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Altoona Proud

A Monthly Insight into all that is Altoona

July is National Park and Recreation Month

National Park and Recreation Month has been celebrated here in the United States since 1985, emphasizing the benefits of local park and recreation centers to the community and encouraging people to explore local parks and trails, and to get outside to take part in outdoor activities.

This July, Park and Recreation Month highlights “The Power Of” parks and recreation areas to bring us together, strengthen our health and well-being and build more connected communities. Parks bring us places to play, to walk, to meditate or to celebrate.

Our area is home to 26 parks, including an all – abilities park, spray park and three community centers, managed by the City of Altoona in cooperation with the Central Blair Recreation and Parks Commission (CBRP) These spaces offer everything from basketball, pickleball, tennis and volleyball to walking trails, public pavilions and musical performances. We also have Prospect Pool, which is currently under complete renovation this summer, to offer a brand new, renovated facility for youth and adults of all ages in 2027.

We are also home to two area amusement parks. Lakemont Park in Lakemont hosts community yard sales, summer concerts, summer basketball league and glow golf events. DelGrosso’s Amusement Park and Laguna Splash Water Park in Tipton is open daily with rides, food, picnic grounds and water fun. Get outside and celebrate at a park during this special month!!



Twilight At The Curve - Head to Horseshoe Curve to enjoy picnicking, stargazing and train watching on select Saturdays through the summer.

Sunday on the Lawn – Bring your chairs or blankets and enjoy free live musical performances on the lawn of the Baker Mansion History Museum.

Fireworks and Firework Safety

July 4th brings picnics, barbecues and, of course, fireworks. While it is a fun day for all, safety needs to be a priority. The National Safety Council suggests the following to ensure a safe Fourth of July:



- Don't allow young children to handle fireworks; allow older children to use them only with adult supervision.
- Never use fireworks if impaired by drug or alcohol usage, or point them or throw them at others.
- Never light fireworks indoors; only use them away from people, houses and flammable material.
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands or try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks.
- Light only one device at a time, use protective eyewear and maintain a safe distance.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks, and soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding.
- Be respectful of neighborhood pets, for which fireworks can be very frightening. Obey the specific fireworks ordinances of the City, which can be found on the City of Altoona website at www.altoonapa.gov

NOTE: Sparklers account for more than 25% of firework injuries and half of all firework injuries for children under 5. Choose alternatives such as glow sticks, confetti poppers or colored streamers.

July Events with The Altoona Curve



S'WINGfest is happening at the PNG field on July 2nd, July 16th and July 23rd, beginning at 5:00 PM. This is a free, family-friendly event with food, drinks and live music from local and regional bands beginning at 6:00 PM. Admission is free and open to all ages. Presented by Co"BRH"s Lounge and Sports Bar, they will be joined at each event by two local restaurants, showcasing the best wings in the area. The Curve will also sell alcohol and Dippin'Dots at each event.

Peoples Natural Gas Field will be abuzz with activity during the month of July, beginning with The Great American Pillow Fight on July 3rd, 2026. This official America250PA Blair County event will feature on field performances and action-packed fun, courtesy of Pillow Fight Championship (PFC), the world's first professional pillow fighting league.

PFC features trained professional fighters competing with patented combat pillows delivering intense, fast-paced, all-age-friendly competition unlike anything else in sports today. Gates open at 6:00 PM and tickets can be purchased through the Altoona Curve website at www.milb.com/altoona/ballpark/upcoming-events/great-american-pillow-fight

Come on back to the PNG Field on July 18th for the Altoona Curve Card show from 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Collectors and fans will be able to buy, sell and trade sports cards, trading card games, and other memorabilia. Presented by Central PA Card Shows, LLC and Altoona Cuve Baseball, this day is packed with collectibles, community and non-stop hobby excitement. Vendor tables are available for \$65 per table at www.centralpacardshows.com

HoopsFest 2026

Get ready for the 2026 HoopsFest, the Mid-Atlantic's largest 3-on-3 basketball tournament, now in its 24th year! The event brings thousands of players and fans to the City of Altoona for competitive action across all ages and skill levels. The event will host 250 teams, representing 11 states, with over 1,000 players playing over 900 games.



Presented by Dick's Sporting Goods in partnership with Altoona First Savings Bank, the event will be on Saturday, July 18th, 2026 in Downtown Altoona and will include youth, adult and competitive brackets. New for 2026, there will also be an Adult Co-ed Division and a Wheelchair Division. The All-Star Division features a \$1,000 cash prize for the champions and a \$250 prize for the runner-up.

For more information about how to register or volunteer, eligible age brackets, and event day details go to www.hoopsfest.net/, or visit the HoopsFest Altoona Facebook page at www.facebook.com/HoopsFest.net. Bring the family out to enjoy a summer day of food, fun and basketball in Downtown Altoona!

Celebrate Summer in Downtown Altoona

There are lots of reasons to visit downtown Altoona, but here are some special ones coming up in July:

The Farmers Market is a summer favorite in Heritage Plaza, with 20 vendors this year. The Farmers Market is open every Thursday from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM and includes local crafts, flowers, baked goods, produce, maple syrup and other vendors. This summer, enjoy Live at Lunch, live music and lunch specials from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM, every other Thursday, this month in July 2nd and July 16th.

The Altoona Area Public Library brings its story time programming to Heritage Plaza, on alternate weeks, featuring stories, songs and movement for kids in the Plaza. The theme is "Underneath A Story" and will feature discovery-focused books and crafts for children. Dates for outdoor story times are listed on the Altoona Area Public Library Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/altoonapubliclibrary/> or by checking out their website at <https://altoonapubliclibrary.org/>

The annual Angie Gioiosa Memorial July 4th Race is on Saturday, July 4th, starting at The Mishler Theatre. The 15K Run begins at 7:30 AM, 5K Run begins at 8:00 AM and 2 Mile Walk begins at 8:05 AM, with a Lollipop Fun Race for kids 6 and under and awards immediately after the race at Heritage Plaza. To register before July 3, go to www.runsignup.com/Race/PA/Altoona/AngieGioiosaMemorial. Race Day registration is from 6:30 AM – 7:30 AM at 12th Avenue & 13th Street, beside Center City Church. For more information, visit www.blairregionalmca.org/race-series/july-4th-angie-gioiosa-memorial-race/

Celebrate July 4th with the Peterson Memorial and Friends Downtown Cruise. Join members of the Blair County Antique Auto Club, the Blair - Bedford Labor Council and other car enthusiasts as Fans of Peterson Memorial Dragway, to cruise the Downtown circuit from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM



Central Blair Recreation Commission Annual Golf Tournament

The 16th Annual CBRC Don Witherspoon Memorial Golf Classic will be held on Monday, July 27th at the Sinking Valley Country Club.



Registration and continental breakfast begin at 8:00 AM, with the shotgun start at 9:00 AM. Snacks and beverages, will be provided throughout the course. There will be awards for putting, closest to pin, long and straight drive, along with raffle prizes. The day ends with an awards lunch.

The cost is \$400 per foursome or \$100 per individual player. Sponsorships are available at different levels, from Tee signs at \$125 through platinum sponsorships of \$1,500. Registration will be open until July 26th at www.brcparks.recdesk.com/Community/Program/. All proceeds benefit children's recreation programs in our area, including our many parks and summer sports programs for kids.

Big Boy Arrives in Altoona

The Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 is the world's largest, heaviest and most powerful steam locomotive. Built in 1941, this 132 foot-long, 1.2 million-pound giant is one of only 25 that were ever constructed. Of the eight remaining Big Boys in existence today, is the only Big Boy still in operation. traveling the Country on historic and commemorative tours.



Though No. 4014 was retired in December of 1961 after running over a million miles for the Union Pacific Railroad, it returned to operational status in 2019. To celebrate the Country's 250th Anniversary, the 4014 has embarked on a massive, historic cross-country tour through various regions of the United States.

The No. 4014 Big Boy will be making its way to Altoona on Wednesday, July 8th, with an estimated arrival time of 5:15 PM for a 30-minute whistle stop in downtown Altoona. During this time, the locomotive will be stationed on the mainline tracks, between the 12th & 13th Street pedestrian bridges. Downtown shops will be open late, and restaurants and food trucks will be ready to welcome visitors.

Big Boy Viewing Days for the public will be on Thursday and Friday, July 9th and 10th, at the Norfolk Southern Rose Yard announced designated Altoona viewing area. Shuttle service from People's Natural Gas Field and the Logan Valley Mall will be operating from 8:00 AM -2:00 PM. Visit www.railroadcity.org/bigboy for updated information.

On Saturday, July 11th, the Big Boy departs Altoona at 8:45 AM, on its way to Horseshoe Curve. Although Horseshoe Curve excursion tickets are sold out, visitors are invited to downtown Altoona for one last glimpse of the Big Boy as it passes by, and then stay downtown for brunch, shopping and other activities.

Don't miss this legendary, once in a lifetime opportunity to see Big Boy No. 4014, and take advantage of the fun in downtown Altoona!

America Celebrates 250

Happy 250th Birthday to the United States of America! Festivals and fireworks will be happening all over the United States, and here is what's happening in our area!

Main Line Mania – Wingfest and Fireworks Show, July 3rd, 2026 at the Railroaders Memorial Museum, located at 1200 9th Avenue. Gates will open at 4:00 PM Live music begins at 5:00 PM, with a special musical performance by Josh Gallagher at 8:00 PM. The event features wings and other foods from local vendors, axe throwing with The Slingers Throw House, craft vendors, yard games, and a massive fireworks show at 10:00 PM. Kids' activities will include face painting, a petting zoo, dunk tank and a bounce house. Parking is \$10 - \$15 per carload and admission is \$5 per person. Tickets can be purchased at www.railroadcity.org/events.

Independence Day Eve at Levity Brewing – Stroll across the decorated 13th Street Pedestrian Concourse for an evening of music and fun downtown on July 3rd, as Autumn Rising performs outside of Levity Brewing from 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Stick around for the fireworks over the Museum Railyard and Downtown at 10:00 PM.

Rockin' The Yard Concert – On July 3, 2026 at Lakemont Park, gates open at 5:00 PM, and music begins at 6:00 PM, with "An American Ride", the award winning Toby Keith Tribute, ay 8:00 PM. Food vendors and the Budweiser Beer Garden will be available onsite. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the gate, and can be purchased at Thompson's Pharmacy locations or Rhodes Pools & Patios.

Summer Thunder at Del Grosso's Park – Enjoy a fun day on Saturday, July 4th DelGrosso's Park & Laguna Splash Water Park. Located at 4352 E Pleasant Valley Blvd in Tipton, DelGrosso's Park rides and food stands will be open from 12:00 PM – 11:00 PM and the Laguna Splash Water Park will be open from 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM. Ending the day will be a musical pre-show at 9:00 PM, followed by fireworks at 10:00 PM.



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