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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Hospitality Happy Hours Shine Spotlight on Local Businesses Driving Tourism in the Heritage Corridor**

Joliet, IL – Heritage Corridor Festivals (501c3) proudly hosted four Hospitality Happy Hours throughout August, honoring local businesses whose work continues to drive tourism and create memorable experiences for visitors in the Heritage Corridor region.

Hospitality Happy Hours highlight and celebrate the dedicated staff at partner businesses who welcome, inspire, and influence travelers throughout the Heritage Corridor. This month, Heritage Corridor Festivals recognized four outstanding partners: True North, Nelly's & RT 66 Old School Brewing, Pontiac-Oakland Automobile Museum, and Bruce & Ollie's.

True North in Morris is a beloved destination for shoppers seeking antiques, vintage finds, and modern treasures. Visitors spend \$119 million in Grundy County each year, and with its eclectic mix of vendors and newly expanded second building, True North is a must-stop destination for those exploring the region.

Nelly's and RT 66 Old School Brewing in Wilmington combine great food, local craft beer, and Route 66 charm. This summer, the restaurant and brewery hosted more than 100 international tourism and media professionals as they traveled the Mother Road ahead of its centennial year. Nelly's and RT 66 Old School Brewing greet visitors with fresh food, unique brews, and a welcoming experience that reflects the heart of this historic community.

The Pontiac-Oakland Automobile Museum, located in downtown Pontiac, is a one-of-a-kind attraction dedicated to preserving the legacy of the Pontiac and Oakland automobile brands. In 2024, visitors spent \$51 million on attractions, lodging, and shopping in Livingston County. The museum draws car enthusiasts and history lovers from around the world, making it one of the most popular stops in Pontiac along Route 66.

Bruce & Ollie's, a coffeehouse and gathering space in Utica, is more than just a place for great coffee and ice cream—it's a community hub. In LaSalle County, where visitors outnumber residents, small businesses like Bruce & Ollie's are essential for attracting tourists, who spend \$324 million in LaSalle County annually. Just minutes from Starved Rock State Park, Bruce & Ollie's has become a favorite for both locals and tourists, offering a cozy spot to relax before or after exploring the Illinois Valley.

"Each of these businesses tells a story that connects visitors to the heart of our region," said Robert Navarro, President and CEO of Heritage Corridor Destinations. "By celebrating their creativity, hospitality, and commitment to community, we're showcasing what makes the Heritage Corridor such a special place to visit— and to return to again and again."



**True North**



**Nelly's and RT 66 Old School Brewing**



**The Pontiac-Oakland Museum**



**Bruce & Ollie's**

### About Heritage Corridor Festivals

Heritage Corridor Festivals is a nonprofit organization supporting Heritage Corridor Destinations through fundraising for public education, training, events, and tourism promotion. Its mission is to enhance the quality of life and economic strength of communities within the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor by delivering meaningful programs and celebrating regional excellence.

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