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Savanna's Bridge Fest Celebrates the End of an Era

Savanna, Ill., October 3, 2017 - Savanna, Ill., and Sabula, Iowa, celebrate the end of an era on October 21, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with Bridge Fest—The Last Drive, featuring food, music, art and a continuous drive across the historic Savanna-Sabula Bridge, which spans the Mississippi River connecting Illinois and Iowa via U.S. Highway 52.

Opened in December 1932, this charming but narrow bridge opened Savanna to tourism, completing a new "short route" from Chicago to Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This iconic Mississippi River bridge is slated for demolition and Bridge Fest is the ceremonial last drive before the opening of its nearly completed replacement, the Dale Gardner Veterans Memorial Bridge. The opening of the new bridge is not yet scheduled.

Henry Matthiessen III, co-owner of Stoned Kaos Art Gallery and an event organizer, says that Bridge Fest is a way to say goodbye to an old friend. "This will be an epic celebration of something that's connected Savanna and Sabula to the rest of the world for 80 years. We're going to party like the bridge is coming down," he says.

Anyone with a connection to the river or bridge is invited to participate in this historic last drive. Cars, motorcycles and pickup trucks are invited, particularly historic, antique and other special vehicles. Due to safety concerns, bicycles and pedestrians will not be allowed on the bridge. Extra-wide vehicles are strongly discouraged. The bridge will remain open to commercial traffic.

Live music is scheduled at several Savanna and Sabula locations, including Iron Horse Social Club, Hawg Dogs, A.O. Elliott and Bombfire Pizza. Stoned Kaos Art Gallery will host the family-friendly event, Art Unabridged, featuring art demonstrations and informal conversation with the gallery's 11 artists.

Bridge Fest will include a classic car show and street dance, which will take place in and around the Block that Rocks on Main St. in downtown Savanna. A food court will be open on Madison St., just west of Main St.

For more information about Bridge Fest, contact Hawg Dogs at (815) 273-2661.

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