



America[®]

in Bloom

© 2001-2010 America in Bloom

PARTICIPANT PROFILE 2018
DECATUR ILLINOIS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2018 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION	3
AIB PARTICIPATION HISTORY INITIAL SUBMISSION	3
INTRODUCTION TO DECATUR, ILLINOIS	4
FLORAL DISPLAYS ATTRACTING ATTENTION WITH COLORFUL PLANTS	4
LANDSCAPED AREAS DESIGNED TREE, SHRUB, TURF, AND PERENNIAL PLANTINGS	7
URBAN FORESTRY	8
ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND AWARENESS	9
HERITAGE PRESERVING YOUR PAST FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS	13
COMMUNITY VITALITY	16
OVERALL IMPRESSION	19
BEST IDEA	21



AIB PARTICIPATION HISTORY

2018 is Decatur, Illinois' first year participating in the America in Bloom Contest.

2018 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Population:	72,706
Website:	Decaturil.gov
Contact Name:	Ellen Hearn, AIB Committee Chair PH: 217-454-8432 EMAIL: DecaturinBloom@gmail.com
Area in Square Miles:	46.92 Square Miles
Acres of Active Recreation:	576 Acres
Acres of Passive Recreation:	1,399 Acres
Do You Have a Volunteer Coordinator:	Ellen Hearn Volunteer Chaired the AIB Effort for Beautify Decatur
Do you have pollinator gardens?	We have multiple pollinator gardens.

DECATUR NATIONAL AND STATE **RECOGNITIONS**



**1ST GOVERNOR'S CUP
WINNER FOR EXCELLENCE
IN VOLUNTEERISM**
- State of Illinois



**2017 GOVERNOR'S
HOMETOWN AWARD
RECIPIENT**
- State of Illinois



**#1 RANK IN AGRICULTURE
BIOSCIENCE EMPLOYMENT**
- Business Facilities Magazine



**1ST IN ILLINOIS FOR
PHYSICIANS
AND SURGEONS
TO LIVE AND WORK**
- Good Call Magazine



**2ND IN THE NATION
FOR A THRIVING
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY**
- Forbes Magazine



**3RD IN THE NATION AS
EMERGING LOGISTICS AND
DISTRIBUTION CENTER**
- Business Facilities Magazine



**3RD MOST AFFORDABLE
HOUSING MARKET
IN THE NATION**
- Demographia International
Housing Affordability Survey



**DECATUR NAMED A
TOP 25 CITY FOR
GLOBAL TRADE**
- Global Trade Magazine



**MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY
NAMED "BEST
IN THE MIDWEST"**
- Princeton Review



**RICHLAND COMMUNITY
COLLEGE RANKED
#8 IN ILLINOIS**
- WalletHub

INTRODUCTION TO **DECATUR, ILLINOIS**

Imagine a place that breaks city limits, that brings people outdoors to eat, shop and explore, where music bounces off walls and fills the street. A place where children can find adventure and imagination can blossom. A place where careers are vast and nature is breathtaking.

Decatur, Illinois traces its roots to the 1820s when a small town, beautifully placed in the midst of some of the world's most fertile, lush, and profitable farmland incorporated itself. We took on a namesake of a famous naval Commodore, Stephen Decatur, whose name is synonymous with acts of heroism and exceptional performance.

Our history has been led by entrepreneurs who engineered corn and beans into products unimaginable, built roads and buildings, dug lakes, and molded the largest downstate hub of activity in the state of Illinois.

Through the years and decades that separate us from the early days on the prairie, there has been unmistakable growth, development and opportunity, as well as change, opposition, upset and defeat. But it's those moments, including both the ups and the downs, that have defined Decatur - that have made us a community of hard workers, believers, and people who come together for the causes and efforts we believe in. Our citizens know that tomorrow is not a hope, but a promise.

The generous spirit in Decatur is conta-

gious. Time and time again, volunteers, businesses and philanthropists undertake projects to make Decatur an outstanding place to live, work, and play. The award-winning WSOY Community Food Drive raised over 1.5 million pounds of food in the one-day drive in 2017, its sixteenth year.

This inspiring community event earned Decatur state-wide recognition as the recipient of the **Governor's Cup for Excellence in Volunteerism**. Coupled with 32 years of attracting thousands of people for the Decatur Celebration - one of Illinois' largest street festivals - an annual LPGA golf tournament, biannual Farm Progress Show, and numerous events surrounding support of athletics, arts, social service agencies, civic groups, and churches, Decatur's community pride through volunteerism runs thick.

Decatur traces its roots to the 1820s.

The pride in the community grows as Decatur has emerged as a global force in the manufacturing, biotechnology, food and agriculture, and logistics industries. By earning recognition in industry, education, and lifestyle fronts, such as the Decatur Park District being named a National Gold Medal Finalist, it's not a mistake saying that we strive for exceptional performance.

Today, in the spirit of our founders, we are yet again amongst visionaries who are pur-



Lake Decatur

suing the next achievement for our community: to be named an America in Bloom (AIB) award winner. In preparation for our first year of AIB participation, a community volunteer attended the 2017 AIB symposium and brought back unmatched enthusiasm for the effort.



Throughout the profile below, you'll find the AIB logo added to areas that reflect enhancements implemented because of opportunities identified at the symposium.

We're looking forward to your visit and know that you'll feel the momentum here. It's a renaissance of sorts. We are thinking big, taking risks, and inspiring change. We are transforming. A success story is in the making every single day. We can't wait for you to experience Decatur.



Downtown Planters

FLORAL DISPLAYS

Attracting Attention with Colorful Plants

Downtown Planters

The City's Downtown Decatur streetscape project, completed in 2015, was a \$14 million public development imagined as the next step in efforts to bring a new look, feel, and energy to the city's central business district. The three-phased plan has brought new sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, recreational opportunities, and other amenities to downtown Decatur.

Installation of 66 planters were part of the city revitalization of downtown, but due to economic downturn, the city lacked the re-

quired funding to plant them. The Beautify Decatur Coalition, an all-volunteer organization, stepped up and found a sustainable method to plant the annuals. Volunteers sought grant funding in the following years that funded the addition of boxwoods to the larger planters in order to bring color to all four Midwestern seasons.

In 2015, Decatur completed a \$14 million downtown renovation.

FLORAL DISPLAYS

Attracting Attention with Colorful Plants (cont.)

Volunteers from the Garden Club of Decatur, Beautify Decatur Coalition, and local businesses spend over 100 hours planting and maintaining the pots annually. The pots are planted each spring with blooms donated by a local gardening center and the City of Decatur partially funds the cost required for the gardening center to water and maintain the planters during the season. Local Caterpillar employees partner in the effort by creating plasma cut signage placed on the planters to recognize donors and volunteer organizations who contribute to the project.

Master Gardeners

Established in 1986, the Macon County Master Gardener program is a volunteer organization sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension Office. This organization currently has 82 volunteers who donated over 1,200 hours of work in 2017. The Master Gardeners serve as a source of botanical expertise for the Decatur area and they share their knowledge by teaching classes, leading workshops, donating produce to food pantries, and demonstrating gardening techniques. In addition to yearly plant sales and garden walks, the Master Gardeners are also responsible for the development and maintenance of gardens throughout the city including:

- Decatur Public Library Gardens
- Staley Museum
- Heritage Garden
- Decatur Correctional Institute
- Millikin Homestead
- Green Thumb Garden

Library Gardens

For at least 20 years, the Master Gardeners have designed and maintained ten distinct gardens around three sides of the Decatur Public Library. The plant materials cost approximately \$1,700 annually and are covered by the Friends of the Public Library, a 501(c)3 organization. These gardens cover approximately 6,000-square feet and 40 Master Gardeners volunteer approximately 900 hours annually to keep them looking beautiful:

- The Container Garden: Two massive pots flanking the main entrance and filled with annuals

- Cottage Garden: Planted with perennials
- Children's Garden: Features habitats for "good bugs"
- Native Garden: Showcasing perennials native to Illinois
- Herb Garden: Annual and perennial herbs
- Xeriscape Garden: Planted in the hot southwest corner
- Raised Beds (2): Planted mostly with annuals for a showy display along busy thoroughfare Franklin Street
- Center Garden: Planted with a mixture of perennials and annuals in sun and shade
- Oakleaf Garden: Large hydrangeas are featured in this shady bed on the northwest corner

Beautification is important to the Master Gardeners, but education is the primary goal. Placards marked with the plant's name and other distinguishing information allows the community to learn more about the gardens. The Master Gardeners annually conduct several evenings where the gardeners give tours and answer questions.

The Garden Club of Decatur

Founded in 1925, the Garden Club of Decatur is affiliated with the Garden Clubs of Illinois and the National Garden Club. The club has approximately 100 local members who assist in beautification efforts around the city by hosting one fundraiser per year.

The Annual Plant Sale is used to support many of the landscapes around Decatur, including three area libraries and schools. The plant sale also provides scholarships for horticulture and agriculture students at Richland Community College, trees for Habitat for Humanity homes, and the Pollinator Garden at the Children's Museum of Illinois. Annually, volunteers donate approximately 1,800 hours to Garden Club projects.

Monarch Haven Garden

The Garden Club of Decatur spends 60 volunteer hours annually planting and maintaining a Monarch Butterfly Garden on the north side of the Decatur Public Library. This 2,000-square foot garden has been certified as an official Monarch Waystation

by the Monarch Watch Organization. It is planted with milkweed, fennel, butterfly bush, coneflowers, and other native perennials that attract butterflies. The Garden Club has also purchased and mounted a monarch statue to enhance the garden and metal plant markers have recently been added.

Veterans Garden

Decatur takes great pride in honoring our service men and women. Volunteers from the Garden Club spend approximately 20 hours annually planting a Veterans Garden on the grounds of the Macon County Courthouse. Designed to enhance the Veterans Memorial at the intersection of two busy downtown streets, this 224-square foot garden is planted with red Knock Out roses and red, white and blue annuals that invoke emotion from onlookers. Volunteers coordinate with maintenance staff to water and maintain the garden throughout the season.

DMH Butterfly Garden

In honor of its 100th anniversary, Decatur Memorial Hospital (DMH) opened a new butterfly garden which was dedicated to the memory of its founder, Dr. William Barnes.

The original garden contained 262 flower varieties and 93 shrub varieties at its peak, but was eventually built over to clear space for hospital campus additions. The new garden contains many of the same flowers favored by the hospital's founder including: butterfly bushes, daylilies, sedum, hydrangea, and coreopsis.

The Garden Path

With a vision and a couple of acres, the Garden Path planted its first roots in the spring of 1997. The Garden Path combines a local garden center with hundreds of trees, shrubs, perennials, herbs, and annuals in a park-like setting. For 20 years, the Garden Path has welcomed visitors who wish to enjoy a walk in the gardens, be inspired, relax, get help with a garden question, or receive a landscape design free of charge. Totalling 35 display gardens located on two acres, guests are first greeted by a large 2,500-square foot Sun & Shade Perennial Garden with signs identifying various landscape principles within the design. Other gardens include the Enabling

FLORAL DISPLAYS

Attracting Attention with Colorful Plants (cont.)

and Healing Gardens that were created as a special place for reflection, and the newest garden that includes the 4,000-square foot Topiary Fun Garden and the Homestead Garden which both opened in spring 2018.

Schaub Floral Display Center

Located in Sportsman's Park, the Schaub Floral Display Center features beautiful seasonal plantings and serves as the propagation and storage center for trees, shrubs, and flowers planted in parks across our community.



Schaub Gardens

The on-site greenhouse is a 4,700-square foot high-tech facility with a fully-automated heating and cooling system which includes two heating and two cooling stages, an evaporation cooling wall, insulated polycarbonate ceiling panels, and an automated shade cloth to cover the ceiling panels on the hottest days. The Decatur Park District staff produces up to 300 different varieties of plants and propagates 20,000 plants in this greenhouse each year!

The center and greenhouse were made possible through grants and a generous gift from the former Lindsay-Schaub Newspapers Inc., along with Robert D. Schaub, whose grandfather was the first president of the Decatur Park Board of Commissioners. In 2013, Alesia and Howard Schaub gifted \$50,000 in memory of Norma Schaub to create an outdoor garden that is now a destination place for small gatherings, photo opportunities, and weddings.

Scovill Oriental Garden



Scovill Oriental Garden

This beautiful Chinese-inspired garden was built by Guy and Rose Scovill in the 1920s and '30s. In 1948, the Scovill Family deeded their farm to the Decatur Park District. Today, the garden also features the Wikoff Oriental Garden Terrace and is enjoyed by nearly 100,000 visitors who also visit the neighboring Scovill Zoo and Scovill Gazebo Gardens.

Scovill Gazebo Gardens

Situated among towering trees and beautiful flower beds, the gazebo is a popular site for weddings and special occasions. Colorful, lush flowers blooming from May 1st through fall's first frost makes Scovill Gazebo Gardens one of Decatur's most photographed locations.

South Side Country Club

Celebrating their twentieth anniversary in 2018, South Side Country Club (SSCC) members who have agreed to join the Dogwood Society, pay an annual fee of \$50 to support golf course landscaping upgrades and annuals. Each spring, careful planning occurs to select the trees, landscaping upgrades, and annuals for the golf course, pro shop and the club house. The same landscaping traditions that began at Augusta National Golf Club now flourishes at SSCC, making it one of Decatur's most beautiful landscapes.

Main Street Medians (New in 2018)

On a blustery, 40-degree April day, 50 volunteers spent the day on an island – a traffic island – as part of community clean-up day targeting medians on West Main Street, where they removed litter and leaves and dug spots for plants and mulch. The project, organized by the Beautify Decatur Coalition, was inspired by volunteer attendance at the America in Bloom Symposium.



Volunteers were supplied with hand warmers, tools, chemicals, bags, and safety vests. The event was sponsored by Ameren Illinois, Speed Lube, the Andreas Foundation, Hickory Point Bank, and Doug Schmalz, former chief financial officer at Archer Daniels Midland Company. Resources came from Lowe's Home Improvement, Kenney's Ace Hardware, Jimmy John's, Millikin University, and the Millikin Homestead.



Main Street Medians

Islands are adopted by organizations and individuals throughout the city who sign paperwork with the City of Decatur indicating they will take responsibility for maintaining the islands which includes removing litter and leaves, trimming bushes, and watering the plants. The caretakers have their own preferences as to how the areas should be landscaped, although they are given suggestions for symmetry.

FLORAL DISPLAYS

Attracting Attention with Colorful Plants (cont.)

Community Clean Up Trailer



For years, the Coalition of Neighborhood Organization (CONO) had dreamed of a trailer full of landscaping tools that could be used for neighborhood cleanup events. Now, funding for that trailer is progressing, and Lowe's and local community members have already donated most all of the needed landscaping tools.

Downtown Hanging Baskets

Inspired by the America in Bloom Symposium, the Garden Club expanded their community beautification efforts to include 20 hanging baskets for Central Park. Garden Club volunteers worked with the City of Decatur to determine what requirements needed to be met to gain the City's approval to proceed. The maximum weight for the baskets could not exceed 50 pounds, so 20-inch baskets were selected. The club paid for the baskets, flowers, and for the watering contract. The City supported the project by providing staff to hang the baskets. The City will also store the baskets over the winter months.



Millikin University

Founded in 1901, Millikin University is an independent, four-year university. It is privately funded and has an enrollment of approximately 2,000 students. Visitors of the Millikin's campus can find many well-maintained floral displays, including tulips, Barberry bushes, daylilies, crabapple flowers, and more.

Additionally, a tree inventory showed that 22 varieties and over 325 total trees stand on Millikin's campus. Millikin Facility Services has received numerous awards related to beautification efforts including Professional Grounds Management Society's Green Star Award in 2015 and 2017.

During the 2017 Let's Keep Decatur Bee-utiful business contest, Millikin received first place in the Large Business Category as well as Best of Show. Several

LANDSCAPED AREAS

Designed Tree, Shrub, Turf and Perennial Plantings

gardens provide study and relaxation spaces for Millikin's students amongst urban surroundings.

Decatur Park District

With 1,975 acres designated for recreation purposes, the Decatur Park District maintains more than 53 properties and facilities that include the following: 32 neighborhood parks, 13 community parks/nature centers, two golf courses, a miniature golf complex, an aquatics center, nearly ten miles of trails, a soccer complex, a baseball complex, a floral display center, a sculpture park, a senior center, an indoor sports center, the Decatur Airport, and Scovill Zoo.

Decatur Park District was named a National Gold Medal Finalist in 2016 amongst all park districts, and more than 1,000 individuals volunteer over 9,000 hours annually at recreational events and activities. The district planted 240 trees in design through a reforestation effort, and maintains nine perennial gardens throughout the district:

- Scovill Oriental Garden
- Scovill Gazebo Garden
- Fairview Rose Garden
- Schaub Floral Display Center
- Nelson Rock Garden
- Fairview Cancer Survivor Garden
- Mini Golf Garden
- Marina Plant Beds
- Scovill Zoo Garden

Imboden Creek Gardens

Imboden Creek Health Services is situated on 17 acres of land, nestled among a quiet neighborhood of schools, churches, and residences. They are tucked in amidst the lush greenery of South Shores, where residents and staff can look out any window and experience nature all around them.

Their assisted living center, Imboden Creek Gardens, is situated on five acres of forested land. Architects and builders carefully plotted the land to keep the integrity of the nature around the buildings. Uninterrupted nature has led to daily visits by a variety of birds, deer, and ducks that live near or on the property. Several residents have transplanted their own flowers from their personal home gardens, adding to the beauty of the property and creating pride among residents and their families.

Speed Lube

Speed Lube is a complete auto care store that has participated and won awards in the Let's Keep Decatur Bee-utiful business contest since its inception in 2011. Located throughout Decatur, all five of Speed Lube's sites are beautifully landscaped and maintained. They set the standard for curb appeal. As a result, Speed Lube serves as a model for other businesses and has become the sponsor of the *Let's Keep Decatur Bee-utiful Continued Excellence Award*.

LANDSCAPED AREAS

Designed Tree, Shrub, Turf and Perennial Plantings (cont.)

Decatur Memorial Hospital

Decatur Memorial Hospital's (DMH) 60-acre campus comes alive each spring thanks to its 2,500 - 3,000 blooming annuals and perennials. These beautiful, fragrant plants can be found in their 77 planters, 37 ground beds, and 37 hanging baskets. Their grounds also boast tropical plants such as cannas, palm trees, ferns, and more. In 2016, the hospital received first place in the Large Business Category award as well as Best of Show award in the Let's Keep Decatur Bee-utiful business contest. They continued their beautification efforts by

adding a contemporary water feature to the hospital's front entrance in 2017, donated by the DMH Auxiliary.

Coffee Connection

This locally-owned coffee business has gone above and beyond in their landscaping efforts which includes fountains, sculptures, outdoor seating, and container flowers. The Coffee Connection has been a winner in the Let's Keep Decatur Bee-utiful business contest on multiple occasions including winning the Continued Excellence Award in both 2015 and 2016.

Country Club of Decatur

In 2013, the Country Club of Decatur (CCD) transitioned its golf course fairways and tees from bent grass turf to zoysia. This was a very novel approach for Central Illinois, as zoysia is known as a warm season grass. With newer varieties available, this enabled the club to drastically cut its water usage and chemical application expense, having a positive impact on both the environment and golf course operation costs.



Pine Tree Forest

URBAN FORESTRY

Urban Tree Canopies and Vital City Trees

is detailed in Section XXVIII in the City Zoning Ordinance. In 2017, over 200 trees were planted because of approved landscaping inspections.

The City of Decatur seeks to prevent erosion of soil into Lake Decatur which serves as the main water source for the citizens and industries of Decatur and surrounding areas. Specific locations in the city may be improved with native plant landscaping areas.

Big Tree Inventory

The first search for the largest trees in Macon County was undertaken in 1976 as a bicentennial project and it has evolved into an annual event. Nominations are accepted until August 1st of each year and champions are announced the following April. The Macon County Big Tree Search uses the same guidelines set by the American Forestry Association for the Illinois Big Tree Register and the National Register of Big Trees.

That means that a tree in yards, in front of schools, or at places of business, has the potential to qualify to be a county, state, or even national Big Tree Champion. Decatur has several county champions in three trees: an American Elm at 316 South Westlawn Avenue, a Ginkgo at 241 West William, and a Red Oak at #2 Millikin Place.

Johnny Appleseed Bicentennial Trees

On October 20, 2017, Decatur resident Mark Sorensen donated an Illinois State Historical Society "Johnny Appleseed Bicentennial Tree" to the Decatur Park District. The tree was planted at the Scovill Zoo where it will be seen by thousands each year while riding on the zoo's train or walking past the wolves. The tree was grafted from the last known apple tree planted by John Chapman in Ohio. A second bicentennial tree was planted on Arbor Day in the *West End Community Garden*.

Forestry Challenges

Decatur trees have been subject to three significant challenges in recent years. In 2006, a major ice storm hit causing severe tree damage throughout the city. Cleanup of the resulting debris took well over a year and resulted in 117,044 dump truck loads of tree limbs hauled out of Decatur.

The winters of 2011 and 2012 were warm and dry, resulting in a significant drought in 2012. The drought stressed and killed many trees in the Decatur area which were further complicated by watering restrictions inhibiting the planting and watering of new trees.

Lastly, the emerald ash borer epidemic hit Central Illinois in 2012 and its impact is

Tree City USA

Tree City USA is greening communities across the country. This program celebrates the importance of an urban tree canopy and improves care of these vital city trees. At 37 years, Decatur ranks fourth highest of all Illinois communities for the number of years to have received the award.

Landscape Ordinance Keeps Beautification & Prevention in Mind

The City of Decatur has a landscape ordinance which requires businesses to submit a landscape plan with site plans. Plant materials include shade trees, evergreen trees, and intermediate/ornamental trees. This

URBAN FORESTRY

Urban Tree Canopies and Vital City Trees (cont.)

still in progress. About 50 percent of the city's ash trees have died and it's estimated that by the time the crisis is over, over 90 percent of Decatur's ash trees will be gone. About 500 ash trees have been removed from city property since 2012 and another 150 are targeted for removal in 2017-2018.

Despite these challenges, in the last four years well over 700 trees have been planted on public grounds due to our community's reforestation efforts.

- **90 at \$90 Tree Fundraiser:** The Decatur community steps up to a challenge no matter the cause. On September 9, 2014, the Decatur Park District celebrated its 90th anniversary with a live broadcast fundraiser on talk radio WSOY AM. The goal was to raise \$8,100 for 90 trees. Listeners called in their \$90 donations and by 9:00 a.m. raised \$22,000 in just three hours. From the original goal of 90 trees to 240 trees, the Decatur Park District

was able to plant eight different tree varieties as a result.

- **CN Railroad Grant:** Decatur Park District has matched a \$25,000 grant from the CN EcoConnexions' From the Ground Up program to improve the community's reforestation efforts. In spring 2018, the Decatur Parks Foundation, Archer Daniels Midland Company, Beautify Decatur Coalition, Limitless Decatur & Macon County Ambassadors, the Young Professionals of Caterpillar, and local neighborhood groups served as volunteers to plant 240 trees as a result of the grant dollars. As with every Decatur Park District program, education is an important component. They implement an educational campaign aimed at volunteers and community groups about the importance of trees and reforestation. This is not an isolated activity, but another part of the Park District and community wide strategic plan to

transform our community so it can be a great place to live, work, play, and retire.

- **Enterprise School Orchard:** Thanks to a \$1,000 grant from local Rotary Club 180, students at Enterprise School will have hands-on experience with five fruit trees in fall 2018. This new orchard will carve out the first definable corner of a living science farm that will be managed by Decatur Public School students at Enterprise and the Dwayne O. Andreas Ag Academy.
- **Evan Johnson Tree Nursery:** The Country Club of Decatur started a nursery in fall 2015 as a memorial to long-time member, Evan Johnson. Mr. Johnson's friends and club members donated 46 trees of 16 varieties to begin a nursery for future transplanting.



ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT

Sustainable Development and Awareness

National Sequestration Education Center

The National Sequestration Education Center (NSEC), a state-of-the-art facility for educational, training, and outreach activities, is located on the Richland Community College's campus. The NSEC has many sustainability features integrated into its design and construction through a Green Globes certification. There are 42 geothermal wells for heating and cooling of the building using a dual piping design. The windows help provide natural lighting and open space views. The renewable energy laboratory, adjacent to NSEC, includes a biomass space and water heating system, a biomass grain hopper, a biodiesel production center, and a biodiesel engine trainer.

As part of the Illinois Carbon Capture & Sequestration Project, this "smart" educational facility provides an innovative and experiential learning and knowledge transfer environment. The interconnected

classroom and laboratory spaces provide a state-of-the-art learning environment by making available "real-time" sequestration data, as well as the monitoring and analysis of the sequestration project. The NSEC also provides unique learning experiences to researchers and visitors from around the world by experiencing the technologies connected to this project on Richland's campus and in surrounding Midwest communities.

The NSEC is the local, regional, national, and international focal point for carbon sequestration outreach and academic programming. Richland offers the nation's first Associate of Applied Science in Carbon Sequestration Technology, along with certificates and a high school dual-credit curriculum. In addition, students are trained for careers in the carbon dioxide capture, sequestration, and storage recovery industries.

The NSEC is a component of Richland's partnership in the U.S. Department of En-

ergy's National Energy Technology Laboratory project titled, "CO2 Capture from Biofuels Production and Sequestration in the Mt. Simon Sandstone." The partners in this project include Archer Daniels Midland Company, Schlumberger Carbon Services, and Illinois State Geological Survey (University of Illinois).

While the NSEC site is designed to facilitate educational and technology development opportunities within its classrooms, laboratories, and conference hall, it is also designed to be a visitor center. Inside are the carbon capture, utilization, and storage informational artifacts and the STELA (Sequestration Technology Educational Learning Array) system.

The STELA is a cooperative game-based learning system designed to provide an exciting, one-of-a-kind experience for K-12, community, and professional audiences. Outside is the Sustainability Nature Walk that weaves through a presentation of energy grasses, prairie plants, four wind tur-

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT

Sustainable Development and Awareness (cont.)

bines, three solar arrays, fossil fuel, and the Richland Renewable Energy Laboratory. This provides an exciting and innovative educational platform for fossil, renewable, and alternative energies for learners of all ages.

Illinois Carbon Capture and Storage (ICCS) Field

The Illinois Carbon Capture and Storage (ICCS) project is demonstrating an integrated system for collecting carbon dioxide (CO₂) from an ethanol production plant and storing it deep underground in a sandstone reservoir. The CO₂ produced is a by-product of processing corn into fuel-grade ethanol at the Archer Daniels Midland Company's ethanol plant in Decatur. The captured CO₂ is being stored at a depth of 6,800 feet in the Mt. Simon Sandstone, a prolific saline reservoir in the Illinois Basin, with the capacity to store billions of tons of CO₂. This project was designed to capture and store 1.1 million tons of carbon annually and will demonstrate the applicability of commercial scale Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technology at a biofuels facility. The project is currently permitted to operate for five years and has the potential to store up to 5.5 million tons of CO₂.

The ICCS project is the 12th large-scale CCS facility operating in North America, and the world's first large-scale application of geologic CCS at a biofuels production facility. With this landmark achievement, Archer Daniels Midland Company will now capture and store about one million tons of CO₂ per year - equivalent to the annual emissions of about 200,000 vehicles.

Wind Turbine – First on a Campus

In addition, the 100kw wind turbine attached to the Center for Sustainability and Innovation (CSI) was the first on any State of Illinois community college campus. The Richland Community College wind turbine generates approximately 200,000kwh per year, more than enough to power the CSI. The turbine serves as Richland's innovation and sustainability signature piece and is iconic for the college's campus and new programs. It's the gateway to the Agribusiness Applied Technology Park.

Center for Sustainability and Innovation

In the shadows of four wind turbines lies the 15,125 square-foot CSI: the first Green Building Council Leadership in Energy & Environment Design Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building in Macon County and at a community college in Illinois. The Center fully demonstrates sustainable building technologies and methodologies and assists in the reduction of Richland Community College's carbon footprint.

Most of the Center's components are made from recycled materials. The concrete is made from coal ash and the carpet from recycled plastic bottles. Wood used in the CSI comes from sustainable forests. Geothermal power heats and cools the building, and windows and skylights provide natural light.

The building's Innovation Lab, supported financially by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Local 146, features flexible space and the latest classroom technology. The University of Illinois Extension office occupies the ground floor of the CSI and cooperates with Richland's Agribusiness and Horticulture programs. Additional cooperative programs are being developed with the University of Illinois and Millikin University.

Lake Decatur Dredging Project

Lake Decatur was constructed on the Sangamon River as a public water supply reservoir in 1920-1923. Since then, erosion severely reduced the lake's storage capacity, falling in line with the lake founders' notes that the lake would need to be dredged in roughly 90 years. The lake is separated by bridges into six large basins and serves as the main water supply for citizens and industry giants Archer Daniels Midland, Caterpillar, Tate & Lyle, and others.

In August 2012, the end of a historic drought was nowhere in sight for Decatur. The City had drawn on all the supplemental water supplies which could be accessed, including a former sand and gravel pit in Decatur, an electric well near Cisco, IL and a system of eight wells in DeWitt County,

several miles north of Argenta. Still, those sources only brought in half the water the city used every day. The other half was still being drawn from the rapidly shrinking Lake Decatur.

After the drought ended, it was clear to all that a more permanent fix was needed. The drought was the driving force behind a Decatur City Council vote in 2013 to more than double water rates over three years, allowing the city to undertake a massive dredging effort. The dredging project was approved at the urging of commercial water customers who also supported the rate increase. This solution is anticipated to help Decatur weather severe droughts throughout the next several decades.

The \$92 million project is increasing the lake's storage capacity by 30%, or 52 days of additional water supply for our community. This is equivalent to the volume of over 60 Willis (formerly Sears) Tower skyscrapers located in downtown Chicago! Sediment traps have been created in Big Creek and Sand Creek to capture incoming sediment before it reaches the main body of the lake.

Since Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company (the City's dredging contractor) began dredging in November 2014, a total of 8,814,387 cubic yards of sediment has been removed from Lake Decatur, which is 82% of the contract amount, including over dredging, or 43 days of additional water supply for our community (as of December 2017).

City-Wide Cleanups

In early 2015, the Decatur City Council directed City staff to organize and fund city-wide cleanup initiatives. Each year since, the City of Decatur has sponsored nine cleanups where residents were encouraged to dispose of large items like mattresses, furniture, excess garbage, and tires free of charge. In 2016 and 2017 alone, over 2,900 tires and over 470,000 pounds of trash were collected and disposed of properly.

The City plans to continue cleanup efforts, with at least four cleanup dates throughout 2018.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT

Sustainable Development and Awareness (cont.)

Single Stream Recycling

City residents responded in record numbers to the city's single-stream recycling program launched in 2012. More than 50 percent of city households signed up to participate in the program and the amount of recycled material continues to increase as residents become accustomed to the program. This program continues to gain further acceptance in the community and further contributes to the "greening" of the City of Decatur, which has served as a model to other communities looking to implement efficient recycling practices.

Styrofoam Recycling Pilot Program

A pilot styrofoam recycling program of select household items with the assigned number six chasing arrows symbol is available to residents of Decatur and Macon County and launched in April 2018. Clean items that are exclusively made of #6 foam may be placed in the white collection bin outside of the Macon County Environmental Management Recycling Center. This pilot program was offered by Macon County Environmental Management in cooperation with the Macon County Community Environmental Council.

Sewer Improvements

Under the direction of the City Council, the Public Works Department has established four priorities to improve the city's sanitary sewer collection system as defined in the 2008 Sanitary Sewer Master Plan. It includes four components: Critical Large Diameter Sewer Rehabilitation, Sanitary Sewer Overflows Due to Inflow and Infiltration, System Operation and Maintenance, and Small Diameter Sewer Rehabilitation.

To address the priorities, some of the major projects include the 7th Ward Critical Sewer Rehabilitation. Approximately 22,000 feet of sanitary sewer ranging in diameter from 24" to 84" will be replaced or upgraded at a cost of \$7.75 million. This project is the third of the four planned critical sewer rehabilitations for a total cost of approximately \$27 million.

Another major project includes the Inflow

& Infiltration Reduction project. The City was awarded a \$723,000 contract with Crawford, Murphy, and Tilly Engineers to provide preliminary engineering services for inflow and infiltration reduction program in the Lost Bridge North and Florian Neighborhoods. The Lost Bridge North area is 449 acres with 670 residences and total 48,000 feet of public sewer. The Florian area is 132 acres with 375 residences and a total 18,000 feet of public sewer.

The City added a second cleaning truck to the streets in 2017 and set a goal of cleaning 1/5th or 450,000 feet of sewer per year. The City has implemented many projects to rehabilitate the small diameter sewer which will also increase system reliability. Projects totaling \$2,047,000 include:

- 2016 Trenchless Long Lining: rehabilitate 16,000 feet of sewer
- 2016 MH Rehab Project: rehabilitate 110 MHs
- 2017 Misc. Sewer Repair Project: provide spot repair of system defects
- 2017 Inspection Project: closed circuit televising of the sewer system
- 2017 Trenchless Long Lining Project: rehabilitate 19,000 feet of sewer

Also, as part of the City Code, a plan for establishing permanent vegetative cover to stabilize disturbed or exposed areas must be submitted with the storm water pollution prevention plan.

Sustainable Decatur Public High Schools

Both Decatur public high schools received transformational renovations thanks to a sales tax referendum passed by the community at large. Surrounding metropolitan communities have tried time and time again to do the same to no avail. Not only were the renovations designed for function and aesthetics, but architects incorporated sustainability features in both Eisenhower and MacArthur High Schools. Here are some of the major features incorporated:

- Recycling construction waste at Eisenhower has already significantly reduced the amount of waste being trucked to the landfills. All scrap con-

crete and metals were recycled. The existing wood bleachers were donated to the Midwest Mission Distribution Center to be cut and rebuilt into school desks for children and schools in third world countries.

- Use of recycled products was considered when ordering materials to be used in the construction process.
- Geothermal energy is thermal energy generated and stored in the earth. Ground that is ten feet below the surface has a consistent temperature of 55 degrees. Both Eisenhower and MacArthur High School renovation projects used geothermal energy to heat water to 55 degrees which is looped through the schools to the heat pumps in the classrooms and other areas. The cost savings comes from only heating the 55-degree air to 72 degrees rather than the ambient outside temperature. In addition, the buildings are air conditioned, which will provide a much better learning environment.
- Window systems and walls have been upgraded to current efficiency standards. The systems built in the 1950s leaked and were single pane glass. The current systems are much better insulated compared to products available 60 years ago.
- Daylight controls dim building lights on sunny days. Sunshades control light and glare while at the same time, daylight and views are introduced to the regularly occupied building areas.
- Water use reduction reduced the burden on the municipal water supply and waste systems by 30 percent by selecting products that conserve water use.
- Storage and collection of recyclables reduced waste generated by building occupants. Areas are provided paper, corrugated cardboard, glass, plastics and metals that are covered by a recycling program.
- Use of low emitting materials in the choice of adhesives, sealants, paints, coatings, flooring systems, and composite wood and agri-fiber products.

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is a non-profit trade organization that promotes sustainability in how

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT

Sustainable Development and Awareness (cont.)

buildings are designed, built, and operated. USGBC is best known for the development of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating systems. Eisenhower High School, the largest of the two projects, reached Gold LEED status.

Macon County Conservation District

The Macon County Conservation District is one of only five conservation districts in Illinois and has been one of the leaders in the environmental efforts for the City of Decatur for over fifty years. The Conservation District operates the 24,000 square-foot Rock Springs Nature Center in the heart of Rock Springs Conservation Area. The Nature Center offers nature-based education programming for area schools to supplement their curriculum. The Nature Center has recently been re-landscaped with native plants as an educational display to encourage people to use native plantings at home.



Conservation District Horse Riding

Rock Springs is a 1,300-acre natural area with more than nine miles of hiking trails and a 2.2-mile bike path that connects the Nature Center with the city. Rock Springs promotes wise use of the area's natural resources through its forest and prairie management efforts. The Nature Center is open every day of the year and has programs and events offered throughout the year for every Midwest season.

The Macon County Conservation District has over 250 active volunteers that assist with the environmental efforts at Rock Springs. Volunteers help with the many programs conducted by the Conserva-

tion District such as the Sangamon River Cleanup.

Scovill Zoo Environmental Solution



Scovill Zoo

Utilizing a professional staff, as well as volunteers who complete 12 weeks of instruction in biology and animal handling techniques, Scovill Zoo's camps, programs, and mobile zoos benefit youth aged three to eighteen. The mobile zoo makes 115 mobile zoo presentations and reaches over 8,000 individuals at schools, fairs, and special events. Their goal is to expose individuals of all ages to nature and the importance of conservation.

Launched in spring 2018, a new partnership between Scovill Zoo, Ameren Illinois, and Wright Tree Service will benefit the zoo's camels, goats, and monkeys. In the past, trees and shrubs that encroach on power lines have been cut, mulched or turned into landfill waste. The leaves and branches will now be delivered to Scovill Zoo to enhance the animals' diets and encourage natural foraging behaviors. This is a creative environmental solution for the zoo, the utility, and the community.

Children's Museum of Illinois Clean Water Display

The Children's Museum of Illinois recently partnered with Rotary Club #180 and Decatur Memorial Foundation to create the Clean Water exhibit. Clean Water is an interactive exhibit that allows children to use

simple machines to "pump" clean water into a drinking glass. Once full, the glass tips into the mouth of a body. Children can direct the water into different areas of the body to highlight the health benefits our bodies receive by drinking clean water. The exhibit also includes an oversize "drinking glass" with graphics that outline the mission of Rotary International and the health benefits of drinking clean water. The content is written for children of varying ages and is an additional educational opportunity for children and parents. Clean Water was unveiled to the public in September of 2017 and has been an instant favorite.



Children's Museum of Illinois

Decatur's West Side 'Sustainability Campus'

In April 2018, a 109-acre site was approved for purchase by the Macon County Board for a new recycling center and administrative offices, with other possibilities including a compost center, small solar farm, and community gardens. The cost of the land has been funded with the generous donation of \$1.2 million from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation.

With the creation of this 'sustainability campus,' Decatur residents will have one place where they can regularly drop off items such as paint and televisions, and move away from "event-based" events. Additionally, the site will have its own compost facility where the county could sell products such as mulches and compost to residents and businesses.



Lincoln Statue at Macon County Courthouse

Visiting Early Decatur

Early settlers to Macon County came in search of fertile and abundant farm land. Located on rich prairie along the Sangamon River, Macon County drew hardy pioneers who worked tirelessly to secure their family's futures through farming.

The county of Macon was formed in 1829 with Decatur as the county seat. A realistic representation of what life was like in early Decatur can be found at the Homestead Prairie Farm, located at the Rock Springs Nature Center. This refurbished 1860s farmstead serves as an educational tool for schools to experience past life on the prairie through living history interpretation.

The heritage garden managed by the Master Gardeners, displays the variety of produce typically grown in the 1860s. From 1829 to the present day, there have been many changes to Decatur but there is a rich and proud history that underpins this community and its people.

Decatur & Abraham Lincoln's Political Destiny

The nation's sixteenth President first laid eyes on Decatur in March of 1830 at the age of 21. Throughout the next three decades, the future President of the United States and the young City of Decatur would continually intersect. Decatur ultimately played a pivotal role in Lincoln's political destiny.

Lincoln's life and his time in Decatur is celebrated throughout the community:

Looking for Lincoln! (9) nine statues and wayside attractions:

HERITAGE

Preserving Your Past for Future Generations

- **Macon County History Museum** "The Lincoln Connection Exhibit" tells the story of Abraham Lincoln's connection to Decatur and Macon County. Extensive Lincoln papers and reference materials can be found in the Museum's library.
- **Main & Merchant, Downtown A** statue of Abraham Lincoln commemorates the site of his important "Stump Speech" that propelled him into political prominence.
- **West Main Street, Front Lawn, Shilling Hall, Millikin University** This Abraham Lincoln statue celebrates his arrival in Macon County at the age of 21.
- **Oglesby Mansion** 421 West William St. - The Oglesby Mansion was home to Decatur's most distinguished citizen, Governor Richard J. Oglesby, who was a close friend to Abraham Lincoln.
- **Busey Bank & Trust Parking Lot** 130 N. Water St. - A plaque marks the site of "The Wigwag" where Abraham Lincoln was nominated for President by John Palmer during the 1860 Illinois Republican Convention. Also introduced at this site is Richard Oglesby's famed slogan, "Abe Lincoln, The Rail Splitter Candidate for President of 1860."
- **Southwest Corner of Main and Main Streets** A bronze monument marks the original site of the old log cabin courthouse where Lincoln tried five cases.
- **Entrance to James Millikin Homestead, West Main Street** A bronze circuit marker recalls Lincoln's route through Decatur on the Eighth Judicial Circuit.
- **Birks Museum, Gorin Hall, Millikin University Campus** On display is an 1851 Lincoln letter, a bronze cast of Abraham Lincoln's hands, and a replica of his life mask.

The Assassination Tree

Rising to a height of some 40 feet with writhing limbs twisting skywards out of a

trunk measuring 15½ feet around, this tree has got character to spare. Local lore says Carrie Hostetler was planting the ginkgo sapling outside her home when news of Lincoln's assassination arrived in Decatur around noon April 15, 1865, via telegraph. Her family began referring to the tree as Assassination Tree and the name continues to this day.

Lincoln Statue Celebrates Illinois' Bicentennial

Decatur-based sculptor John McClarey, donated a bronze statue to the Decatur Library Local History Room in celebration of the State's bicentennial in 2018. The statue depicts Lincoln with Stephen Douglas and Gov. Joseph Duncan in 1834 devising the state's railroad plans with Decatur as a focal point.

Historic Districts & Preservation

The Historical and Architectural Sites Commission (HASC) was created by the Decatur City Council as a means of encouraging the preservation, conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historically and architecturally significant structures and areas of the city. Approximately 271 homes exist within the local historic districts and the City has processed 32 Certificate of Appropriateness in the last 4 years.

Dotted throughout the city are historically preserved homes, neighborhoods, and monuments mixed with a splash of new color through new arts and gardens. Here's a glimpse of Decatur's storied past:

Downtown Historical District

Beautiful downtown Decatur includes many of the commercial buildings which were built in the economic boom following the railroad's construction; all but one of the district's contributing buildings were built between 1854 and 1916. Lincoln Square, located at the corner of Main and Main was the center of early Decatur. The first courthouse, where Abraham Lincoln tried his cases, was located on one side of the square.

HERITAGE

Preserving Your Past for Future Generations (cont.)



West End Historic District

West End Historic District

Located in Decatur's near west end, the district was primarily built in the first half of the 20th century and includes over 1,700 contributing buildings featuring 23 different architectural styles.

The West End was a popular neighborhood for Decatur's business owners and managers, and most of its residents came from upper-middle class occupations; however, the district also had many working-class residents. The annual Heritage and Holly Tour offers the opportunity to visit a selection of these historic homes decorated for the holidays.

Transfer House

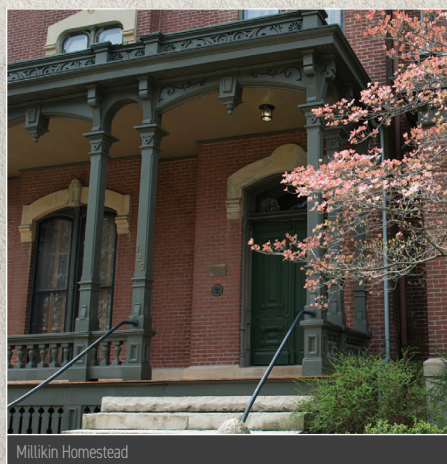
Originally located in the center of Lincoln Square, Decatur's most iconic building served as a transfer point for Decatur's electric streetcar system. Chicago architect William W. Boyington, most famous for designing the Chicago Water Tower, designed the Transfer House which was built in 1896. The building was ultimately moved to Central Park and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Millikin Place

One of the most unique streets in the state, Millikin Place, boasts several prairie style homes, including one designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright designed the Irving House at 2 Millikin Place, before absconding to Europe in 1909 with his mistress. It was therefore left to Marion Mahony, a Wright associate and the first licensed

female architect in the United States, to complete the commission. She designed homes for Adolph and Randolph Mueller, modified Wright's design on the Irving home, and likely is the one who designed the gates and lanterns for Millikin Place.

The Millikin Homestead



Millikin Homestead

Built in 1876 by James and Anna Millikin, founders of Millikin Bank, Millikin University, and the Millikin Trust, is located on the corner of Main and Pine Streets. Surrounded by historically accurate landscaped grounds, this home is a stately example of Italianate/Second Empire architecture.

Oglesby Mansion

Built in 1859 and added on to in 1874, Richard J. Oglesby, U.S. Senator, Union

Civil War General, and three-time Illinois Governor, called this lovely Italianate style mansion "home." The home has been restored to its original style and the back garden has recently been restored with beautiful landscaping.

Greenwood Cemetery

Greenwood Cemetery dates from 1840. Until the 1920s, Greenwood was the place to be buried. Prominent Decatur families built ornate family mausoleums and monuments. Some historic Decatur figures are buried there including James Millikin, the Mueller family, Orlando Powers, Jane Johns - along with 30,000 others.

The Culver House

Built on a Native American burial ground in 1888, the Culver House has the reputation of being haunted. This home, located on West Prairie Ave, is a brick Queen Anne with two turrets, arches, and stone lintels - very rare now.

Two well-known Decatur families built the home. Josiah Clokey owned much of the real estate in the city at the time and John Culver was known for many endeavors including bringing electricity to the area and rebuilding Lincoln's tomb in Springfield.

Decatur Texaco Service Station

On August 2, 1930, a new Texaco service station opened for business on West Main Street near downtown Decatur. It would continue to offer Texaco products and automotive service for 55 years until 1985. The building sat empty, derelict, and deteriorating for another half dozen years before its private renovation project began. The station now serves as a casual "office" for the owner. Events have been hosted from time to time, including a wedding, birthday parties, meetings, and numerous photo sessions.

Jones School

Formerly a one-room brick schoolhouse, this circa 1865 structure now houses Dr. William Fiesler's dental practice. The re-worked building is divided into a series of dental suites and offices linked and adorned by extensive decorative bridgework using everything from salvaged stained glass to Victorian furniture and gingerbread wood trim. The building also boasts a lovely gar-

HERITAGE

Preserving Your Past for Future Generations (cont.)

den on the south side.

Yunker House

The home, built in 1892, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Three rooms are decorated in traditional Queen Anne Victorian style and available to visitors as a bed and breakfast establishment.

Rock Springs Conservation Area and Nature Center

This extensive park provides a natural history museum, a homestead prairie farm built around the Trobaugh-Good House that has been restored to let visitors explore rural life on the Grand Prairie of Illinois in 1860, classes for all ages on a variety of topics, trails for hiking through diverse ecosystems, and opportunities to experience nature close to home.

Decatur's Monument-AL History

Decatur is proud of its history and evidence of this pride can be seen in the form of monuments dedicated to the memories of people important to the city.

African American Civil War Memorial

Designed by famous sculpture and Decatur native Preston Jackson, this memorial pays tribute to the African American soldiers who fought in the Civil War. This unique artwork is one of only a handful of sculptures in the United States that salutes the African American Civil War soldiers.

911 Memorial

This memorial stands as a reminder of the lives lost in the events of September 11th. The Twin Tower memorial is approximately 30 feet tall with a steel I-beam recovered from the World Trade Center incorporated into its design. It stands on a pentagon base with entrances at 9 and 3 o'clock to signify United 93.

World War II Memorial

A groundbreaking took place in 2013 for the \$300,000 memorial, of which all funds were raised locally. The black granite sculptural memorial is a lasting tribute to the more than 300 Macon County residents who died in World War II.



Stephen Decatur

The statue of Stephen Decatur commemorates the man from whom the city takes its name and the encircling inscribed bricks commemorate the location of Decatur High School from 1911 until the 1975 closure and demolition.

Museums Celebrating Decatur Legacies

Decatur has several museums dedicated to preserving the legacies of the city's founding families and history as well as sharing their legacies with the citizens of Decatur.

Staley Museum

From founding one of the city's largest employers, to establishing a football team that would become the Chicago Bears to urging the creation of Lake Decatur, there is no

question Augustus Eugene Staley helped shape Decatur into the community it is today. The former Staley Mansion built in 1884, was purchased by Staley for his family in 1913 followed by 40 years of family ownership. In 2015, the home returned to the Staley family and has become museum paying tribute to the Staley legacy.

Hieronymus Mueller Museum

Founded in 1995, the Hieronymus Mueller Museum celebrates the life and legacy of Hieronymus Mueller: a pioneer entrepreneur who emigrated from Germany to Decatur, and founded several business concerns, including Mueller Co., which still exists today and produces many of the original signature Mueller products, namely water pressure valves and the iconic fire hydrants that we see in nearly every American town and city.

Macon County Historical Society and Museum

Since 1916, this organization has led efforts to permanently protect thousands of artifacts, documents, and photographs from Decatur and Macon County's past for future generations. The Prairie Village on the museum's grounds is home to such historic buildings such as a replica of the 1830s courthouse where Abraham Lincoln practiced law, an 1850s log house, an 1860s one-room school, a smithy, and a print shop.

The African-American Cultural & Genealogical Society (AACGS)

The African-American Cultural & Genealogical Society was organized on August 31, 1993, starting with 25 members from Decatur and Central Illinois. The A.A.C.G.S provides the Central Illinois community with a solid local research base and networks with other societies' local, state, and national resources.



Scovill Zoo Penguins

Life isn't meant to be merely lived; it's meant to be experienced. Residents find endless opportunities to enjoy life without limits here in Decatur.

Decatur Park District

With 1,975 acres designated for recreation purposes, the Decatur Park District maintains more than 53 properties and facilities, including 32 neighborhood parks, 13 community parks/nature centers, two golf courses, a miniature golf complex, an aquatics center, nearly ten miles of trails, a soccer complex, baseball complex, floral display center, sculpture park, senior center, indoor sports center, Decatur Airport and Scovill Zoo.

Decatur Park District was named a National Gold Medal Finalist in 2016 and more than 1,000 individuals volunteer over 9,000 hours annually at recreational events and activities.

Scovill Zoo

Scovill Zoo is in the 62-acre Scovill Park overlooking Lake Decatur and showcases 400 animals spanning six continents. Fifteen acres of exhibits attract visitors from 285 zip codes. This unique facility offers visitor contact with exotic and domestic animals, horticultural displays and gardens, natural wooded beauty, and family picnicking.

Playground, summer camps, adult volunteer opportunities, and mobile classroom programs, the zoo contributes to the education, enjoyment, and quality of life of residents and visitors from across Central Illinois.

COMMUNITY VITALITY

Endless Opportunities to Enjoy Decatur

Scovill Sculpture Park

The Decatur Parks Foundation, along with the Decatur Park District, Children's Museum of Illinois, Decatur Area Arts Council, Neuhoft Media, and Limitless Decatur & Macon County began conversations in October 2015 for an exciting, accessible, outdoor art development in Scovill Park. Shortly thereafter, the idea was proposed to a private philanthropist, who invested \$250,000 to fund the project in its entirety. The Scovill Sculpture Park is comprised of 12 sculptures that are rented from the artists for a two-year period. By renting them rather than purchasing them the Parks Foundation provides a new art experience for the community every couple of years!

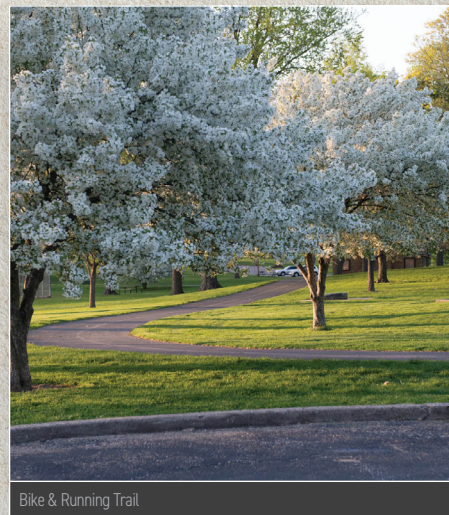


Scovill Sculpture Park

An addition, a purchased permanent sculpture called Learning Curve by local artist Aaron McIntosh, is now the centerpiece of the park. At the Scovill Sculpture Park entrance, Learning Curve appears to be peeled up from the ground to reveal something hidden. Each element of this beautiful piece has been custom-designed, from the striking mirrored-back to the one-of-a-kind, curved LED display, which reflects into a pool of water. The sculpture was inspired by McIntosh's desire to see local artistry unearthed, put on display, and reflected in all directions.

The heavy, unpolished steel structure is a tribute to our local workforce, and the steel pieces were fabricated by Decatur's Iron Bull Fabrication. A strong labor backbone

gives our community a framework upon which all can enjoy the arts. In the future, the LED display will provide a platform featuring the work of local artists and Millikin students, as well as offer an interactive feature to engage families in the park.



Bike & Running Trail

Bike Trails

The Decatur Park District's bike trail system is among the most popular amenities in the parks system, used by Decatur residents of every age, race, and income level. The trails began as a one-mile segment in Fairview Park, which opened July 4, 1994, and was constructed on an abandoned rail bed.

Now, seven different trail sections totaling more than ten miles wind through Decatur, ranging in difficulty from the mostly flat trails near Kiwanis Park to the challenging hills at Rock Springs.

The Park District plans in upcoming years to connect the Decatur trail to the Forsyth trail at Cresthaven Park. The extension will allow a cyclist to bike uninterrupted from Rock Springs Nature Center in the southern part of Decatur to Forsyth, north of Decatur. For those who like to take their bikes off-road, Decatur boasts two mountain biking trails: one on the north side and one in centrally-located Nelson Park.

COMMUNITY VITALITY

Endless Opportunities to Enjoy Decatur (cont.)

Overlook Adventure Park

Transforming an old golf course has never looked cooler. Overlook Adventure Park includes batting cages and a 36-hole zoo-themed miniature golf course. Nine holes on each course are ADA accessible. Also in the park, the only course of its kind in Central Illinois, the Sky Trail Ropes Course at Overlook Adventure Park puts climbers 25 feet above the ground to soar above the mini golf course. Wearing a full-body safety harness, visitors climb their way around 33 challenges, walk the tightrope, balance on rickety bridges, brave the balance beams, and fly 68 feet on the zip line.

A nine-obstacle course is also available for the little ones. And opening in 2019, Overlook Adventure Park Aquatic Center will feature cool slides, a zip line, climbing wall, beach-style entry, and much more.

Nelson Park

Historic Nelson Park is one of the most beautiful parks in Central Illinois. Rolling hills on the banks of Lake Decatur make it a fantastic place to explore. Nelson Park is our community's most visited park with Fourth of July festivities, Shoreline Classic Race, Lakeside Triathlon, Special Olympics' Polar Plunge, Staley Firecracker Road Run, Shake the Lake Summer Concert Series, and hundreds of family gatherings. An estimated 80,000 people enjoy the park over the course of the year. Pavilions/Great Lawn, Fitness Park/Trail, Dog Park, Disc Golf Course, and the Amphitheater (also coming in 2019) add to the vitality of the great city while embracing beautiful views of Lake Decatur.

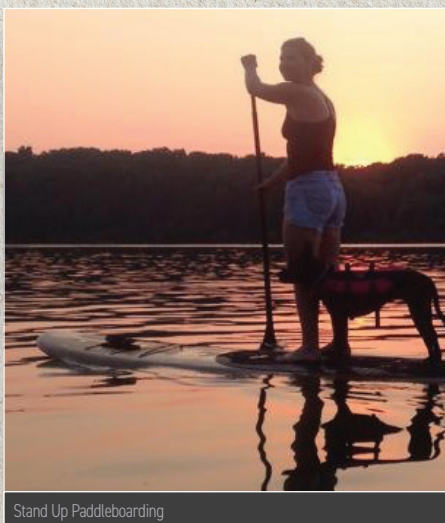
Dog Parks

Decatur boasts two dog parks: one located at Fido Fields in Fairview Park, and the other in Nelson Park on Lake Decatur. Both are fenced, off-leash dog parks designed to provide a recreational community space for dogs and their owners to exercise and socialize throughout the year. Both feature an electronic, double-gated entrance with a separate area for small dogs and large dogs.

Pier 36

The Pier 36 area includes the beautifully

restored Beach House restaurant, a breathtaking promenade, ADA compliant boat docks, and the new Decatur 9/11 Memorial. During the summer, residents and visitors alike enjoy Stand Up Paddle Company's board and pedal boat rentals on Lake Decatur.



Stand Up Paddleboarding

There's no better way to soak in the summer than by spending some time on the lake and lakeshore by trying out a variety of activities from paddle boarding to biking or walking along the shore. In addition to privately owned docks, the Pier 36 Marina on Lake Decatur has dozens of boat docks available for rent and eight docks available for public use.

Children's Museum of Illinois

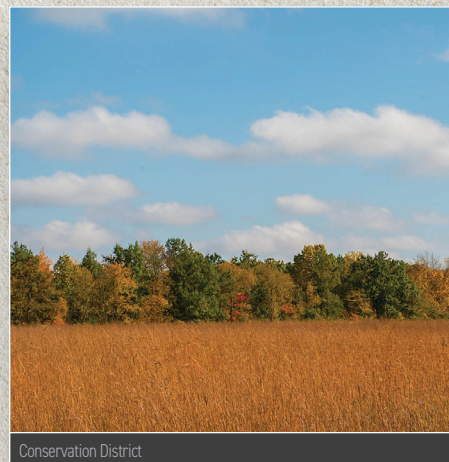
Children's Museum of Illinois is a hands-on, interactive museum for children ages three to twelve. Over 50 exhibits and related activities complement and enhance children's educational opportunities, particularly in the arts and sciences. The museum contributes to the community's quality of life as an educational facility, visitor attraction, family activity destination, and site for volunteerism.

The Museum is currently undergoing a 7,000-square foot addition, the first in the Museum's 28-year history. The \$3,000,000 new space will be home to *Heroes Hall*, an exhibit space dedicated to educating chil-

dren and adults alike about careers in law enforcement. The only one of its kind, Heroes Hall opens July 6th, 2018.

Macon County Conservation District

Macon County Conservation District is the entryway to more than 3,300 acres of nature, wildlife, and outdoor recreation. Hiking and bird watching are just some of the activities residents can enjoy at six distinct Macon County conservation areas. From canoeing to cross country skiing, there is programming throughout all four Midwestern seasons.



Conservation District

Decatur Celebration

Notably the most festive time of year in Decatur takes place annually in early August. The Decatur Celebration is a massive three-day event which blankets the downtown business district with six show stages featuring national and emerging music artists, three blocks of authentic Arts and Crafts, spectacular carnival rides for all ages, the Razzle Dazzle Good Times Parade and over 60 unique food items.

The Celebration has been held annually for 32 years and it typically draws over 300,000 visitors to Decatur. Serving as the community's staple event, the Celebration was the inspiration for Decatur's America in Bloom theme, Celebration of Blooms.

COMMUNITY VITALITY

Endless Opportunities to Enjoy Decatur (cont.)

Community Gardens: Opportunity for All Decatur Citizens

Mercy Gardens & Mercy Kitchen



Mercy Gardens

The Good Samaritan Inn serves over 100,000 hot nutritious meals every year to economically disadvantaged citizens of the Decatur community at no cost to them. Their mission is to create opportunities with the support of our community toward improving the lives of our economically disadvantaged neighbors through daily nourishment, life skills education, and job skills training programs.

Mercy Gardens & Mercy Kitchen is the farm to fork job skills training program offered to the Inn's clients. The course is divided into two segments, horticulture and culinary, both taught by Richland Community College (RCC) instructors. Students spend one day a week with each instructor, giving students the full farm to fork experience. The partnership between the Inn and RCC creates a bridge program for students to go into the Culinary program at RCC.

The gardens program has transformed dilapidated vacant city lots into beautiful permaculture gardens that produce much of the food served at the Inn's noon meal program. The Inn also operates three greenhouses on their property which employs graduates of the program year-round as well as brings fresh, local, healthy food

into the Inn both seasonally and year-round through hydroponic growing. Collaborations with other organizations like Crossing Healthcare and HSHS St. Mary's Hospital extend the impact of the Mercy Gardens and Mercy Kitchen.

Good Samaritan Inn serves over 100,000 meals every year to economically disadvantaged citizens.

Mary's Garden at St. Mary's Hospital

Mary's Garden at HSHS St. Mary's Hospital, at a third of an acre, is the largest single plot in the Mercy Gardens program. It supplements area food banks and offers a buy-in program to help expand the garden and aid the Mercy Garden horticulture apprenticeship program. Planted in 2015, the garden provides jobs for the disadvantaged as well as vegetables to feed the needy at the Good Samaritan Inn. The garden hosts biweekly farmer's market for HSHS St. Mary's Hospital employees that continues through late September.

Crossing Healthcare Prescription Produce Program & Gardens

Crossing Healthcare is a federally qualified health center that provides primary outpatient healthcare. Since 1972, they have been operating as a non-profit organization serving Decatur and Macon County and striving to make our community a healthier one.

With help from Mercy Gardens in 2016, Crossing Healthcare began its Prescription Produce program. Using produce from that garden, as well as Good Samaritan's Inn's gardens and food purchased from the Central Illinois Foodbank, 20 patients were hand-selected by Crossing staff based on their social determinants for the first-year prescription produce program.

More than half lost weight and nearly half experienced lower blood sugar. In 2017, the program was expanded and has 43 patients, and in addition to the free produce, patients are given recipes that match that

week's produce, which can include tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumbers, eggplants, lettuce, zucchini, watermelon, strawberries, and other fruits.

Crossing Healthcare also holds cooking demonstrations to show patients healthy ways to prepare the food.

ReSource Farms

Macon Resources, Inc.'s (MRI) ReSource Farms began partnering with Mercy Gardens in 2016. MRI provides floor care at the soup kitchen and greenhouse space for its Mercy Gardens horticultural job training program. Mercy Gardens, in turn, provides the staff oversight needed to train some of the adults with developmental disabilities that MRI serves to take on more of the work. The partners plan to share the plants and the harvest and experiment with a produce washing and packing assembly line at MRI.

The WE Grow Community Garden

The WE Grow Community Garden is a visual representation of the flourishing partnership between Millikin University and Dennis Lab School. What began as three garden plots in 2013 has now expanded to include 18 garden plots, a stage for entertainment and teaching, picnic tables, a storage shed and compost bin, a greenhouse and a fruit tree "forest."

The WE Grow Community Garden has proven to be an excellent resource for Dennis and Millikin students alike by providing an outdoor classroom where they are able to learn through a hands-on approach.

The garden received an award from the City of Decatur's Historic and Architectural Site Commission in 2015 for the vast improvement to the use of the land. Summer 2017 programming revitalized use of this space for the entire community and launched a highly successful West End Farmers' Market on Thursday evenings.



Downtown Decatur

Downtown Redevelopment

The Downtown Decatur Streetscape project, completed in 2015, was a \$14 million public development imagined as the next step in efforts to bring a new look, feel and energy to the city's central business district. The three-phased plan has brought new sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, recreational opportunities, and other amenities to downtown Decatur. Improvement to Central Park, Merchant Street, and Lincoln Square were completed in 2013.

The project spurred a return to prominence of the city's downtown district in the form of new businesses and jobs, entertainment options, and the creation of a "new" downtown that is now a destination for residents and visitors. The project was funded with \$10 million from the 2010 General Obligation Bond Issue, \$2 million in motor fuel tax from the State of Illinois, and \$2 million in transportation grants from the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The City of Decatur implemented sweeping changes to its downtown parking system designed to make the local shopping experience more convenient. The program included, among other upgrades, a transition from parking meters to free parking for most of the downtown area and the addition of 150 new spaces as part of the overall Downtown Decatur Streetscape project.

The City received \$1.9 million in federal funds to assist improvement of the streetscape along the heavily traveled Franklin and Main Street corridors. Additionally, the City negotiated to receive control of the Main St. U.S. Route 51 corridor from the State of Illinois, allowing for rerouting of

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Decatur Is in Bloom

truck traffic outside of the core downtown area, benefitting downtown foot traffic, outdoor dining opportunities, and shopping, resulting in a safer, quieter, and more vibrant scene.

The Eldorado streetscape project was completed in 2012 and brought a new roadway, sidewalks, curbs, and other aesthetic improvements to the section of Eldorado Street between Church Street and the railroad tracks just east of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Additionally, the State of Illinois completed work to resurface the section of Eldorado between the railroad and 19th Street east of the City's work, meaning that Eldorado Street has been completely resurfaced from Church Street to 19th Street.

The \$2.6 million project was funded by a \$1.2 million federal transportation grant, \$1.1 million from the Illinois Department of Transportation and \$300,000 in Motor Fuel Tax funding allocated by the City of Decatur.

In 2016, Chastain and Associates and the City of Decatur received the Engineering Excellence Merit Award at the 44th Annual Engineering Excellence Awards. The downtown streetscape offered aesthetic enhancements, increased parking, and improved accessibility. 3D Laser technology was used to improve drainage design. Electrical hook-ups were also added to accommodate the electrical needs for community vendors for our annual Decatur Celebration street festival.

Installation of 66 planters were part of the city revitalization of downtown, but due to economic downturn, the city lacked the required funding to plant them. The Beautify Decatur Coalition, an all-volunteer organization, stepped up and found a sustainable method to plant the annuals. Volunteers sought grant funding in the following years that funded the addition of boxwoods to the larger planters in order to bring color to all four Midwestern seasons.



Hundreds of new light poles were installed during the renovation, and the City of Decatur partnered with the Economic Development Corporation of Decatur – Macon County and the Beautify Decatur Coalition to design banners for the poles. Inspired by participation in the 2018 America In Bloom contest

participation, the city incorporated blooms into the design of the spring, summer, and fall banners.

Downtown Decatur has always been a place for community events such as the Decatur Celebration in August, concerts in Central Park, annual Arts in Central Park, and even a calm space for people to eat lunch on a nice day. Now more than ever, downtown Decatur is a destination for fine dining, food, music festivals, and art fairs. New restaurants and boutiques have opened and are thriving. The downtown revitalization has resulted in multiple private investments including new office and retail space and upscale loft apartments.

Lakeshore Landing

The enhancement of Decatur's lakefront (Nelson Park basin) has been identified as a community priority since 1978, when it was included in the Decatur Park District's Master Plan. Additional plans in the years to follow included the Chamber of Commerce Sangamon River Restoration Plan (1991), the Lohan Associates Lake Development Study (1993), the Sangamon River Greenway Study (1995), the 1996 Park District Master Plan, the 1998 Decatur Metro Area Greenway Plan, and the 2004 Park District Master Plan.

Goals for the current project are: to provide a unique venue for open space and entertainment, to optimize and enhance community access to the lake, to provide linkages from Nelson Park to Scovill Park, and to create lakefront activities that will promote multi-generational and multi-seasonal use.

With leadership from the Decatur Park District and City of Decatur, as well as input from the community at large, the comprehensive plan will provide year-round activity for our citizens, attract visitors, spur economic development, and improve quality of life for all in the greater Decatur area.

The Lakeshore Landing project was unveiled at a public ceremony on September 19, 2012. Since then, a variety of collaborations led by the Decatur Park District and City of Decatur have already developed such as: Overlook Adventure Park's miniature golf course, batting cages, and ropes course; the Nelson Park's dog park, mountain biking trail, fitness park, and disc

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Decatur Is in Bloom (cont.)

golf; the Beach House Renovation, on-lake fitness and recreation activities, and boat dock rentals; and the Scovill Sculpture Park. Some items currently in progress as this profile is written are: Overlook Adventure Park's aquatics center, the Lakeside Amphitheater, the Scovill Zoo train extension, and the Children's Museum of Illinois addition. Even more is planned for future years to bring a new life and economic development to a retired lakeside golf course and create new synergy between downtown Decatur and the lakefront.

Public Art in Decatur

The Decatur Area Arts Council established the Decatur Mural Project in 2012 to create partnerships with artists, property owners, the City of Decatur, local volunteers, and sponsors for the creation of murals for the beautification of Decatur buildings. Momentum has continued to grow as others have been inspired to invest in public art:



Stephen Decatur Mural

- The Decatur City Council approved a measure in the spring of 2016 that would allow public art displays to be created on city property.
- Later that year, the City of Decatur worked with Millikin University art students to have a lake wildlife-themed design painted on a water treatment tank.
- Two electrical wraps were added in

the fall of 2017 with more planned.

- There are approximately 25 other murals and artworks scattered across the city which have been created by private businesses and individuals. These artworks help beautify Decatur and further create a sense of pride in our city. The Decatur Area Arts Council has created a "catalog" of these pieces and is compiling a map showing their locations.
- A sculpture, lovingly called a "POP," an acronym meaning "a pile of parts," was constructed by Caterpillar employees using parts from the current products made at the Decatur facility. The sculpture transformed a corner that was formerly just grass and weeds to a symbol of the importance of Decatur's industrial heritage.
- A digital map has been created to capture the locations of murals, sculptures, and electrical box wraps throughout the city. The map can be found here: <http://www.decatuarts.org/community-arts/Public-Art-Map>.

Community Volunteer Hours

It's been long believed that the Decatur community is very generous with their time. Community organizations were polled to determine annual volunteer hours. The Decatur America in Bloom committee is pleased to share that a minimum of ten hours per resident have been donated towards community projects in 2017.



Beautify Decatur Coalition

The Beautify Decatur Coalition, organized in 2012, is an all-volunteer group whose mission is to instill a mindset in the residents and businesses of the Decatur community to constantly create and maintain a clean, beautiful public presence. They have lead the America in Bloom effort and secured funding for the planting of (66) downtown planters and promoting other beautification efforts. Its initiatives include:

Litter Initiatives

- The No Litter Zone program has over 400 businesses and 12 schools that have committed to keep their properties litter free on a daily basis. A window cling is provided to recognize their pledge.
- The Adopt a Street program has grown to over 57.2 miles of adopted city streets thanks to partnership between the City of Decatur and the Beautify Decatur Coalition.

Let's Keep Decatur Bee-utiful Business Contest

The Coalition sponsors an annual good-natured competition to recognize and reward local businesses, large and small, for their efforts to be well-maintained, litter and graffiti-free, and to maintain attractive landscaping. Over 100 businesses participated in 2017 and 11 winners were recognized. Better looking businesses are more inviting and show pride in their neighborhoods. The real winner of Keep Decatur Bee-utiful is all of Macon County.

The Beautify Decatur Coalition Facebook Page

It has over 3,000 followers and averages 1,000 page reaches each week. In November, a daily post of thanks was used to recognize specific volunteers. The page also includes a volunteer/donor tab, and has overall heightened the community's awareness and encouraged community action on beautification.



Adopted Medians and Signs

Decatur has 10 medians/planters throughout the city which have been adopted by volunteers who weed and maintain them throughout the year. In 2015, all nine of the "Welcome to Decatur" signs received a fresh coat of paint.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Decatur Is in Bloom (cont.)

Brinkoetter Bright Blooms

Inspired by the America in Bloom Symposium, the Beautify Decatur Coalition partnered with local real estate company, Brinkoetter & Associates, to give awards for beautification. The "Brinkoetter Bright Blooms" weekly program runs for 21 weeks starting on May 9, 2018. During this time,



Brinkoetter recognizes homeowners whose properties are clean and well-maintained.

They'll choose winners by looking around town and finding homes whose appearance stands out to them. Each weekly winner will be placed in a drawing for a monthly prize presented by The Garden Path of Decatur and will receive an award sign

placed in their yard. The winners will also be showcased on social media and receive recognition at the Decatur City Council meetings.



No Litter Zone Sign

BEST IDEA

Decatur Creates a Powerful Program

The No Litter Zone

The Beautify Decatur Coalition has been promoting the No Litter Zone program for the past several years. This is a no cost program for pledged participants that are committing to train their employees to understand that it is part of their job description to monitor and pick up litter on their business



property daily.

The businesses receive a No Litter Zone cling which they can display showing their involvement with the program. Since September 2017, the number of business pledges has risen from 297 to 400.

Map of The No Litter Zone Business Participant Locations

