

VISIT PONTIAC, ILLINOIS

MUSEUMS, MURALS, MERCHANTS & MORE!



PONTIAC

ILLINOIS





MUSEUMS

Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum - The "Mother Road" comes alive with memorabilia from the glory days of Route 66. Browse through images, artifacts, and informational displays. The museum traces the history of the highway from its beginnings in 1926 to the current efforts to preserve this historic byway. Featured exhibits include the Bob Waldmire VW van and Road Yacht, and the "Life in the 1940s" exhibit. Take a virtual tour of the entire cross-country route by visiting the Route 66 - A Photo Journal exhibit by Michael Campanelli.

The Pontiac-Oakland Automobile Museum and Resource Center - A museum showcasing the entire history of the General Motors Pontiac car brand. Exhibits feature antique and rare Oakland and Pontiac cars, advertising memorabilia, printed materials, designer sketches, over 5,000 highway maps, a large oil can collection, and rare bits of Pontiac history.

Livingston County War Museum - A tribute to the men and women who have served in all branches of the service. A hands-on museum staffed by veterans who will guide you through the meaningful exhibits.

The Museum of the Gilding Arts - The Museum highlights the history, craft, and art of using gold, silver, and other precious and non-precious metal leaf for architecture and decoration. Exhibits includes examples of gilding, displays featuring the tools utilized in gilding, and videos demonstrating how gold leaf is produced from ingots of solid gold. A special section contains articles from the M. Swift & Sons gold leaf manufacturing plant which began operation in Hartford, CT, in the 1800s.



MURALS

Pontiac has a unique and growing collection of outdoor murals located in and around the downtown area. These murals convey the commercial, social, and political history of the city. Our "Murals On Main Street" walking tour map is available at the Visitor Center, and all museums. Be sure to bring a camera as these murals are fantastic!



JOLLY TROLLEY & TOURS

The Pontiac Jolly Trolley provides transportation for tour groups of up to 30 people. Regular history tours are available on Saturdays during the spring, summer, and fall. Private tours may be scheduled other days of the week by contacting the Pontiac Tourism office.



EXHIBITS

Life in the 1940s - Four rooms lovingly recreate the days of yesteryear. Furniture and decorations, fashion, toys, and original newspapers are on display.

Bob Waldmire Experience - Learn more about the life one of Route 66's most gifted icons. See how his unique art style developed over the years. Get the full Waldmire experience by seeing his murals, the extraordinary Road Yacht, and his now famous VW minivan.

Route 66 Photo Journal - 166 images taken by photographer Michael Campanelli showing some of the famous sites along the entire length of the Mother Road.

Walldog Mural Museum - Explore the history and craft of outdoor sign painting. Presentations look back on the early days of outdoor advertising, and the more recent activities of the modern day Walldogs.

Art Cars - 15 miniature cars, each uniquely painted by a local artist or art group. Full of whimsy, they make 15 great photo opportunities!



POINTS OF INTEREST

Memorials - Located on the courthouse lawn - 6 memorials honor veterans from the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan. The Civil War monument was dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903.

Three Swinging Bridges - The only town in the Midwest to boast this! Dating back to the late 1800's. Simply a must to walk across one!

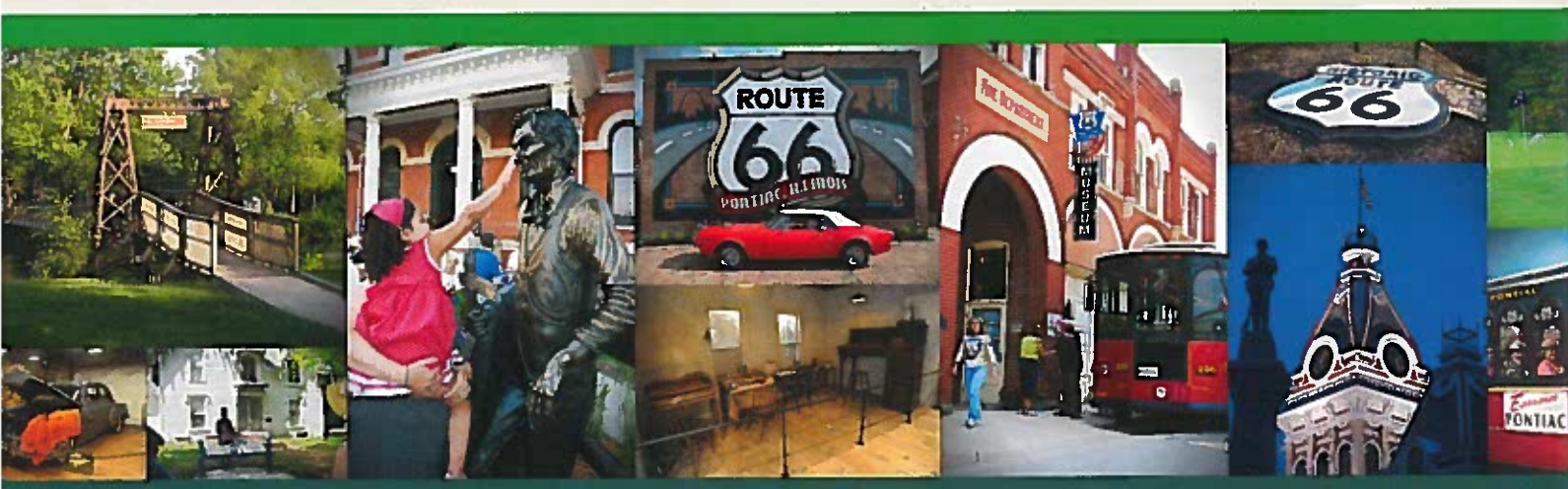
Dargan Statues - "Seasons of Life" rusty in appearance, standing 25 feet tall, the three sculptures symbolize the human "changes" or "seasons" of growth during our lives.

Round Barn - Built in 1918 is now the home of Interglobe Genetics, tours by appointment.



MERCHANTS

The historic downtown business district features a variety of shops and boutiques, restaurants, and specialty stores. Antiques, souvenirs, or new merchandise, you will find it here!





HISTORIC SITES

Courthouse - On the square in downtown Pontiac, built in 1875, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Jones House - Gothic Revival brick house built in 1858, it is the oldest brick home in Pontiac.

Old City Hall/Firehouse - Built in 1900 serves as home to the Livingston County War Museum, Old City Hall Shoppes and the Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Jason W. Strevell House - Built in the 1850s and occupied by friend of Abraham Lincoln and local lawyer, Jason Strevell, this Gothic-style wood frame home was visited by Lincoln before he became the nation's 16th President. The house is currently undergoing a complete restoration by the Livingston County Historical Society.

Yost House Museum - This Queen Anne styled house, built in 1898, portrays the life of an upper middle class family and showcases the original furnishings and turn of the 19th century décor.



ARTS IN PONTIAC

Community Arts Center - Studio, gallery, and retail sales of locally produced art of all types and styles.

Dongbai Art School and Gallery - Home to internationally famous airbrush artist, Tang Dongbai, includes examples of his amazing talents and technical skills.

Vermillion Players - Regional amateur theatre group producing plays and musicals at the historic Chautauque Park pavilion.

Eagle Theater - Opens in late 2015. Dinner theatre, musicals, dramas, and other forms of performance art. Available as meeting and conference location.



THE PONTIAC CHARM TRAIL

Discover the shops of Pontiac while collecting inexpensive pewter charms for your bracelet. Pick up a Charm Trail map at any museum or participating merchant and begin your shopping adventure.

MEALS

Satisfying your appetite in Pontiac is never a problem. We have more than 30 restaurants eager to serve you. From a country-style breakfast to a steak banquet, dining in Pontiac is a satisfying experience. Groups can easily be accommodated, and menus can be tailored to fit the most discriminating palate. So, if you are in the mood for Italian, Mexican, Chinese or traditional "Down Home Cooking," Pontiac has the eateries to meet your needs.



MEETINGS

Conveniently located in central Illinois, Pontiac is only a short drive from nearly all major Midwestern cities and is a great location for meetings of all kinds. Conference spaces are available for both large and small group gatherings, and can be equipped as necessary. Whether your group wants a downtown location with full technology resources available, or a secluded, natural setting away from all distractions, we can provide the facility.



LODGING

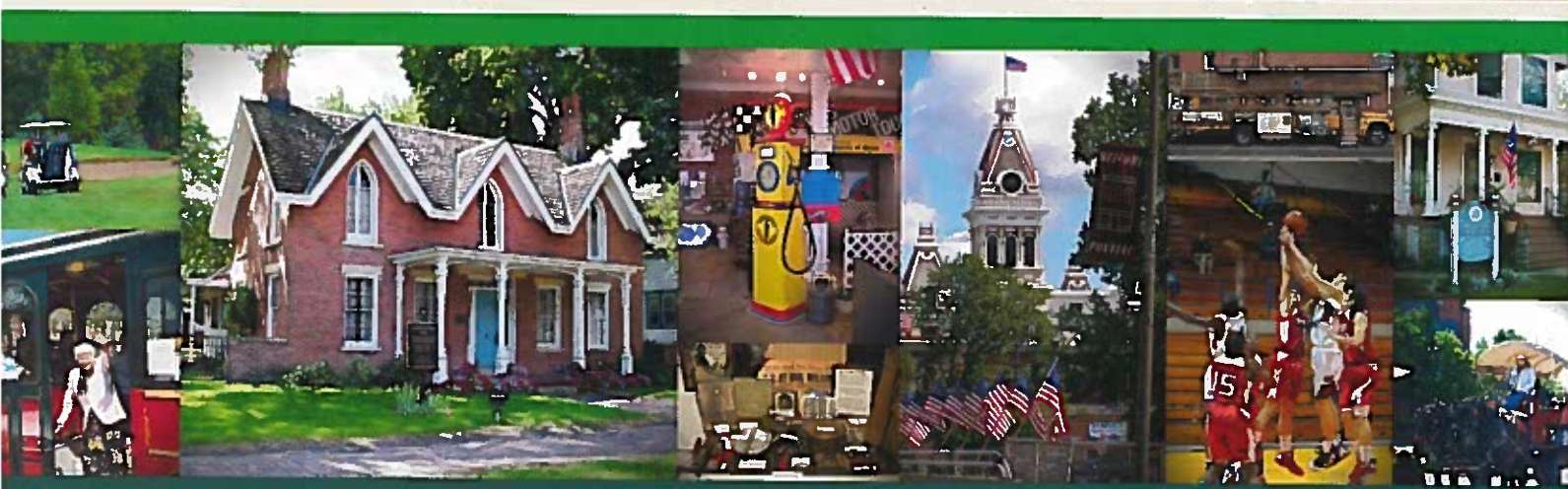
Overnight stays in Pontiac are easily accommodated with our selection of quality hotels, motels, camping facilities, and bed & breakfasts. From the ultra-modern to the quaint, we can help you find the lodging that meets your expectations. Major chains are located near Interstate 55 and those with a more "local" flavor are situated closer to the downtown area.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Pontiac has many and various connections to our 16th President. We are part of the Looking For Lincoln Coalition, and have nine wayside exhibits which tell the stories of Lincoln's visits here. We also have a beautiful life-size bronze statue of young Mr. Lincoln which stands on the Livingston County Courthouse square, and a huge outdoor mural celebrating the events of one of Lincoln's trips to Pontiac. The Jason Strevell historic house, where Lincoln spent hours in conversation with local civic leaders, still stands and is being renovated to return it to its 1860 condition.

Learn more at:
www.visitpontiac.org





PARKS & RECREATION

Chautauqua Park - Swinging Bridge; home of the Vermillion Players theatre group which perform in the historic pavilion. Park is surrounded by the Vermillion River.

Golf Courses - Thirty-six holes at two spectacular public golf courses.

Humiston Riverside Park - Picturesque park with one of our three swinging bridges

Humiston Woods - 400 Acres of woods, canoe launch, hiking, pond and 15 acres of restored prairie, scouting camp.

Play Park - Another swinging bridge as well as a boat launch.

Rec Center - Indoor recreation complex with swimming pool, three basketball courts, racquetball, walking track, cardiovascular equipment.

Rex Plex - Outdoor facility featuring 5 baseball diamond recreational complex, football field, tennis, volleyball and basketball courts.

Vermillion River - From the days of the indigenous Indians, the Vermillion River has provided transportation, food, and recreation to the residents of the area. The river is a continuing source of recreation in Pontiac with canoeing, kayaking, and fishing available. For those reluctant to get their feet wet, sitting comfortably on the riverbank in one of our parks and meditating on the natural wonders in front of you is a peaceful way to spend an afternoon.

Threshermen's Reunion Park - Home of the 2nd oldest steam engine show in the USA; camping.

4-H Park - Home of the Livingston County Fair; camping facilities.

ROUTE 66

Route 66 Stencils - Drive the road and look for the painted stencils along the route.

Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum - see museum section.

Route 4 Bridge - Another pre-Route 66 gem in Pontiac! The original IL Rt 4 marker dates back prior to Route 66.

Murals - Three murals celebrate our Route 66 connection, the largest is located on the outside south wall of the Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum. There is a drive-up paved with bricks from the original Route 66, and guests can drive their cars up in front of the mural for photographs.

Old Log Cabin - Opened in 1924 and originally faced IL Rt. 4. When Rt. 66 was being made a four-lane it was rotated to face this "new" highway. Thus, making it one of the oldest restaurants on Route 66.

District Six Police Headquarters - Built in the shape of a pistol, the building housed the District Six Headquarters from 1943 - 2005.

Six Route 66 wayside exhibits - telling some of the many stories about Route 66 and the City of Pontiac.



MILEAGE	
Bloomington/Normal	35
Joliet	50
Chicago	100
Springfield	100
Quad Cities	150
Indianapolis	195
St. Louis	200

For information on attractions, tours, or retail space available in downtown Pontiac, contact: Pontiac Tourism - (815) 844-5847 - www.visitpontiac.org



Become a true V.I.P. (Visitor In Pontiac) when you arrive! Simply stop at any museum and pick up your FREE collector's button. Once you don the prestigious button you'll become an instant celebrity throughout our town! Area businesses, restaurants and shops offer special discounts and incentives just because you're a VIP! Look for the VIP button sign at participating businesses.