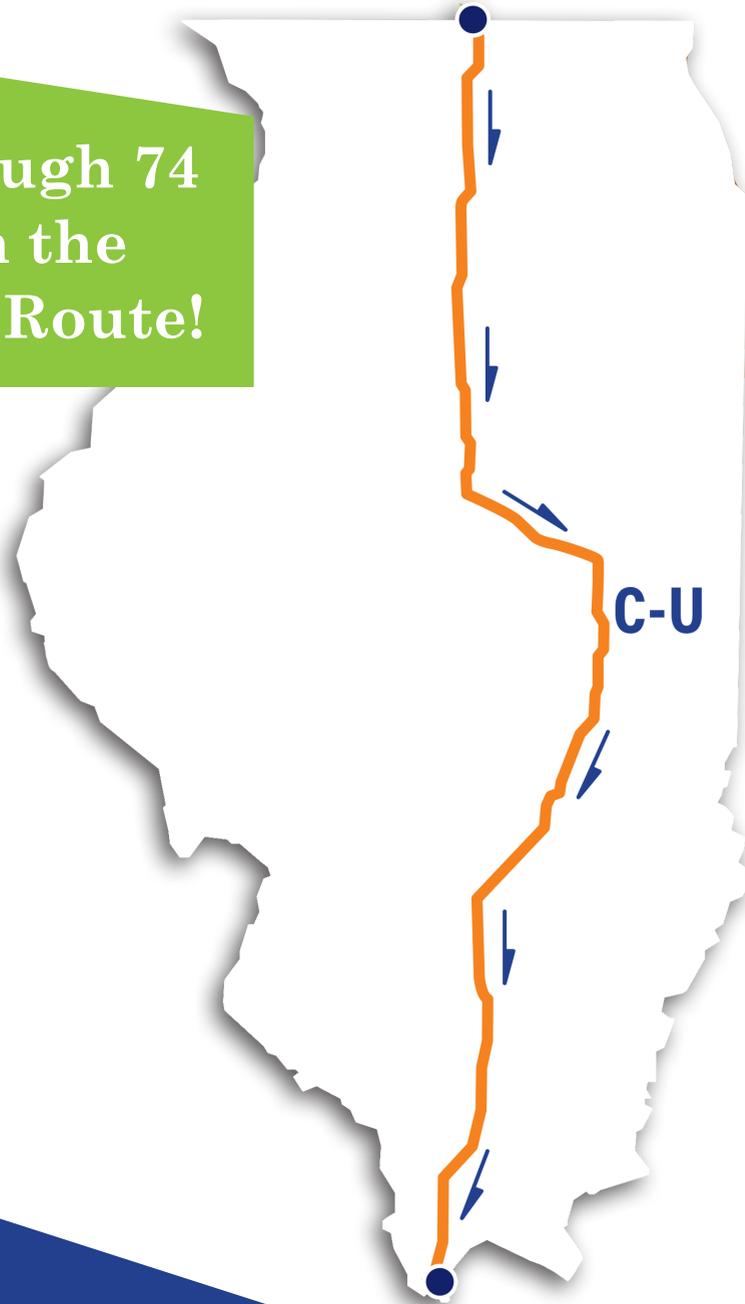
Welcome to the Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon's Criss-Cross Virtual Challenge! We're thrilled that you're joining us on this virtual journey through the state of Illinois! Thanks to the talented TEAM at Race Roster, our registration partner, who created the technology that is making this virtual challenge possible, especially the interactive virtual results leaderboards, which we know you're going to love pouring over day by day. Why the Criss-Cross Virtual Challenge? Why now? As the pandemic wiped out large in-person running events across the country, virtual events became our lifeline. But after nearly every event in the last seven months converted to virtual (with no end in sight), the simple virtual 5K or 10K started to lose its appeal. We yearned for something more! The virtual Criss-Cross, with its 25-week timeline, hundreds and hundreds of miles to cover, and celebration of the state of Illinois, offers a running and walking experience unlike any other. Since most of us aren't doing much out-of-state travel right now, what better time to combine our love of running and walking with learning more about the state of Illinois. Did you know there are towns in Illinois named Bonnie, Paradise, and Paw Paw? We didn't either! Let this Guidebook be your companion as you virtually pass through over 70 communities on the north-to-south route and over 30 communities on the west-to-east route. You will learn many fascinating facts about the "jewel" towns along the way. Perhaps you live in one of these towns!

Keep staying the course! And remember: We are better together.



NORTH - to - SOUTH ROUTE

You'll pass through 74 communities on the North-to-South Route!



TOWNS ON YOUR ROUTE

- South Beloit
- Rockford
- Cherry Valley
- New Milford
- Monroe Center
- White Rock
- Hillcrest
- Creston
- Rochelle
- Steward
- Compton
- Paw Paw
- Meriden
- Mendota
- Troy Grove
- LaSalle
- Peru
- Oglesby
- Cedar Point
- Tonica
- LOSTANT
- Rutland
- Minonk
- El Paso
- Kappa
- Hudson
- Normal
- Bloomington
- Downs
- Leroy
- Empire
- Farmer City
- Mansfield
- Mahomet
- Champaign
- Urbana
- Savoy
- Tolono
- Sadorus
- Pesotum
- Tuscola
- Arcola
- Humboldt
- Mattoon
- Charleston
- Paradise
- Neoga
- Sigel
- Effingham
- Watson
- Mason
- Edgewood
- La Clede
- Kinmundy
- Alma
- Tonti
- Salem
- Dix
- Mount Vernon
- Bonnie
- Spring Garden
- Ina
- Benton
- West City
- West Frankfort
- Johnston City
- Spillertown
- Marion
- Dongola
- Ullin
- Pulaski
- Mounds
- Mound City
- Cairo

SOUTH BELOIT

Founded in 1917
Population...7,892
Geographic size...6.13 square miles

Known For

- Named Turtle for an important chief, Kau Rau Maw Nee (Walking Turtle), the area was looking to change the name in 1838, and by committee, the French word “bellotte” (meaning nice or pretty) was referenced, and from there Balloit to eventually Beloit. The name was approved, and South Beloit became the south part of that area, Beloit.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

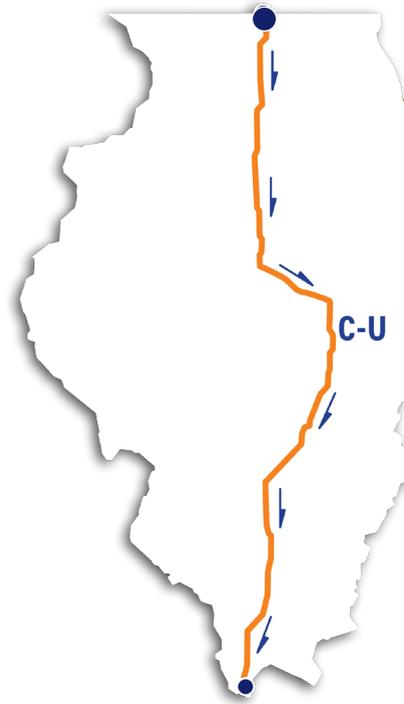
- Sports cars, motorcycles, bicycles, and go-carts race around a two-mile track at Blackhawk Farms, which welcomes racers and spectators alike.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- North American Tool, a global company with headquarters in South Beloit, manufactures custom order cutting tools used to produce everyday items like eyeglasses as well as specialized items such as the Space Shuttle!

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...199 miles
- Number of 2020 Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon (CCIM) race participants who live in the town...0



Annual Events

- The South Beloit Historical Society opens the historic Bushnell Wheeler Home twice a year for two annual events: the final Sunday in June for an Ice Cream Social and the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday prior to Thanksgiving for a Christmas open house.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Originally, resources such as copper, lead, and bog iron comprised the area that is South Beloit today, and natural limestone formed the banks of the Rock River and Turtle Creek.
- Lake Victoria and Pearl Lake are former gravel quarries.
- South Beloit City Park and Lake Victoria provide walking paths, picnic shelters, fishing, and access to the Dorr Road Bike Path.

Unique Amenities

- History comes to life at the Bushnell Wheeler Home, an impressive Italian Villa that overlooks South Beloit.
- Nature at the Confluence, an urban environmental learning center located along Turtle Creek on land once used as a dump, reflects a success story of ecology and restoration.
- RVerS and campers looking for a “get-away” experience complete with scuba diving and swimming fun are sure to find it at Pearl Lake Resort.

Learn more about South Beloit, Illinois

- <https://southbeloit.org/>
- Convention & Visitors Bureau <https://www.gorockford.com/about/region/south-beloit/>
- South Beloit Historical Society <http://bushnellwheelerhome.com/>
- South Beloit Library <https://www.southbeloitlibrary.com/>



ROCKFORD

Settled in 1834–1835, incorporated as a village in 1839, and chartered as a city in 1852

Population...147,881

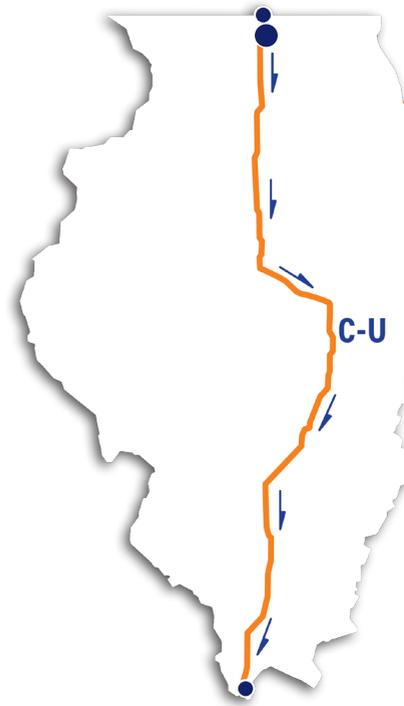
Geographic size...61.949 square miles

Known For

- Originally named “Midway” due to its geographic location of halfway between Chicago and Galena, it subsequently became Rockford, as it provided an exceptional ford across the Rock River.
- Early settlers called it “Forest City” for the abundance of forests, while today it is known as the City of Gardens, boasting a variety of prized, unique gardens complete with year-round tours, shows, concerts, and workshops.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Rockford has been home to a wide variety of recognizable figures from Nobel Laureate and Hull House founder Jane Addams to presidential candidate John B. Anderson, to a host of Olympic and professional athletes, actors, activists, and musicians to astronaut Janice Voss, and beyond.
- Baseball and Rockford share a strong history with Rockford gaining national recognition with the post-Civil War Forest City Baseball Club, producing early major league players, becoming a member city in the first minor league, and supporting the Rockford Peaches in the All American Girls Professional Baseball League (highlighted in the movie, *A League of Their Own*).
- Camp Grant, opening in 1917, put Rockford on the map as an important military city. The Camp trained thousands of soldiers for World War I until it was deactivated in 1921. When the state of Illinois took ownership, the Camp became a permanent training center for the National Guard and home to the Civilian Conservation Guard. Reactivated as a U.S. Army Base in 1940, it served as a reception area for draftees, medical training site, and living quarters for German prisoners of war. Today, the location spans the Chicago Rockford International Airport and Seth Atwood Park.



Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- Early industry during the 1860s was marked by production of the John H. Manny reaper and other agricultural machinery while furniture making during the 1880s placed Rockford as the second largest furniture manufacturing center in the United States.
- Industry during the 20th century turned to machine tools, heavy machinery, fasteners, aerospace, hardware, packaging devices and concepts and spurred inventions such as the Nelson knitting machine, airbrush, electric brake, electric garage door opener, dollar bill changer, and electronic dartboard.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...183 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...19



Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens Fountain in Rockford, Illinois.

ROCKFORD

Public Art

- Rockford Letters, an initiative of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau can be viewed at Davis Park in downtown Rockford.
- Eleven murals, recently added through the 2019 CRE8IV Mural Festival, may be found in downtown Rockford.
- Sculpture enthusiasts will enjoy the Rockford Sculpture Park with an impressive 13 sculptures on display.
- Fresh air and art are found along a two-mile, self-guided tour of public art through the Rock River Art Walk.

Annual Events

- The annual Stroll on State kicks off the area's holiday festivities the first Saturday after Thanksgiving with a tree lighting, parade, entertainment, shopping, and more.

Natural Areas and Resources

- The area is rich in outdoor amenities with over 10,000 acres of natural areas, lakes, and rivers through the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County while Rock Cut State Park in nearby Love's Park offers two lakes, bird watching, and hiking opportunities for visitors.
- Experience outdoor learning at the Severson Dells Nature Center or water ski and wakeboard without a boat at the West Rock Wake Park.

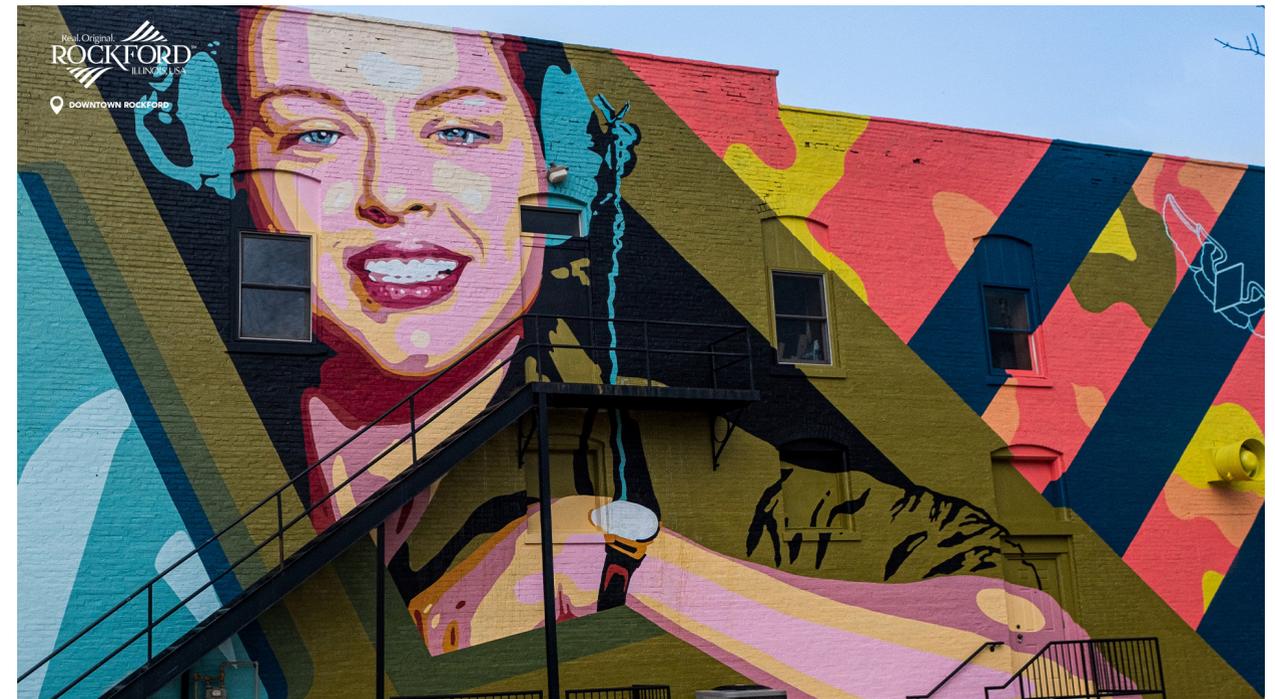
Unique Amenities

- Expansive in museum offerings, enrichment and discovery abound with a visit to the Riverfront Museum Campus where a dinosaur named Jane inhabits the Burpee Museum of Natural History, children explore at the Discover Center Museum, and an impressive collection of art resides at the Rockford Art Museum.
- Step back in time and get a glimpse of life during 1890–1910 at Midway Village Museum, experience the rich cultural heritage of the area at the Ethnic Heritage Museum, become immersed in a time capsule of Victoria-era life at the Tinker Swiss Cottage, honor those who served at the Veterans Memorial Hall and Museum, and travel to the Macktown Living History Education Center, one of the area's earliest settlements in nearby Rockton.

- Find outdoor inspiration at the Anderson Japanese Gardens, one of North America's top Japanese gardens, relaxation at Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens, and beauty for all seasons at the Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden.

Learn more about Rockford, Illinois

- <https://rockfordil.gov/>
- Convention & Visitors Bureau <https://www.gorockford.com/>
- Rockford Historical Society <https://www.rhsil.org/>
- Rockford Public Library <https://www.rockfordpubliclibrary.org/>



Downtown Rockford mural created by Jenny Roesel Ustick and Atalie Gagnet.

CHERRY VALLEY

First settler arrived 1836, organized as a village in 1896
Population...3,162
Geographic size...8.70 square miles

Known For

- A gristmill along the Kishwaukee River, and the railroad traveling through in 1857 helped to secure a place for this area, originally known as Butler Precinct, on the map. When stagecoach mail arrived, it was discovered another Butler, Illinois existed and a name change was needed. Suggestions were put into a hat and Cherry Valley, submitted by a lady who hailed from Cherry Valley, New York, was selected.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

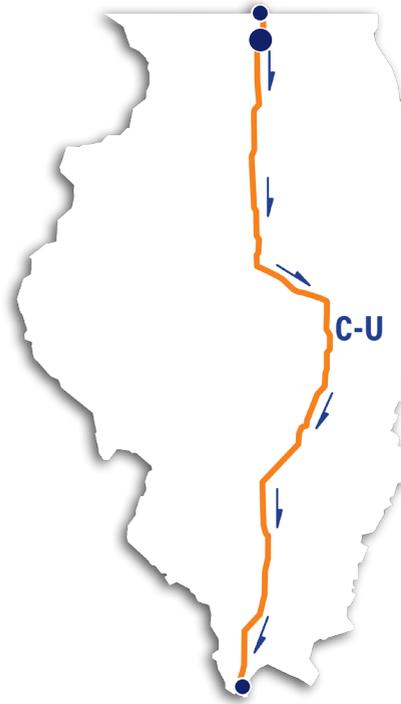
- Home to Cherryvale Mall (originally The Mall at Cherryvale), one of Illinois' first enclosed shopping malls.
- Notable people who have called Cherry Valley home include country music artist Mo Pitney; businessman, Illinois State Representative, and former Cherry Valley mayor (1945) John Baumgarten; and Virgil Abloh, artist, architect, creative and artistic director, engineer, designer, musician, and DJ.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- During the mid-late 1800s broom corn was an important crop in the area and provided a significant source of employment for both adults and children.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...180 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0



Natural Areas and Resources

- A community gem, Baumann Park, is a source of outdoor adventure with paved trails, a canoe launch, fishing, bird watching, and more.

Unique Amenities

- Kegel Harley-Davidson, the world's oldest family-owned Harley-Davidson dealership, has been serving the area for well over 100 years.
- Pick apples, raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries, take a tour, or attend a field trip at Valley Orchard, a 35-acre family-owned orchard.
- Six Flags Hurricane Harbor family water park is home to Tsunami Bay, the largest wave pool in Illinois.

Learn more about Cherry Valley, Illinois

- <http://www.cherryvalley.org/>
- Convention & Visitors Bureau <https://www.gorockford.com/about/region/south-beloit/>
- Cherry Valley Library and Historical Society <http://www.cherryvalleylib.org/wpcherryvalley/>



Kegel Harley-Davidson, in Cherry Valley, Illinois, is the world's oldest family-owned Harley-Davidson dealership.

NEW MILFORD

Settlers arrived 1834, and the earliest documented founding is noted as October 1835.
Population...689
Geographic size...2.57 square miles

Known For

- The origin of the name New Milford is not documented; however, it may be traced to early inhabitants from Milford, Connecticut; Milford, New York; or another Milford in New England.
- Starting out as a settlement perhaps as Old Shumway Place and/or Rib Town, it was officially recognized as New Milford in 1850.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- During a dig for new home construction in 1949, a mastodon molar was unearthed, which provided some of the oldest evidence of life in the New Milford area.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

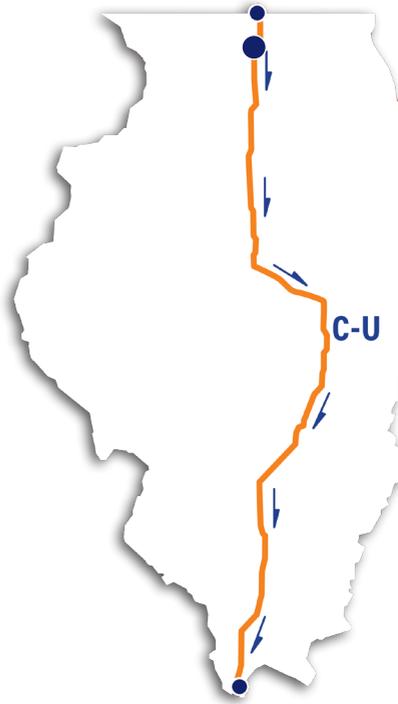
- James L. Fountain developed a revolutionary reaper, inventing exceptional cutting knives for it that did not require the use of long handled scythes at harvest time.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...175 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Natural Areas and Resources

- With proximity to the Rockford area, an abundance of natural areas, parks, and resources are nearby.



Unique Amenities

- Interesting family markers (a tree stump and a stack of logs), military graves, and fascinating stories can be found at the New Milford Cemetery.

Learn more about New Milford, Illinois

- Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau www.gorockford.com
- Rockford Public Library <https://history.rockfordpubliclibrary.org/localhistory/>
- New Milford Cemetery http://genealogytrails.com/ill/winnebago/cem/cem_new_milford_a_i.htm



New Milford, Illinois, Cemetery.

MONROE CENTER

We could not determine when Monroe Center was founded.

Population...435

Geographic size...1.2 square miles

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location 169 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Natural Areas and Resources

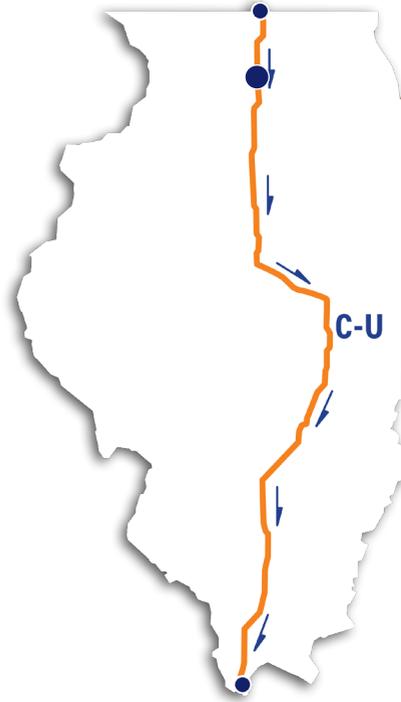
- Pack a ball, bat, and picnic basket for outdoor fun at MC Park.
- With proximity to the Rockford area, an abundance of natural areas, parks, and resources are nearby.

Unique Amenities

- Kilbuck Creek Resort is a hidden destination and getaway for special events and gatherings on 200+ acres of wooded land, complete with a flowing creek, walking paths, and a Tennessee Log Cabin.

Learn more about Monroe Center, Illinois

- Visit Northwest Illinois <https://www.visitnorthwestillinois.com/>
- Ogle County Illinois <https://www.oglecounty.org/>
- Ogle County Historical Society <http://www.oglecountyhistoricalsociety.com/>



Kilbuck Creek Resort in Monroe Center, Illinois.

WHITE ROCK

Founded as part of White Rock Township in 1849
Population including White Rock Township...738
Geographic size including White Rock
Township...35.56 square miles

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Captain John Campbell, murdered by prairie bandits in 1841, was the first burial in White Rock Cemetery.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...168 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Annual Events

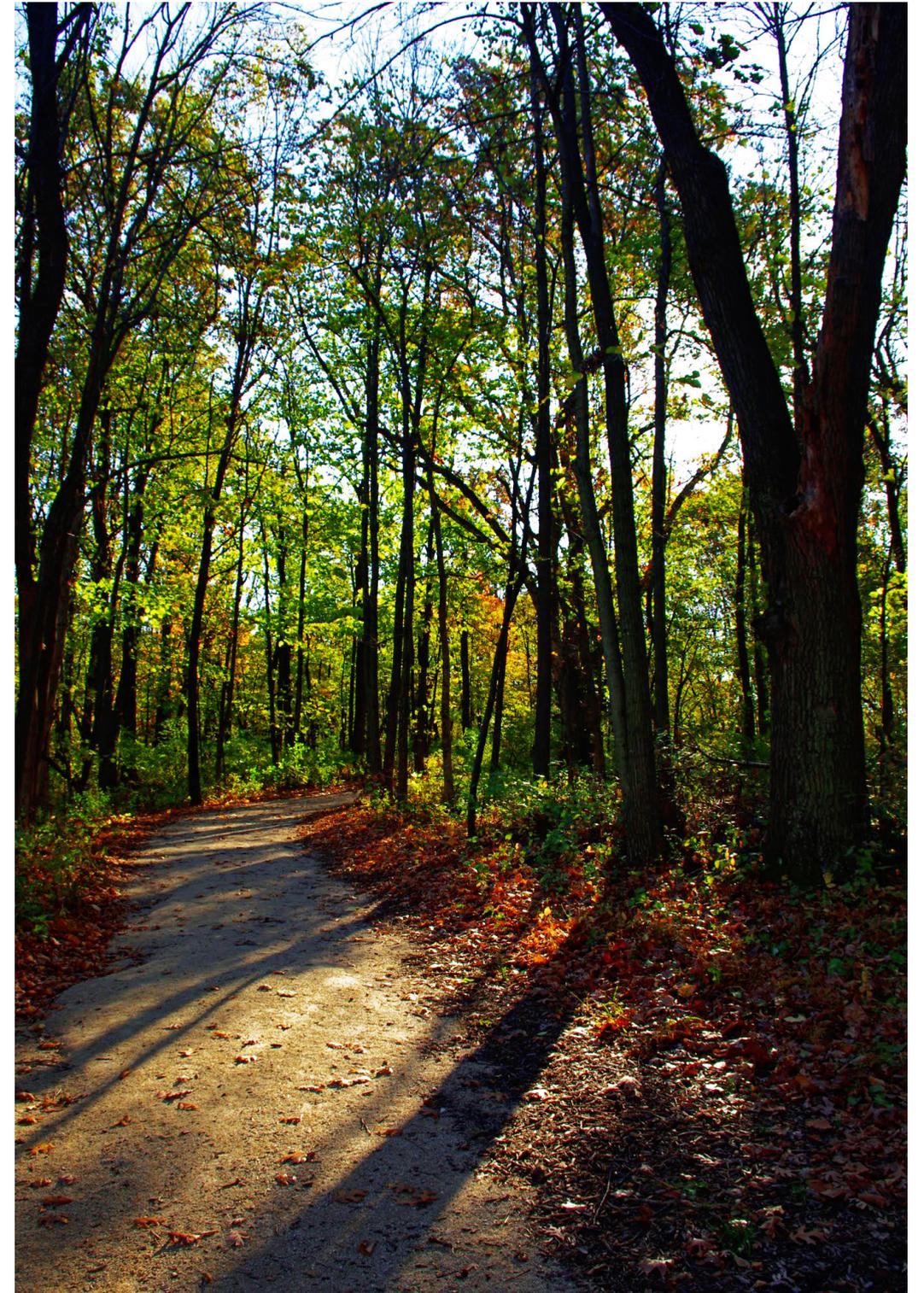
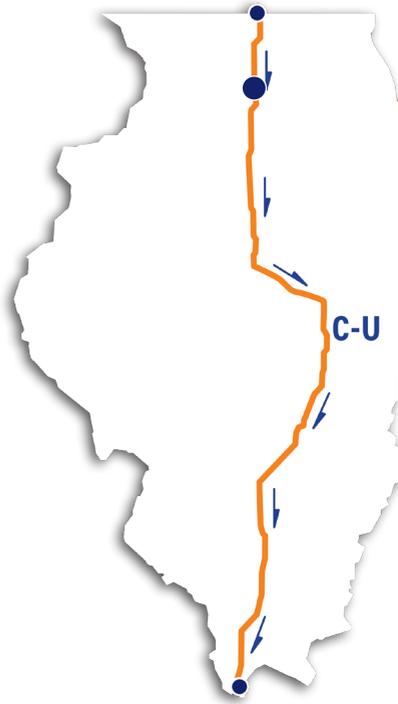
- Since 1937, nearby Stillman Valley has hosted an annual Fall Festival, a tradition for many in the surrounding communities.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Positioned within Ogle County, an abundance of natural areas and resources, including three state parks—Castle Rock, Lowden, and White Pines—are all within a few miles of one another.

Learn more about White Rock, Illinois

- Visit Northwest Illinois <https://www.visitnorthwestillinois.com/>
- White Rock Township City Data <http://www.city-data.com/township/White-Rock-Ogle-IL.html>
- White Rock Cemetery <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~ilogle/whiterockcem.htm>
- Ogle County Historical Society <http://www.oglecountyhistoricalsociety.com/>



A trail in White Pines Forest State Park near White Rock, Illinois.

© Jeff Heidrich

HILLCREST

Formed in the early 1950s and
incorporated in 1958
Population...1,237
Geographic size...3.17 square miles

Known For

- Named for its location and tucked in between park and agricultural land, the village was originally known as Bogue Addition after a prominent local physician, Dr. Arthur Bogue, who owned the large home on the “hill” and began development of the area.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...160 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Annual Events

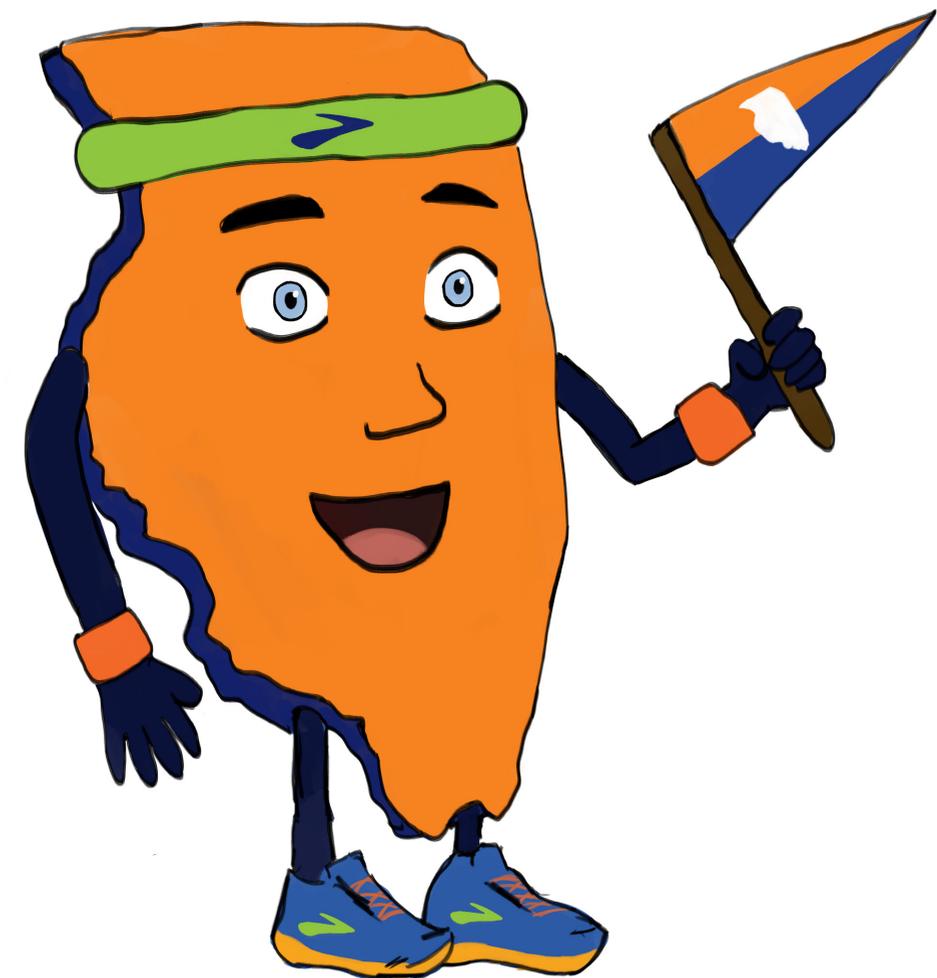
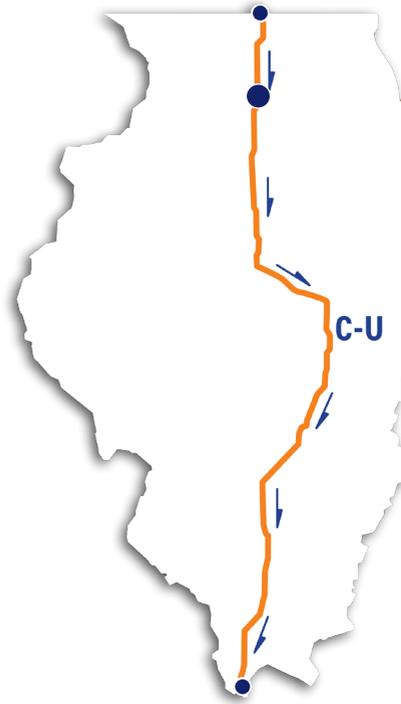
- An Old Fashioned Christmas Walk in nearby Rochelle is a destination for annual cheer.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Located in Ogle County, with Rochelle close by, state and local parks, walking paths, and a bike path provide ample outdoor opportunities for the region.

Learn more about Hillcrest, Illinois

- <https://www.hillcrestil.us/community/page/resources>
- Visit Northwest Illinois <https://www.visitnorthwestillinois.com/>
- Ogle County Illinois <https://www.oglecounty.org/>



CRESTON

Established in 1856
Population...650
Geographic size...1.15 square miles

Known For

- Located along historic Lincoln Highway, the first U.S. transcontinental road for automobiles, stretching 3,000 miles from New York City to San Francisco.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Birthplace of U.S. Representative Knute Hill of Washington, who represented Washington's 4th district from 1933–1943.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

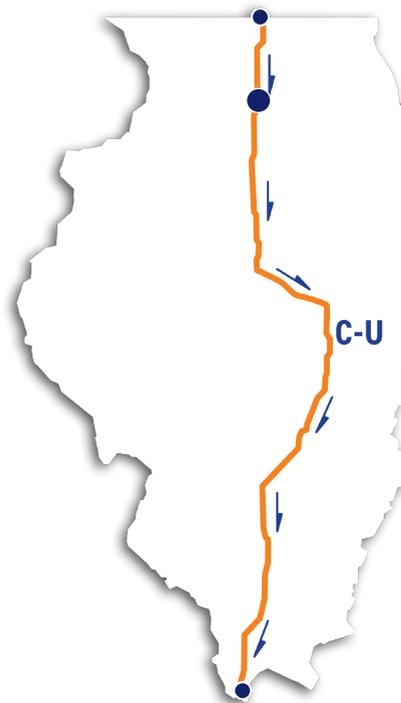
- The village boasts a vibrant and thriving agricultural base as a highlight of the community.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...159 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Public Art

- The Creston Lincoln Highway Interpretive Mural and Gazebo depicts the drinking fountains along Lincoln Highway throughout Illinois, which was the only state along the Lincoln Highway to have drinking fountains along the route.



Annual Events

- Creston Booster Days, an annual event hosted by the village for more than 60 years, is renowned as one of the top small-town festivals in the region.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Natural areas, parks, and resources are nearby within Ogle County, including three state parks, hiking, biking, and walking trails.

Unique Amenities

- Home of the Creston Regulators Vintage Baseball Team, playing baseball according to rules of the mid-late 1800s in period uniforms, encountering fellow Vintage Baseball Association teams throughout the state.

Learn more about Creston, Illinois

- <http://www.villageofcreston.org>
- Creston-Dement Public Library <http://crestonlib.org/>
- Visit Northwest Illinois <https://www.visitnorthwestillinois.com/>
- Ogle County Illinois <https://www.oglecounty.org/>



Creston, Illinois, is home to the Regulators Vintage Baseball Team.

ROCHELLE

Became a city in 1853
Population...9,574
Geographic size...12.919 square miles

Known For

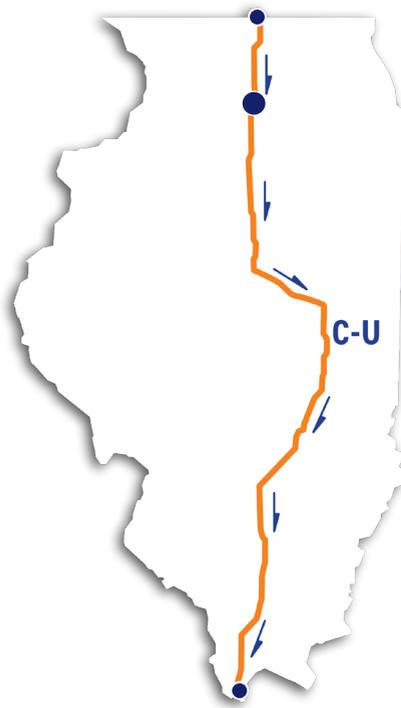
- The city has been known by several names throughout history. Originally known as Land, then Hickory Grove, it became referred to as Hang Town by residents after the Civil War because of a vigilante action. Recognizing a need for a new name to attract residents and visitors, Rochelle was selected, having been suggested by a bottle of Rochelle Salts in the local pharmacy.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Located along historic Lincoln Highway, the first U.S. transcontinental road for automobiles, stretching 3,000 miles from New York City to San Francisco.
- Crossed by major roadways and railway lines, forming a visual hub of a wagon wheel on a map, Rochelle earned the moniker “Hub City,” a name seen in area businesses as well as the high school team name “Hubs.”
- Actors Joan Allen and Lloyd Ingraham; professional football player Stan Campbell; Olympian William W. May; and journalist and women’s suffragist advocate Mabel Craft Deering name a few notable residents who have called Rochelle home.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- Home to a Bright Farms location that produces one million pounds of produce hydroponically, using beneficial bugs, such as ladybugs, in place of pesticides. Produce is available for purchase in supermarkets throughout Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Missouri.



Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...158 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Public Art

- The Rochelle Lincoln Highway Interpretive Mural reflects the travels of Emily Post along the Lincoln Highway as she wrote about her experience for *Collier's* magazine. Emily spent several days in Rochelle, enjoying the welcoming, sociable reception she received from the community.

Annual Events

- The Old Fashioned Christmas Walk complete with a lighted parade, horse and carriage rides, and community tree lighting brings warmth to the area even on the chilliest of December nights.
- Railroad Days celebrate the rich history and ties to the nation’s railway system and hub of rail transportation throughout the town.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Situated in Ogle County, an abundance of outdoor recreation is nearby with three state parks in the area.
- Closer to home, open space, hiking, boating, fishing, picnicking, and more can be found through the 25 parks located within the Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District.

Unique Amenities

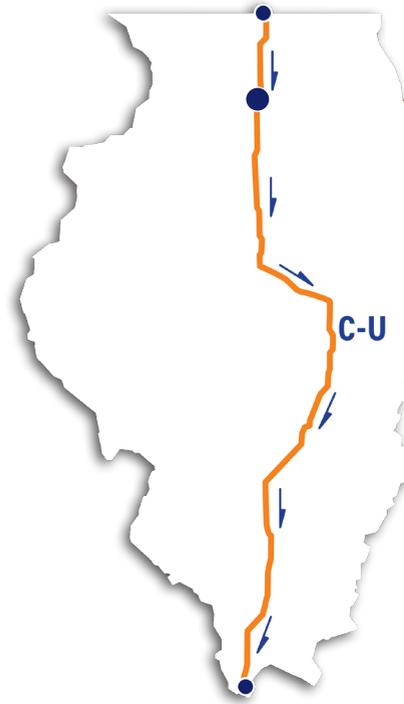
- The Rochelle Railroad Park is the first park in the nation designed for visitors to view operating trains. The park is open year-round, complete with a pavilion, for railroad enthusiasts to view the approximately 80 to 90 trains that pass through Rochelle in a 24-hour period. Visitors can also tune in to live dispatcher communications.
- The Flagg Township Museum, located in an Italianate structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places, interprets the area’s local history through exhibit and events.

Learn more about Rochelle, Illinois

- <https://www.cityofrochelle.net/>
- Enjoy Rochelle <http://www.enjoyrochelle.com/>
- Flagg-Rochelle Public Library District <http://www.rochellepubliclibrary.org/home/welcome/>
- Flagg Township Museum <http://www.flaggtownshipmuseumrochelle.org/home.aspx>
- Visit Northwest Illinois <https://www.visitnorthwestillinois.com/>
- Ogle County Illinois <https://www.oglecounty.org/>

STEWARD

Founded in 1870
Population...256
Geographic size...0.2 square miles



Known For

- The village is named for Wesley Steward, who arrived in the area in 1855 and was instrumental in bringing the Chicago and Iowa Railroad (later Burlington Northern) through the area in 1870.
- For over 15 years, the village has been a Tree City USA, planting trees, celebrating Arbor Day, and establishing a committee to meet the requirements of this affiliation.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Birthplace of professional baseball player Leroy Hermann, pitcher for the Chicago Cubs (1932-33) and Cincinnati Reds (1935).

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...151 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Public Art

- The Steward Celebration Garden honors and celebrates community residents in a peaceful garden setting.

Annual Events

- Stewardfest, a community celebration, is held annually the first Friday in August.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Located within Lee County, outdoor amenities such as the Franklin Creek State Natural Area with birding, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, and the Nachusa Grasslands where bison roam are within miles of this community.

Unique Amenities

- The Historic Train Depot, dating to 1896, provides a peek into the past and an appreciation for the present, housing a local history museum within its historic structure.

Learn more about Steward, Illinois

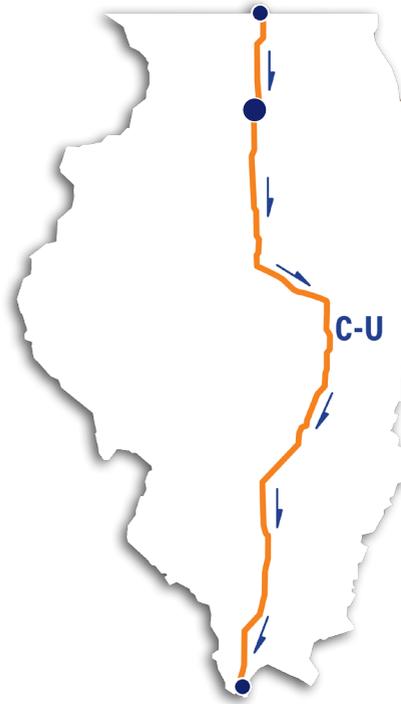
- <https://www.stewardil.com/>
- Lee County Illinois <https://leecountyfun.com/>



Steward, Illinois, has been a Tree City USA for 15 consecutive years. To keep this distinction, the town must have an Arbor Day Proclamation, celebrate Arbor Day, have a tree ordinance and tree committee, and spend at least \$2 per capita on trees each year. The town is supporting the Arbor Day Foundation's initiative for 2022—the 150th anniversary of Arbor Day—to plant 100 million trees and inspire 5 million new tree planters.

COMPTON

Founded in 1875
Population...347
Geographic size...0.16 square miles



Known For

- The village began as Melugin Grove in 1833, after Zachariah Melugin settled the area along the stage route between Galena and Chicago. During the period of railroad expansion, railroad tracks laid in 1872 surprisingly did not follow the stage route and instead were laid one mile away through property owned by Joel Compton. Businesses in town quickly moved closer to the land near the railroad, and the village of Compton was established in 1875.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- At one time in the community's development, one of the most prominent institutions in the area was the Chandler Hospital, established by physician Dr. A.W. Chandler, which treated patients from throughout the country.
- Birthplace of professional baseball player Joe Zdeb, outfielder for the Kansas City Royals (1977–1979).

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...142 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Public Art

- A quick trip through Lee County to Dixon leads to the Reagan Peace Park, home of a twenty-foot outdoor marble sculpture, "Wings of Peace and Freedom," and murals depicting President Reagan's "Tear Down This Wall" speech.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Mathesius Memorial Park offers a baseball field, picnic shelter, and playground for area residents.
- Located within Lee County, outdoor amenities such as the Franklin Creek State Natural Area with birding, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, and the Nachusa Grasslands where bison roam are within miles of this community.

Learn more about Compton, Illinois

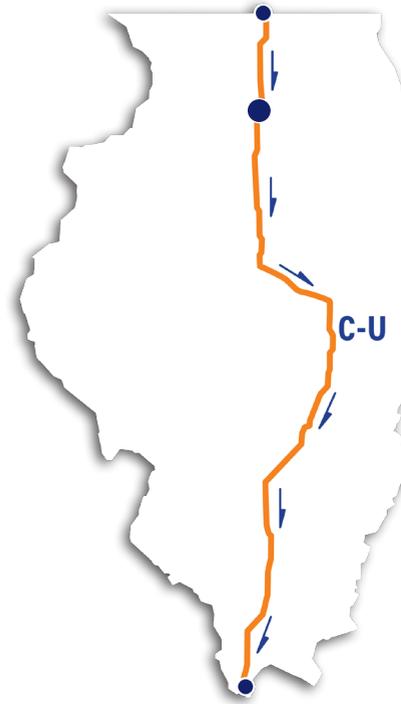
- <http://genealogytrails.com/ill/lee/leecitycompton.html>
- Lee County Illinois <https://leecountyfun.com/>



Mathesius Memorial Park in Compton, Illinois.

PAW PAW

Settled in 1834 and official named in 1878
Population...870
Geographic size...0.59 square miles



Known For

- The village name was derived from a forest of Pawpaw trees that produce the largest edible fruits indigenous to the United States. Sweet and reminiscent of banana, mango, and pineapple, the fruits are most used in baked desserts and ice cream.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Located along the Frink & Walker stagecoach line between Galena and Chicago.
- Birthplace of major league baseball player George Bristow, outfielder for the Cleveland Spiders (1899), U.S. Representative Ulysses S. Guyer, football coach Jesse Harper, and educator Robben Wright Fleming.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...142 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Public Art

- Within Lee County, a visit to neighboring communities are home to an historic arch, plaques, and sculpture.

Annual Events

- An annual car show, parade, and entertainment mark the annual Lions Club Labor Day Celebration in the community.
- Area runners, walkers, cyclists, and fitness enthusiasts can find events throughout the year within Lee County.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Lion's Park, with a baseball field and playground, provides outdoor opportunities close to home.

Unique Amenities

- The Stephen Wright House, an example of Queen Anne style architecture, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Learn more about Paw Paw, Illinois

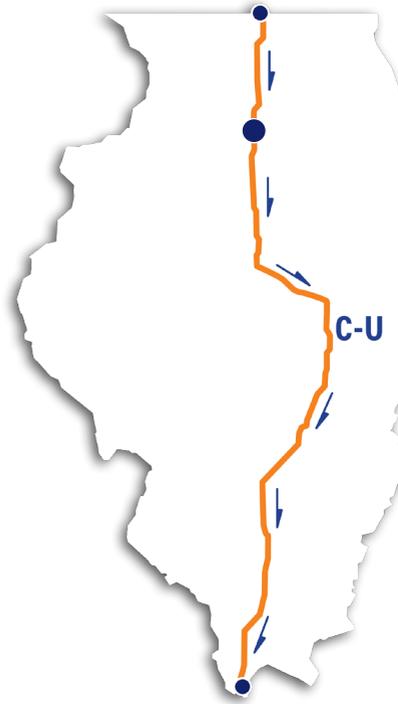
- <https://pawpawil.org/>
- Lee County Illinois <https://leecountyfun.com/>



Pawpaw are native to North America, growing wild in 26 states. They taste like a combination of banana, pineapple, and mango; they are nutritional superstars, and they are great to cook with. Pawpaw meringue pie, anyone?

MERIDEN

First settled in 1836, unincorporated and located within Meriden Township, and founded in 1849
Population...316
Geographic size...35.28 square miles



Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Since 1954, drive-in movies have been a mainstay at the Route 34 Drive-In in nearby Earlville.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...131 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Natural Areas and Resources

- Located within LaSalle County, four state parks, areas for running, boating, fishing, hiking, birding, camping, and exploring are abundant.

Learn more about Meriden, Illinois

- Meriden Township <https://www.toi.org/township/lasalle-county-meriden-township>
- Meriden History <http://genealogytrails.com/ill/lasalle/township/meriden.html>
- LaSalle County Illinois <https://lasallecounty.org/>
- Enjoy LaSalle County <http://www.enjoylasallecounty.com/>



Residents of Meriden, Illinois, have been going to the nearby Route 34 Drive-In in Earlville, Illinois, since 1954.

MENDOTA

Incorporated in 1853

Population...7,372

Geographic size...5.15 square miles

Known For

- The name Mendota is derived from a Lakota word meaning “junction of two trails,” appropriate since there is a junction of the Illinois Central Railroad and Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Mendota has been home to several prominent residents, from inventor William P. Bettendorf to football players Bill Brown, Ray Jauch, Frank Seno, to professional baseball players Otto Vogel and Deacon White to cartoonist Helen Hokinson to motorcycle designer Jason Pohl and Illinois state legislator David C. Shapiro.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

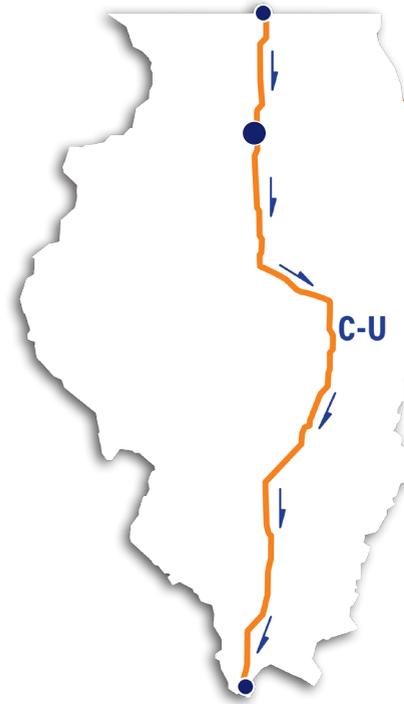
- Early industry included Mother Hubbard washboards, Schaller and Goebel buggies and carriages, Extra Pale beer, and the manufacture of high-style pump organs.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...132 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...7

Public Art

- Silo art depicting an 80-foot ear of corn was established as one of the first silo art pieces in the area as part of the North Central Illinois ARTworks’ Silo Pathways Countryside Public Art Tour.



Annual Events

- The Mendota Sweet Corn Festival held every August treats visitors to corn cooked to perfection in a vintage steam engine.
- Each Labor Day, the Mendota Tri-County Fair hosts carnival rides, entertainment, and events at the fairgrounds where in 2013 the English rock band, the Arctic Monkeys, filmed a music video.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Lake Mendota and Lake Kakusha provide boating and fishing opportunities for the community.
- Snyder’s Grove is a 104-acre nature preserve complete with shelters and picnic areas for a full day of outdoor enjoyment.

Unique Amenities

- Home to three museums—the Hume-Carnegie Museum (featuring a small collection pertaining to Wild Bill Hickok), the Union Depot Railroad Museum, and the Breaking the Prairie Museum.

Learn more about Mendota, Illinois

- <https://www.mendota.il.us/>
- Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce <http://www.mendotachamber.com/>
- Mendota Museum and Historical Society <http://www.mendotamuseums.org/>
- LaSalle County Illinois <https://lasallecounty.org/>
- Enjoy LaSalle County <http://www.enjoylasallecounty.com/>



“Mendota Gold,” created by Ray Paseka and his team, is hand-painted on the southern silo at Northern Partners Cooperative in downtown, Mendota, Illinois.

TROY GROVE

Incorporated in 1886
Population...250
Geographic size...0.69 square miles

Known For

- Originally laid out by an early settler from Homer, New York, the town was called Homer for a time until it was noted that a post office already existed in Homer, Illinois. Taking its name from the local grove, named for an early settler, the area became known as Troy Grove.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Birthplace to Wild Bill Hickok, folk hero of the American Old West.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

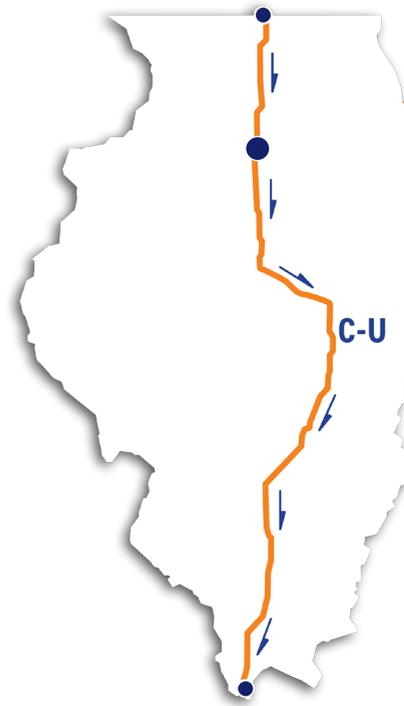
- Silica sand, used for making glass, is mined in the area of Troy Grove. The raw material is transported from the active mines via the Union Pacific Railroad.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...124 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Public Art

- Home to the Wild Bill Hickok Memorial, a state historic site operated by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.



Annual Events

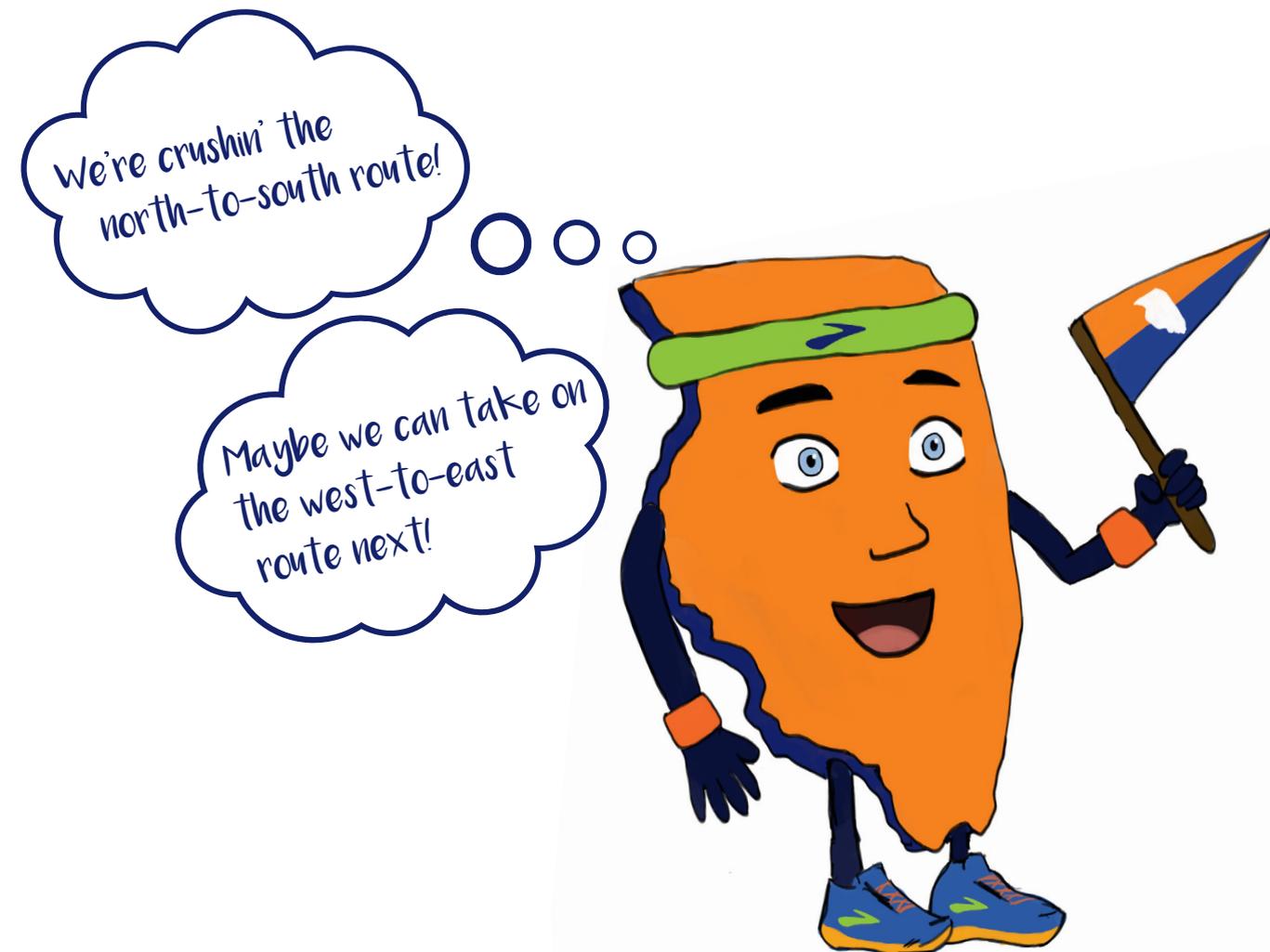
- Area events throughout LaSalle County in nearby Utica and Starved Rock State Park provide events and activities.

Natural Areas and Resources

- State and local parks, preserves, and trails dot the landscape throughout LaSalle County and are within a few miles from Troy Grove.

Learn more about Troy Grove, Illinois

- Troy Grove History <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~illasall/townhist/troygrove.htm>
- Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce <http://www.mendotachamber.com/>
- LaSalle County Illinois <https://lasallecounty.org/>
- Enjoy LaSalle County <http://www.enjoylasallecounty.com/>



Originally platted in 1838 and established as a city in 1852
 Population...9,609
 Geographic size...13.57 square miles

Known For

- Named in honor of the French explorer Robert de LaSalle.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

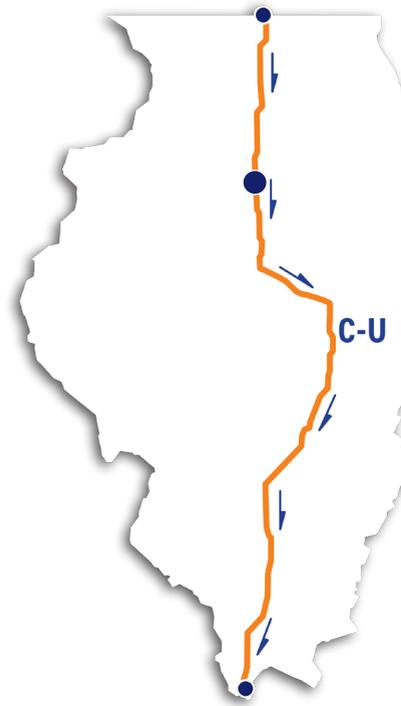
- The Illinois & Michigan Canal was an original idea of the explorer Louis Joliet. When Illinois became a state, the idea of a canal connecting Lake Michigan to the Illinois River was well received with Abraham Lincoln one of the noted supporters.
- Many accomplished individuals have called LaSalle home. Professional baseball and football players, film directors, sports coaches, Illinois politicians, state and federal judges, an author, artist, architect, and journalists are just some of the professions represented by residents of LaSalle.
- Known as “Little Reno” after the era of Prohibition, gambling, though not legal nor sanctioned, became the primary commercial business from 1933–1953.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- Coal mining under the city during the 1850s and the establishment of the first zinc smelting plant in the United States earned LaSalle and its twin city, Peru, the name Zinc City, spanning the years 1858–1978.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...116 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...1



Public Art

- Located in LaSalle County, nearby Ottawa’s downtown Ottawa Mural Walking Tour provides public art and history appreciation to area visitors to the county.

Annual Events

- Area events throughout LaSalle County in nearby Utica and Starved Rock State Park provide events and activities nearby.

Natural Areas and Resources

- The I & M Canal National Heritage Area is home to outdoor exploration along the canal by foot, bicycle, and boat.

Unique Amenities

- The I & M Canal Boat, a replica boat that was pulled by mule down the Illinois & Michigan Canal, takes riders on this boat pulled by mule during the summer months.
- National Historic Structures are abundant in LaSalle, with the Hegeler Carus Mansion, home of the owners of one of the largest zinc producers in the world; Hotel Kaskaskia; Julius W. Hegeler House; and the LaSalle City Building.

Learn more about LaSalle, Illinois

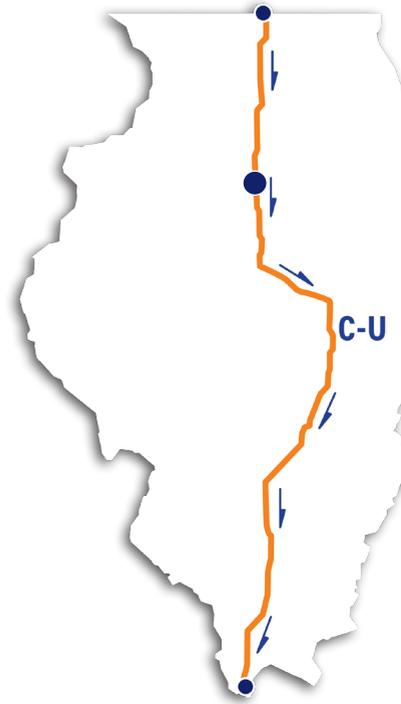
- <https://www.lasalle-il.gov/>
- LaSalle Public Library <https://www.lasalle.lib.il.us/>
- LaSalle County Illinois <https://lasallemounty.org/>
- Enjoy LaSalle County <http://www.enjoylasallemounty.com/>
- I & M Canal National Heritage Area <https://iandmcanal.org/>



You can take an I&M Canal mule-pulled boat ride in LaSalle, Illinois, aboard “Volunteer,” a replica 1840s canal boat.

PERU

The first settler arrived in 1830;
incorporated 1851
Population...10,295
Geographic size...9.77 square miles



Known For

- Early home as a steamboat port along the Illinois River.
- Since 1915, Peru has been home to the Carus Chemical Company, one of the largest producers of potassium permanganate in the world.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- With access to the Illinois & Michigan Canal, railroad lines and four coal mines in the area, Peru enjoyed a position as a hub of industry for nearly 100 years beginning in the 1830s.
- Businesses thrived in the early development years with Maze Lumber, Maze Nails, Peru Plow and Wheel Works, Huse and Loomis Ice Co, Brunner Foundry, Star Union Brewery, Hebel Brewery, and Illinois Zinc.
- Charles F. Gunther, inventor of the caramel, has called Peru home along with professional football players, actors, Illinois politicians, a congressman, major league baseball players, state and federal judges, Civil War Generals, composers, musicians, inventors, and the oldest person to have called Illinois home, Wilhelmina Kott.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- Coal mining and the establishment of the first zinc smelting plant in the United States during the 1850s earned Peru and its twin city LaSalle the name Zinc City, spanning the years 1858–1978.

- The Western Clock Company, which emerged from the bankrupt United Clock Company, gained national recognition with the alarm clock trademarked “Westclox.” The company was also nationally recognized as a model organization for employee benefits, insurance, and safety.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...114 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...2

Public Art

- Located in LaSalle County, nearby Ottawa’s downtown Ottawa Mural Walking Tour provides public art and history appreciation to area visitors to the county.

Annual Events

- Christkindlmarket festival in twin city LaSalle celebrates the winter season with a German holiday market.

Natural Areas and Resources

- The I & M Canal National Heritage Area is home to outdoor exploration along the canal by foot, bicycle, and boat.
- Baker Lake Park is a destination for fishing, picnicking, soccer, and a paved one-mile walking path.

Unique Amenities

- Westclox Museum preserving and exhibiting the history of the Western Clock Company, also known as “Westclox.”
- Location of the Igloo Diner founded in 1937 during the Great Depression.

Learn more about Peru, Illinois

- <https://www.peru.il.us/>
- LaSalle County Illinois <https://lasallemounty.org/>
- Enjoy LaSalle County <http://www.enjoylasallemounty.com/>
- I & M Canal National Heritage Area <https://iandmcanal.org/>

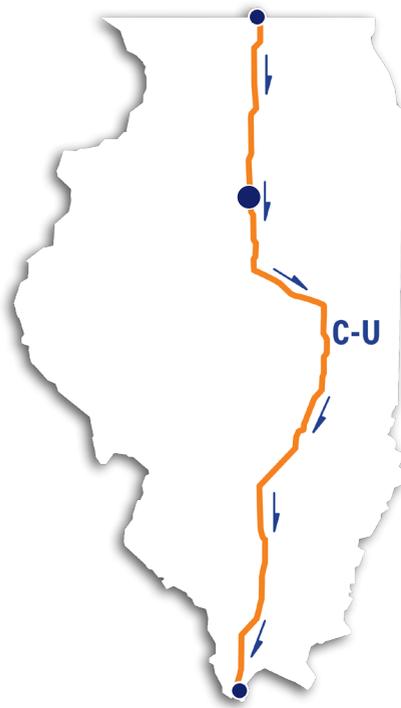
Officially became a town in 1902
Population...4,483
Geographic size... 4.11 square miles

Known For

- Originally referred to as Kenosha, after the Kenosha Coal Company sank a coal mining shaft there in 1865, and then named Portland because the cement manufactured in the area was similar to Portland Cement in England. Finally, in 1913, the citizens of Portland voted to rename the town after the former U.S. Senator and three-time Illinois Governor, Richard James Oglesby.
- Located near the confluence of the Illinois River and the north-flowing Vermilion River, Oglesby was a center for mining coal, limestone, and silica.
- Cement being a major industry in the town for over 100 years.
- Being home to Illinois Valley Community College, a top Illinois community college.
- Where friends and rivers meet.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- A number of athletes hail from the town, including Jim Bottomley, first baseman for the St. Louis Cardinals, Cincinnati Reds, and St. Louis Browns; Frank Lamanske, pitcher for the Brooklyn Dodgers; Bo Molenda, fullback (and later coach) for the Green Bay Packers and New York Giants; and Walt Tauscher, pitcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates and Washington Senators.



Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...112 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Public Art

- A mural created during the Depression to boost the morale of the American people—*The Illini and Potawatomi Struggle at Starved Rock*—resides in the town's post office and received a restoration in 1988.
- A major city icon was demolished in 2001—the Shippingsport Bridge, a steel, lift bridge across the Illinois River that originally opened in 1929 and served as the main north and south road until the 1960s, when Route 51 was moved. Its demise left only two other steel, lift bridges in Illinois.

Annual Events

- Harvest Fest takes place the third Saturday in October and includes a craft and vendor fair, parade, trick or treating downtown, and more.
- Christmas Candyland celebrates the holiday season the second Sunday in December and invites residents to explore store fronts and stops throughout town for a winter treat.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Home to Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks, where you can hike among the beautiful sandstone canyons, see seasonal waterfalls, and much more. See pages 44–45 for more details.

Unique Fact

- Fay E. Davis's historic mural depicting the legend of the struggle at Starved Rock has been a bit of a lightning rod since its completion in 1942. In 1993, a post office custodian launched a complaint that the nudity in the mural created a hostile work environment. This led to the painting being covered, although viewable upon request. Townspeople joined forces to support uncovering the work of art and, after an investigation determined that the nudity was not offensive, the painting remains uncovered in the lobby of the Oglesby post office.

Learn more about Oglesby, Illinois

- <http://www.oglesby.il.us/newsite/>
- Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce <http://www.oglesby.il.us/newsite/chamber-of-commerce/>
- Oglesby Public Library <https://oglesbylibrary.org/timeline/>

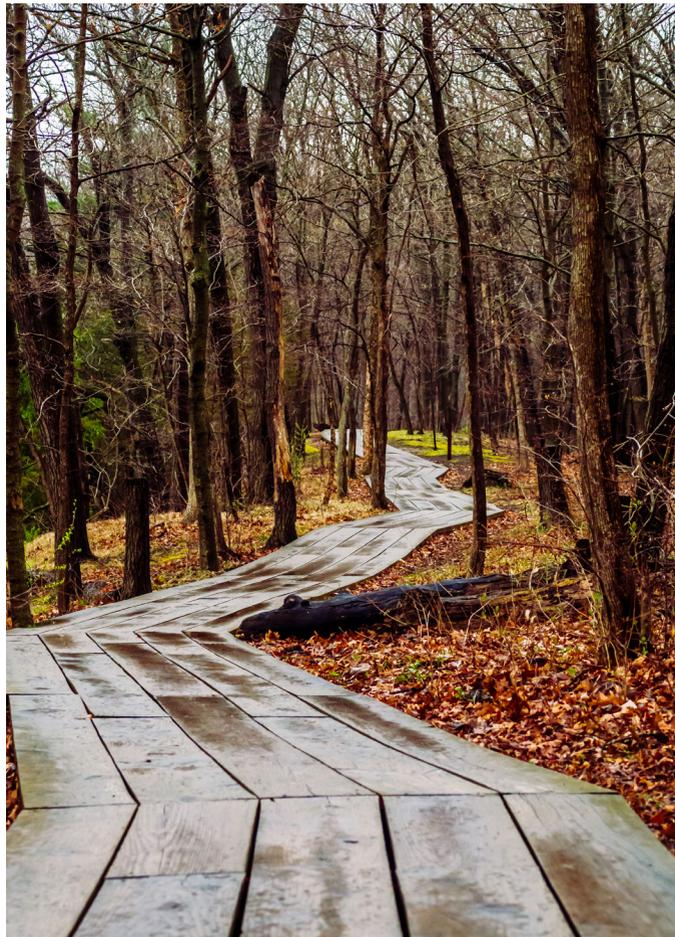
Starved Rock State Park & Matthiessen State Park

About Starved Rock State Park

- Starved Rock State Park encompasses 2,630 acres and greets over two million visitors a year, making it the most visited of any Illinois state parks. You'll find 13 miles of trails, 18 deep canyons, numerous waterfalls, and breathtaking Illinois River bluff overlooks. The far west side of the park has horseback riding trails. There's also a lodge/conference center, visitor's center, camping, fishing, boating, and many picnic areas. Birders flock to the park to see the bald eagles that are transitory to the area.

How the Park Got Its Name

- The area was originally home to Native Americans, particularly the Kaskaskia. The first Europeans arrived in the 17th century, and by 1683, the French had built Fort St. Louis on a large sandstone butte overlooking the Illinois River. According to local legend, in the late 17th century, a group of Native Americans of the Illinois Confederation who were being pursued by the Ottawa and Potawatomi took refuge on the butte. Around 1769, the Ottawa and Potawatomi attacked the butte until all of the Illiniwek had starved, and the butte became known as "Starved Rock." The area around The Rock was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960.



A winding trail in Starved Rock State Park.
© Jeff Heidrich

About Matthiessen State Park

- Matthiessen State Park** is the lesser-known of the two parks. While smaller, at 1,938 acres, the park's fabulous trails, waterfalls, and spectacular geological formations—minus all the crowds found at Starved Rock—make it extra appealing. The entrance is also located on Illinois State Route 178, a few miles south of Starved Rock State Park.

How the Park Got Its Name

- The park is named for Frederick William Matthiessen, who had originally owned the 176 acres of property that makes the core of the current park. Two mansions, several cottages, a garage, and a private fire station were built here by Matthiessen for his family. Following Matthiessen's death in 1918, his heirs donated the park to the state. It was renamed in his honor in 1943, and in subsequent decades lots more land was added to the park.



The upper dell at Matthiessen State Park.

CEDAR POINT

A LaSalle County village incorporated in 1922
Population...277
Geographic size...1.02 square miles

Known For

- Named after Cedar Point Mine, which operated north of town from 1906 to 1924.
- The LaSalle Carbon Coal Company, which sunk the Number 5 Mine in 1906. The mine closed in 1924.
- June Bug's Corral Inn, owned for the last 53 years by Charlotte Olson, who tells us that people come from far and wide to eat her fried chicken, ravioli, and fried turtle. The postmaster in Tonica, Illinois, confirmed that claim!! Located at 108 4th St in Cedar Point.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...111 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Annual Events

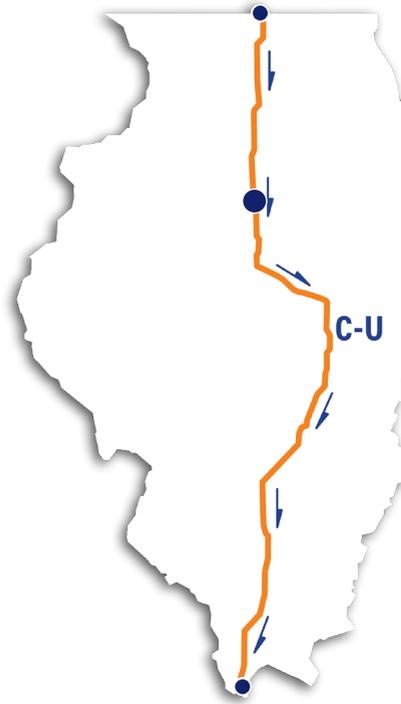
- There's an annual Cops for Cancer fundraiser each June.

Natural Areas and Resources

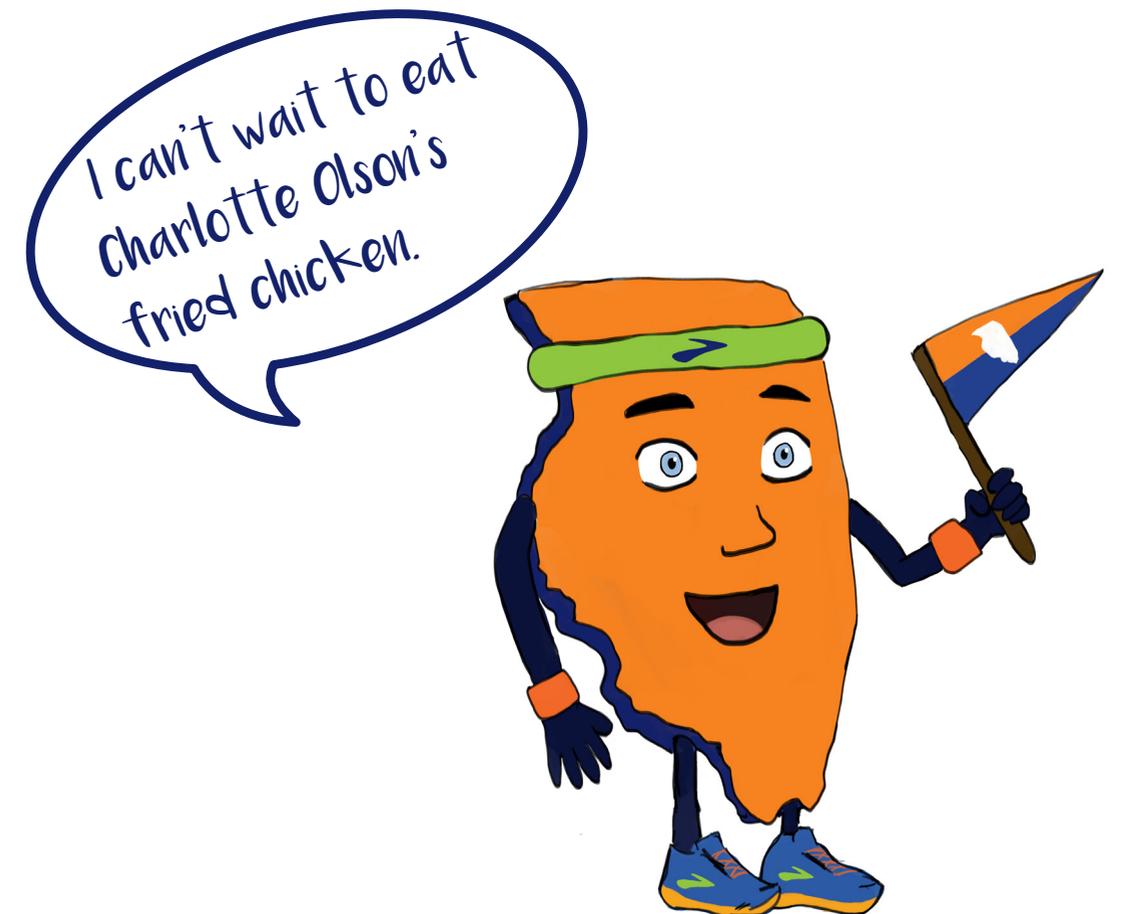
- The town has one park named Cerri Memorial Park.

Learn more about Cedar Point, Illinois

- LaSalle County Illinois <https://lasallecounty.org/>
- Enjoy LaSalle County <http://www.enjoylasallecounty.com/commerce/>



June Bug's Corral Inn in Cedar Point, Illinois.



TONICA

Founded in 1853
Population...768
Geographic size...1.36 square miles

Known For

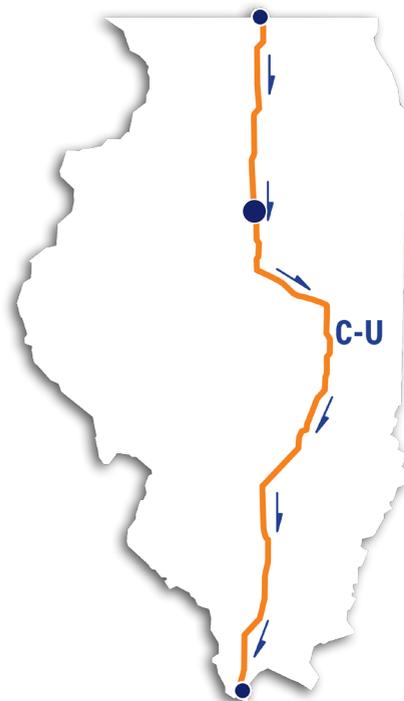
- Tonica was originally a small hamlet called Point Republic. The village was founded in 1853 by Andrew West, the local agent for the Illinois Central Railroad, which had started running its trains through the area in May of that year. When a bridge over the Illinois River was completed in 1854, Tonica gained access to trade and new business opportunities.
- The name Tonica derives from the Tunica people, a group of linguistically and culturally related Native American tribes in the Mississippi River Valley that West learned about while growing up in New York.
- An 1867 fire destroyed nearly every building in the business section of Main Street, except for one lone brick building. Armed by the lesson of the fire, the town rebuilt immediately, making sure to erect substantial brick structures, some of which still stand today.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- In its early days, Tonica's chief shipping interest was in livestock, principally hogs. The town had the reputation of shipping more pork than any village of its size on the Illinois Central Railroad.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...106 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0



Unique Fact

- Sadly, *The Tonica News*, which was established in 1873 and covered local news, sports, business, and community events in Tonica, Lostant, and the surrounding communities of LaSalle County, stopped publishing in May 2020.

Learn more about Tonica, Illinois

- LaSalle County Illinois <https://lasallemounty.org/>
- Enjoy LaSalle County <http://www.enjoylasallemounty.com/>

The Tonica News

*Serving the Tonica & Lostant
area since 1873*

815-442-8419

The Tonica News
P.O. Box 86, Tonica, IL 61370
news@tonicanews.com

LaSalle County residents will miss The Tonica News, which stopped publishing in May 2020, after almost 150 years in print.

LOSTANT

A LaSalle County village incorporated in 1867
Population...484, including the cats and dogs
Geographic size...1.124 square miles

Known For

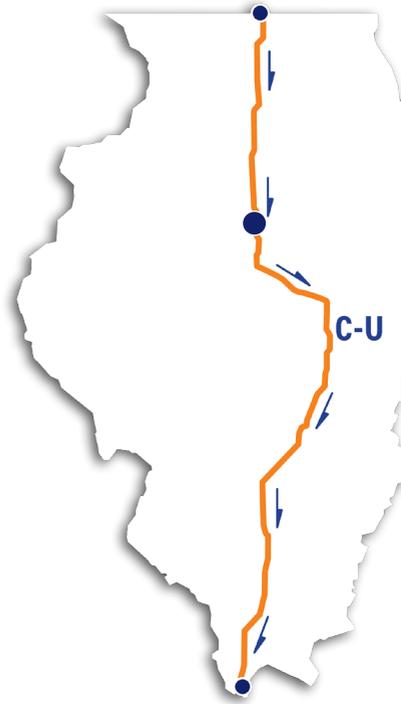
- Lostant was sometimes known as L'Ostant in its early days. John M. Richey from Mushingum County, Ohio, laid out the village in September of 1861, and the citizens voted to incorporate in 1867.
- The first post office in the village opened in 1862.
- By 1886, the town was “booming” and had three general stores, two grocery stores, two hardware stores, a furniture store, two druggists, two millinery stores, three saloons, a restaurant, a boot and shoe store, two shoemakers, two harness shops, a wagon shop, two blacksmith shops, two grain elevators, two barber shops, a mill, two tile factories, two meat markets, a carpenter and a contractor, a lumber-yard, a broom factory, a music store, two physicians, and one lawyer. Today, just a handful of businesses remain.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- In the late 19th century, it is believed that more grain shipped from Lostant than any other station on the Illinois Central Railroad between Bloomington and Freeport. The two large elevators used to ship yearly between 600,000 and 700,000 bushels of grain.
- Today, Lostant is primarily a farming community. Ruff Brothers Grain Company has a grain elevator in Lostant and many towns in the area.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...101 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0



Annual Events

- An annual Lostant Fall Fest lasted about 15 years but is not held any longer.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Village Park, on the east side of town, is a small-town green space with playground equipment and a pavilion, perfect for friend and family gatherings.

Unique Amenities

- Dave’s Lost Ant Café, 1422 North US Highway 251, is a must-visit when you are in/near Lostant. David Holmes, who has lived in Lostant for more than 30 years, is described as the “nicest owner alive.” You’ll get great service, great food, and a cozy vibe. Dave opens early for the local farmers looking for a good breakfast to start their day and stays open late for folks who want to hang out at the bar. His noon lunches are popular. Be sure to try his fried chicken and his tacos.

Learn more about Lostant, Illinois

- LaSalle County Illinois <https://lasallecounty.org/>
- Enjoy LaSalle County <http://www.enjoylasallecounty.com/>



Dave's Lost Ant Cafe in Lostant, Illinois.

RUTLAND

A LaSalle County village founded in 1855
Population...304
Geographic size... 0.69 square miles

Known For

- The village was founded as “New Rutland” in 1855 when about 200 members of the Vermont Emigration Association paid \$10 each for a plot of land. Rutland is a town in Vermont. Located in the southern panhandle of LaSalle County, the original location of the town-site was exclusively within LaSalle County, until 10 additional blocks of land were added in October 1856. The western border of the village is the LaSalle/Marshall County line.
- Other than homes, all we can find in Rutland is a post office, a park, and an American Legion Post 1121.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

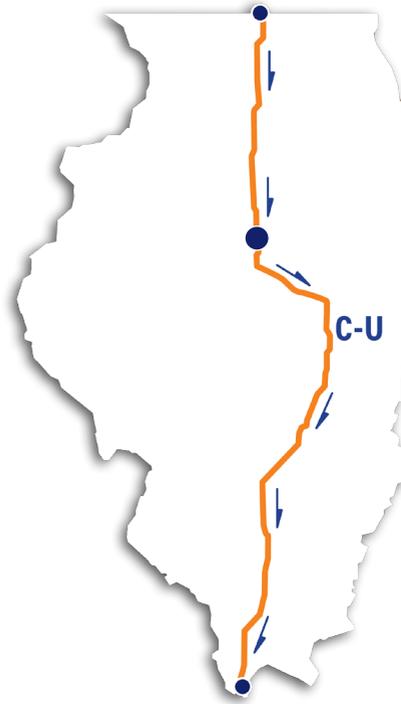
- Distance to C-U from the location...89 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Natural Areas and Resources

- There is one park that seems to go by both the name Rutland Park and Stenger Park.

Learn more about Rutland, Illinois

- LaSalle County Illinois <https://lasallecounty.org/>
- Enjoy LaSalle County <http://www.enjoylasallecounty.com/>



The Rutland, Illinois, post office.

MINONK

Settled in 1854; located by railroad engineer David Neal
Population...2,078
Geographic size...2.42 square miles

Known For

- The meaning of the town's name has been a source of controversy, with differing accounts as to its origin. Some say it is the Ojibwa Indian Tribe word meaning "a good place" while others reference "Minonk" as a Mohican term meaning "high point." Despite that historical controversy, the community agrees with the town motto, which is a "Good Place" to Live.
- With three railroad lines calling Minonk home over the years, the community grew with the railroad and earned an identity as a railroad town.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

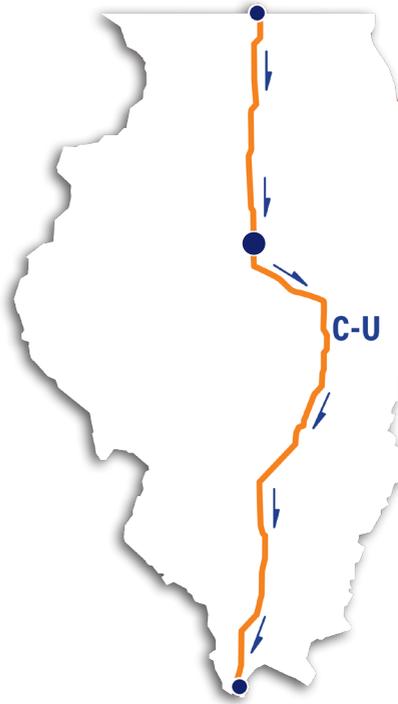
- Minonk marked a significant place in history becoming the first city in the country to install incandescent lighting on both the city streets and within the homes of the city's residents.
- Birthplace of microbiologist and mycologist Charles Thom whose contributions were significant in the development of penicillin during World War II.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- Lumber and coal mining were integral to the town's development, with several coal mines and four lumber yards established there.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...86 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...1



Natural Areas and Resources

- The city boasts a variety of beautiful and well-maintained parks for the community to enjoy. The community parks are operated by a Parks & Recreation Board comprised of all volunteers.

Learn more about Minonk, Illinois

- <https://cityofminonk.com/>
- Filger Public Library <https://minonklibrary.wordpress.com/>
- City Data for Minonk <http://www.city-data.com/city/Minonk-Illinois.html>



The Minonk town motto.

EL PASO

Founded with the larger township of El Paso in 1861

Population...2,810

Geographic size...2.13 square miles

Known For

- Named after El Paso, Texas, by founders George Gibson and James Wathen.

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- The city of El Paso used manual switching of telephone lines until 1975 and was the last location in the contiguous United States to do so.

Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

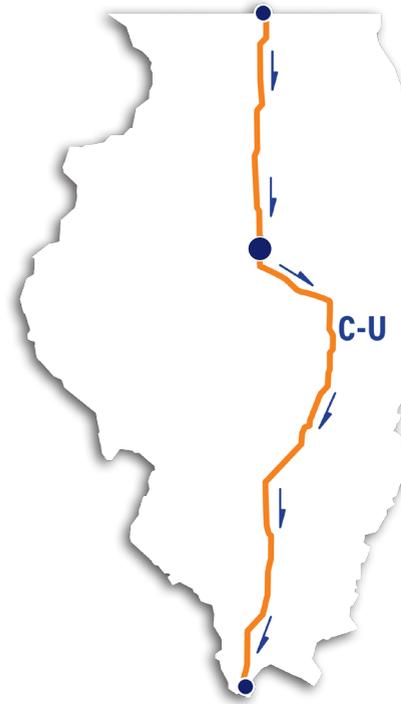
- El Paso has been home to notable residents including an Illinois legislator and a college athletic coach.
- The city has also produced recognizable television faces as the birthplace of both Archbishop Fulton John Sheen of the Catholic Hour and actor Byron Keith of *Batman* and *77 Sunset Strip*.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location... 74 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...9

Annual Events

- The city hosts an annual National Night Out, the first Tuesday of August. As part of a nationwide event, the annual night promotes a sense of community through neighborhood activities and police-community relationship building.



Natural Areas and Resources

- Parks and outdoor activities are abundant through the city's Parks and Recreation department. Ball fields, playgrounds, and picnicking are easily accessible to residents.
- South Pointe Park boasts 40 acres of outdoor recreation with something for everyone, from ballfields and courts to a frisbee golf course and an Olympic-sized pool.

Unique Amenities

- The El Paso Public Library, built in 1906-07 in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. The library is a Carnegie library, built through funding by Scottish-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.
- Archbishop Fulton John Sheen Spiritual Centre, complete with a museum and located within a former depot.

Learn more about El Paso, Illinois

- <https://www.elpasoil.org/>
- Community History <http://www.allendrake.com/elpasohistory/>
- El Paso Public Library <http://www.elpasopubliclibrary.net/>
- El Paso Chamber of Commerce <http://www.elpasoilchamber.com/index.html>



The El Paso Library, as depicted on a postcard from a series of historic postcards that capture town history, dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s.

KAPPA

The first settler arrived in 1833
Population...227
Geographic size...0.34 square miles

Known For

- Rail and postal service entered the area in 1853, with the first postmaster, William Jones, naming the village Montrose. The Illinois Central Railroad, however, did not care for that name and instead preferred Kappa because Kappa is the tenth letter of the Greek alphabet, and the town's location is the tenth town between Dunleith (East Dubuque today) and Bloomington.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

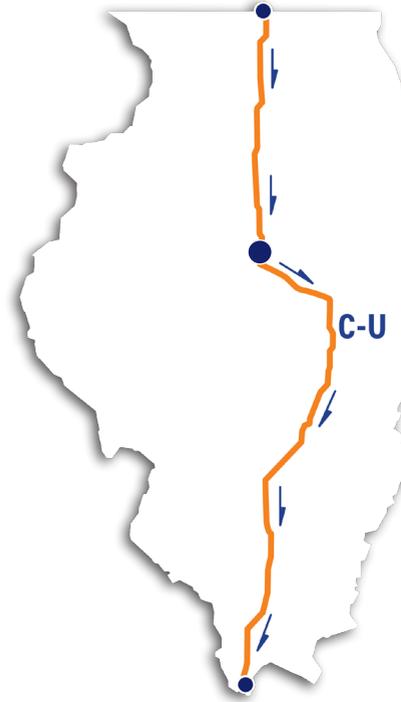
- Distance to C-U from the location... 69 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...0

Natural Areas and Resources

- Surrounded by area water sources, Kappa is situated on the north side of the Mackinaw River. Outdoor recreation, sport fishing, and boating can be enjoyed in nearby Lake Bloomington and Evergreen Lake, both just a few miles from Kappa.

Learn more about Kappa, Illinois

- Kappa City Data <https://www.city-data.com/city/Kappa-Illinois.html>



Historic photo of the railroad depot in Kappa, Illinois.

HUDSON

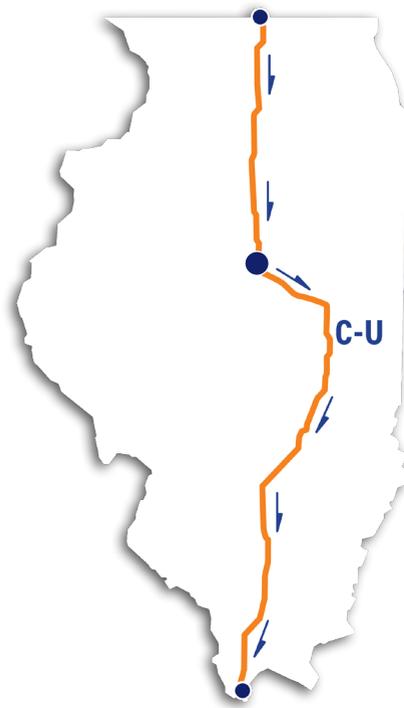
Founded in 1836
Population...1,838
Geographic size...0.83 square miles

Known For

- One of eight towns established during the 1835–1837 real estate boom of central Illinois.
- Created by the Illinois Land Association as a colonial settlement. The design of the colony allowed settlers to migrate as a group to a new location. The settlers would pool their money, purchase a section of land, and then divide it among the group. Hudson is one of two such settlements in McLean County with the Rhode Island colony being the other.
- The origin of the name may be attributed to Hudson, New York, or to the Hudson River.
- A spirit of community throughout the village, living their motto “Product of the Prairie, Pride of the People.”

Place of history, place of entertainment, product, person

- Unlike other central Illinois towns, Hudson does not have a town or public square. The town was designed on an “in lot” and “out lot” concept, modeled after a layout in New England that kept livestock and owners near one another. A rather antiquated design, it is unknown why the town was laid out in this manner.
- Birthplace to film actor Ben Corbet and *Chicago Daily News* owner Melvin Elijah Stone.
- Home to writer and artist Elbert Hubbard, founder of the Arts & Crafts Movement Roycroft community, who met an untimely death upon the sinking of the *Lusitania*.



Product Grown, Produced, Discovered There

- Established in 1933 for and by local farmers, the Hudson Grain Company is a farmer-owned co-op that continues to meet the needs of today’s modern farmer.

Ties to Champaign-Urbana

- Distance to C-U from the location...65 miles
- Number of 2020 CCIM race participants who live in the town...9

Public Art

- The Melville Stone historical marker was originally located on the Gildersleeve House, the first house in Hudson Colony. The Gildersleeve House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 but razed in 2000. At that time, the marker was relocated within the community.

Natural Areas and Resources

- Hudson is home to multiple parks and recreational areas for picnicking, grilling, and enjoying time outdoors. Complete with full-size baseball and soccer fields and along with a full-size basketball court, there is ample opportunity to play in this community.
- Fishers and boaters will enjoy a day at Lake Bloomington. Originally designed as a man-made lake to supply Bloomington-Normal with a reliable water source, the lake is a source of outdoor recreation for the area.

Unique Amenities

- Timber Pointe Outdoor Center, a joint effort of Central Illinois Easterseals and the Timber Pointe Charitable Foundation, provides inclusive and adaptive programming to meet the needs of individuals and families through a year-round camp and retreat center.

Learn more about Hudson, Illinois

- <http://my.hudsonil.org/>
- Hudson Area Library <https://hudsonarealibrary.com/>
- Hudson Township History http://genealogytrails.com/ill/mclean/history_hudsonwp.html
- Timber Pointe Outdoor Center <https://www.timberpointeoutdoorcenter.com/>