

Details for 2012 bus trips nearly complete

We now have final details in place for most of our 2012 Stephenson County Farm Bureau bus trips, with our two Cubs/Brewers baseball trips to Miller Park in Milwaukee hopefully getting finalized in the next week. We begin with our March 16 trip to Davenport IA for the biennial “Gathering of the Green” convention and trade show for John Deere restorers, collectors and general enthusiasts. Lots of interesting seminars accompany the numerous vendors on display. Signup deadline for this trip is March 2.

We follow that with a journey back to the Quad Cities on March 21 for a tour of the John Deere Harvester Works (the world’s largest and most modern combine assembly plant) and the newly renovated John Deere Pavilion, followed by lunch at the Coral Ridge Mall in Iowa City and a tour of Kinze Manufacturing’s planter and grain cart production facilities. Kinze is one of the great American success stories, evolving from founder 21-year-old Jon Kinzenbaw’s on-farm welding shop in 1965 (started with a small bank loan and \$25 in his pocket) to a global farm equipment enterprise employing over 650 people. Reservations for this trip are due by March 14.

On Sunday April 15 we’ll return to the popular Conklin’s Barn II Dinner Theatre at Goodfield IL for their delicious brunch and performance of the comedy “See How They Run”. Last year’s trip was a sellout, and we already have a number of people signed up – deadline for this one is March 15.

Our Chicago Getaway on May 19 offers travelers several interesting options, with drop-off and pickup points at Navy Pier, downtown for shopping, or at the museum complex. Signup for this trip ends May 4.

We’re excited to be returning to Shipshewana IN on our June 12-13 Indiana Amish Tour. Day one includes an extensive Amish Country Tour with a step-on guide highlighting the culture and life of the Amish people. Tour stops will include a cheese shop, quilt shop, Dutch market, Yoder’s Popcorn, furniture shop, and a buggy maker’s shop. We’ll enjoy a bountiful Amish-style dinner at the Blue Gate Restaurant before our overnight stay at the Farmstead Inn. Day two features the huge Shipshewana Flea Market and free time to visit the many shops in town. Reservations for this trip are due by May 11.

On August 14 we’ll travel to Springfield to the Illinois State Fair as we begin an alternating-year rotation of trips to the Illinois and Wisconsin state fairs. As always, that will be Agriculture Day at the fair with a number of special events and activities taking place. For more information on these trips, visit www.stephensoncfb.org or stop by the Farm Bureau office to pick up flyers, and you can call (815) 232-3186 to sign up for any of these great outings. We may still plug in one or two other trips during the year, so stay tuned for more information.

Retirement reception

Join us for our retirement reception for SCFB secretary/bookkeeper Maryann Stubbe this Thursday January 5 from 4-6 p.m. here at the Farm Bureau. We’re encouraging attendees to bring one or more non-perishable food items for donation to the Freeport Area Church Cooperative Food Pantry, and we hope to see you then!

A great gift idea

SCFB is now offering meat gift certificates for sale in \$5 increments, redeemable at A.J.’s Lena Maid Meats, Harbach Meats near Freeport, Cub Foods in Freeport, and Sullivan’s Foods in Lena and Freeport. As an added bonus, SCFB will donate \$1 for every dollar’s worth of certificates purchased to be directed toward a fund for grants to our five Stephenson County FFA chapters for specific programs or activities (based on need and project focus). You can support agriculture while giving a memorable gift to someone special – check it out today!

“On The Road” meeting

Area farmers and truckers are invited to an important meeting on Monday January 23 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Pearl City Fire Station to learn the latest in rules and regulations affecting agricultural transportation. Kevin Rund, Illinois Farm Bureau Senior Director of Local Government and transportation expert for over 30 years, will be here to share what’s new on this ever-changing horizon. We’d like reservations to help with refreshments and printed materials, so please call (815) 232-3186 to confirm your attendance.

Black Hills trip preview

Mark your calendar for Tuesday night January 31 at 7 p.m. as we’ll be hosting a preview program for our Black Hills trip with Tri-State Travel and area county Farm Bureaus. The trip is planned for September 22-28, 2012 and is open exclusively to Farm Bureau members, and Tri-State’s Jack Wideman will be here with all the details of this exciting new destination for us. Watch for a flyer soon on our website at www.stephensoncfb.org.

Bruce Johnson is the manager of the Stephenson County Farm Bureau.