



**Office of the Governor
Bruce Rauner**

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Contact

Laurel Patrick

Laurel.Patrick@illinois.gov

Randolph County to Host Start of the 100 Day Countdown to the Illinois Bicentennial Celebration

*Historic sites on Kaskaskia Island and along the Kaskaskia Trail plan events on
Constitution Day to commemorate 'Where Illinois Began'*

SPRINGFIELD (July 28, 2017) – The Governor’s Office of the Illinois Bicentennial announced today that Kaskaskia Island has been selected as the site to begin the 100 Day Countdown to the Illinois Bicentennial Celebration. Events are being planned for Constitution Day – Aug. 26, 2017 – in front of the Liberty Bell of the West and along the Kaskaskia/Cahokia trail.

“We are very excited that the Governor’s office has selected our historic region to begin the 100 Day Countdown to the Bicentennial Celebration,” Randolph County Commissioner Dr. Marc Kiehna said. “Since Randolph County is ‘Where Illinois Began,’ it is appropriate for festivities to start on Kaskaskia Island – the site of the first state capital of Illinois.”

At 9 a.m., a gathering of state, county and local officials, along with state historians, will mark the date with a ceremonial signing of the 1818 Illinois Constitution. The ceremony and document signing will be in front of the original courthouse near the Liberty Bell of the West shrine. Officials will signal the start of the 100 Day Countdown to Dec. 3, the date Illinois was federally recognized as a state and the official start of the Bicentennial Celebration.

The 100 Day Countdown will be commemorated each day through videos about Illinois history produced by Illinois high school and college students and posted on www.Illinois200.com, Illinois200 social media platforms, media partners WGN Radio.com and SJ-R.com and other media. BMO Harris Bank is the sponsor of the 100 Day Countdown to the Illinois Bicentennial.

At the completion of the ceremony, the group will proceed on the Kaskaskia/Cahokia Trail and stop at the Pierre Menard home, recognizing the home of the first lieutenant governor of Illinois. Fort de Chartres State Historic Site will be the next stop on the trail for special activities. Exhibits including the powder magazine (the oldest building in Illinois) will be available from noon to 3 p.m., and the public is invited to view a special flag raising ceremony at 2 p.m. The boom of cannons and a parade of colorful uniforms will transport visitors back in time to the early history of Illinois and the region.

The special events are free and open to the public. Food and refreshments will be available.

Bicentennial Commission Co-Chair and Southern Illinois University System President Randy Dunn said: “As a resident of Randolph County for over 10 years, I’m proud that one of the state’s very first bicentennial events will take place at Kaskaskia, our first capital. The area is so closely intertwined with the history of Illinois, and it will be exciting to be part of this celebration.”

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