



CHAPTER 1

MISSOURI ALMANAC



This edition of the Missouri Official Manual (2025–2026) is dedicated to the memory and legacy of Christopher Samuel (Kit) Bond, whose life of public service transformed the state and inspired generations.

Christopher S. (Kit) Bond: 1939–2025

Missouri State Auditor: 1971–1973

Governor of Missouri: 1973–1977, 1981–1985

United States Senator from Missouri: 1987–2011

A Statesman for the Ages

Christopher Samuel (Kit) Bond's rise from a young lawyer in Mexico, Missouri, to one of the most impactful leaders in state and national politics is a story of vision, persistence and purpose. Across four decades of public service—as state auditor, two-term governor and four-term U.S. senator—Bond shaped modern Missouri with an eye toward accountability, innovation and opportunity. More than the offices he held, it was the values he embodied that defined him: integrity, pragmatic leadership and a deeply rooted belief in the promise of public service.

Bond was a Republican with a Democrat's fluency in the language of compromise. He was a budget hawk who believed in investing boldly in education, infrastructure and research. He was a loyal partisan who, as former Rep. Ike Skelton once put it, "never let party stand in the way of progress."

Bond passed away May 13, 2025, at the age of 86, leaving behind a Missouri transformed by his leadership—and a model of statesmanship for future generations.

A MISSOURI SON

Born in St. Louis on March 6, 1939, Kit Bond was a sixth-generation Missourian raised in the rural town of Mexico. His father, Arthur Bond, was a naval officer, and his mother, Elizabeth, instilled in him a strong sense of duty and faith. After graduating from Deerfield Academy in 1956, Bond earned a degree in public and international affairs from Princeton University and later a law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law, where he graduated first in his class.

Bond began his legal career clerking for Judge Elbert Tuttle on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit before practicing law in Washington, D.C. But Missouri always called him home.

LAUNCHING A CAREER IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Bond returned to Missouri in the late 1960s and was soon appointed assistant attorney general under John Danforth. In 1970, he was elected state auditor, becoming the youngest person ever to hold statewide office in Missouri at the time.

Determined to modernize the office, Bond brought in professional certified public accountants and focused on financial transparency in government operations. "If you take care of the

taxpayers' money," Bond often said, "you build trust. And without trust, government cannot work."

THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNOR

At just 33 years old, Kit Bond was elected Missouri's 47th governor in 1972, ending nearly three decades of Democratic dominance in the executive branch. His first term was marked by sweeping reforms in education and early



Bond's gubernatorial inauguration, 1973
Photo courtesy of the Missouri State Archives

economic development initiatives, including the creation of a network of community colleges and the establishment of the Department of Natural Resources.

Although he was narrowly defeated in his 1976 re-election bid, Bond reclaimed the governorship in 1980, winning re-election with a broad coalition of support.

His second term saw even more lasting impact. He expanded the Parents as Teachers program statewide, helping to establish Missouri as a national leader in early childhood education. Today, that program remains a model used by states and countries around the world.

"Education is the cornerstone of everything we do," Bond once said. "We owe every child the chance to succeed before they even set foot in a classroom."

His administration also undertook major transportation upgrades, championed river port development, and pursued innovative public-private partnerships to revitalize rural communities.

MISSOURI'S VOICE IN WASHINGTON

Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1986, Bond served until 2011—one of the longest tenures of any Missouri senator. He became known as a

workhorse in Washington, particularly on the Senate Appropriations Committee, where he secured billions in federal investment for Missouri over the years.

Bond played a critical role in funding:

- The transformation of Kansas City's Union Station and Liberty Memorial
- The expansion of St. Louis Lambert International Airport
- The construction of flood protection systems along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers
- Biomedical research infrastructure at the University of Missouri, including the Christopher S. Bond Life Sciences Center
- Highway and bridge expansions across the state

Bridges bearing his name span the Missouri River in Hermann and Kansas City, physical testaments to a career dedicated to connecting communities—literally and figuratively.

Bond's ability to bring federal dollars home earned him bipartisan respect. "He never forgot where he came from," said former Sen. Claire McCaskill. "Whether it was a big city or a small town, Kit made sure Missouri's voice was heard in the halls of power."

As vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Bond also contributed significantly to national security oversight, including the development of modern counterterrorism strategies in the years following 9/11.

A CHAMPION OF BIPARTISANSHIP AND MENTORSHIP

Bond's enduring reputation as a coalition-builder stemmed from his willingness to work across the aisle. He co-sponsored legislation with Democrats on environmental conservation, small business development, and veterans' health care. "Partisan politics may dominate the headlines," he once remarked, "but progress happens when we roll up our sleeves and get to work—together."

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, a Democrat from Kansas City, frequently praised Bond for setting politics aside to pursue joint efforts to revitalize urban neighborhoods and improve transportation access in underserved areas. "He was never above picking up the phone and asking, 'How can we get this done for Missouri?'"

Bond also made it a priority to mentor the next generation of public servants. His legacy includes not only the buildings, bridges and programs that bear his name, but also the people he helped shape. Former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft once noted, "Over and over again, Kit launched the careers of young people... who later found opportunity beckoning them to achievement levels they hadn't anticipated."

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

Bond's career offers a masterclass in the principles of effective public service. The lessons of his life are as relevant today as ever:

- Public service is a noble calling. Bond approached his roles with humility and seriousness of purpose.
- Bipartisanship is not a weakness, but a strength. He proved that principled compromise could yield transformative results.
- Invest in the future. From education to infrastructure to biomedical research, Bond had a generational vision.
- Mentorship multiplies impact. He believed the future of Missouri was best secured by empowering others to lead.
- Stay grounded. No matter how high he rose, Bond remained deeply connected to his Missouri roots.

A LEGACY ETCHED IN STONE—AND MEMORY

Beyond the bridges and buildings named in his honor—the Kit Bond Bridge in Kansas City, the Bond Life Sciences Center in Columbia, the Kit Bond Federal Courthouse in Jefferson City—his true legacy lives in the communities he helped, the leaders he inspired, and the causes he championed.

Upon his passing, Governor Mike Kehoe ordered Missouri's flags to be flown at half-staff, noting: "Kit Bond was a skilled statesman, public servant, and a man who truly loved Missouri. His legacy lives on in concrete achievements—and in the countless lives he touched along the way."

THE MEASURE OF A LIFE

Bond often said that the success of any public servant could be measured not in accolades, but in lives improved. By that measure, his was a career of extraordinary success.

His journey reminds us that legacy is not defined by office or title, but by service, humility and the courage to lead through change. As Missouri looks to the future, Kit Bond's memory serves not only as a source of pride, but as a call to action—for public servants of all stripes to serve with the same steadfast commitment to the people they represent.

May his legacy endure in the hearts and hopes of all Missourians.

Written by Rachael Herndon Dunn, Director of Communications for the Missouri Secretary of State's Office. Dunn oversees the Communications & Publications Division.

Photos courtesy of the Missouri State Archives, a division of the Missouri Secretary of State's Office.

From the Archives



Bond with then-United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger
Photo courtesy of the Missouri State Archives



Bond on the campaign trail
Photo courtesy of the Missouri State Archives



Bond at his 1973 inauguration
Photo courtesy of the Missouri State Archives



Bond relaxes in the Governor's Mansion with his Basset Hounds Ozark and Merriwether
Photo courtesy of the Missouri State Archives—Massie Collection



ROUTE 66 IN MISSOURI

Long Gone, But Still Kicking

Celebrating 100 years

By Susan Croce Kelly

Today it's difficult to imagine a time when automobiles had to battle their way down dangerous, muddy roads, constantly at risk of slipping into a ditch.

That was the reality in 1925. The United States had 20 million automobiles—more than half a million in Missouri alone—but few paved roads. (Missouri's first concrete road stretched just 7.2 miles between Webb City and the Kansas line.) Fortunately, Missouri's mule population often came to the rescue when vehicles needed help getting back on the road.

In those days, painted stripes on fence posts or telephone poles guided travelers: green and white for the Ozark Trails, red, white, and blue for the

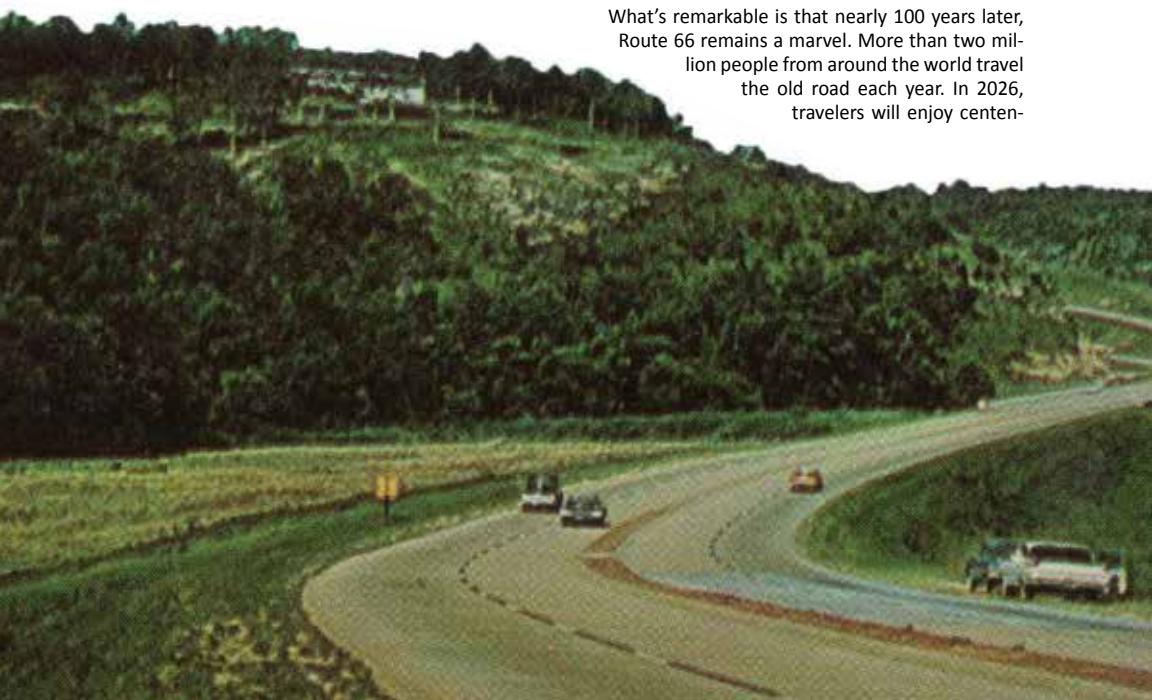
National Old Trails Road. If the paint faded or the posts fell, drivers could easily lose their way.

In 1925, Missouri's highway department joined others across the country to ask for federal help. By the next year, a national highway system was underway—prioritizing roads for concrete paving. Besides paving, the feds were adding uniform signage and, most important, changing highway from names to numbers. Missouri would soon boast 300 miles of a new curving highway running through eight states between Los Angeles and Chicago.

That highway, of course, was U.S. Route 66.

Five years later, in 1931, Rolla hosted thousands from eight states to celebrate the completion of concrete pavement on U.S. 66 from the Mississippi River at St. Louis to the Kansas border near Joplin. For the traveling public, it felt like a miracle.

What's remarkable is that nearly 100 years later, Route 66 remains a marvel. More than two million people from around the world travel the old road each year. In 2026, travelers will enjoy centen-



nial celebrations beginning in Springfield on April 30, marking the day the highway got its number.

But why Route 66? Why has this long-bypassed, sometimes hard-to-find road become a national treasure?

To understand that, we must return to a time when 20 million cars churned through the mud, because there was no other way to get from one place to another. That's when Route 66—especially in Missouri—earned its legendary status.

How the Highway Got Her Number

In 1925, as officials from all 48 states gathered to designate routes for a national highway system, two men—former Missouri schoolteacher and William Jewell College graduate Cy Avery, now Oklahoma's Highway Commissioner, and Missouri State Highway Engineer B.H. Piepmeier—ensured that one key route would link Los Angeles to Chicago via Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, a small 11-mile corner of Kansas, Missouri, and Illinois.

Highways were to be numbered according to direction and length. North-south roads ending in "1" or "5" and coast-to-coast roads ending in "0" received priority numbers. Avery and Piepmeier labeled their highway U.S. 60.

But Kentucky's governor protested: his state's road reached the Atlantic and deserved the "60" designation more. When Avery and Piepmeier refused to yield, the disagreement grew, reaching Congress and threatening the entire system.

Eventually Avery and Piepmeier met in Springfield on April 30, 1926, and compromised. They dropped "60" and chose an unused number: 66.

A telegram went to Thomas H. MacDonald, head of the Bureau of Public Roads:

"Regarding Chicago-Los Angeles Road, if California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Illinois will accept



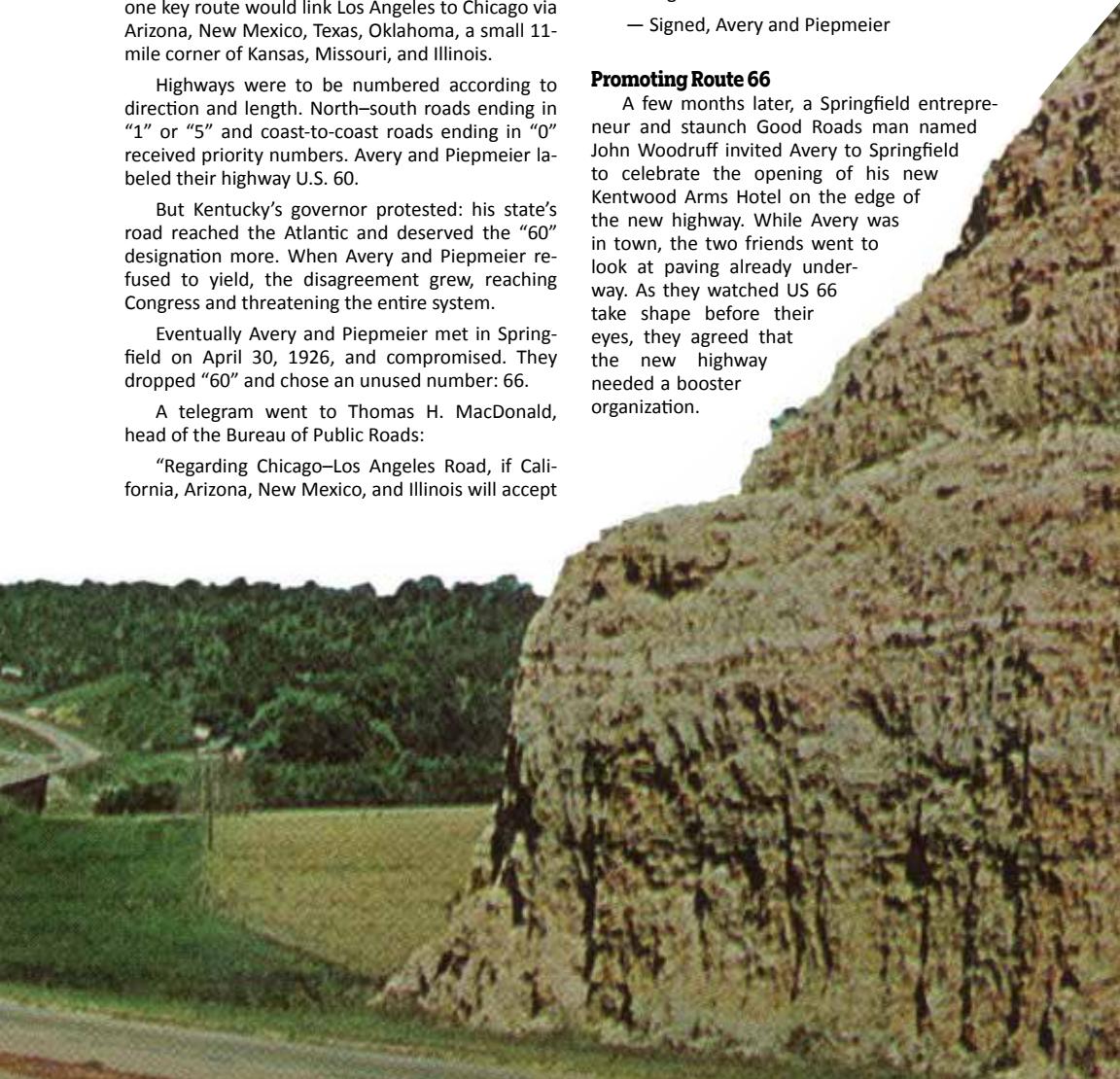
Photo courtesy of the Missouri State Archives

sixty-six instead of sixty, we are inclined to agree to this change..."

— Signed, Avery and Piepmeier

Promoting Route 66

A few months later, a Springfield entrepreneur and staunch Good Roads man named John Woodruff invited Avery to Springfield to celebrate the opening of his new Kentwood Arms Hotel on the edge of the new highway. While Avery was in town, the two friends went to look at paving already underway. As they watched US 66 take shape before their eyes, they agreed that the new highway needed a booster organization.



In early 1927, representatives from all eight Route 66 states met and formed the U.S. 66 Highway Association. Their goals:

- Make Route 66 the first national highway fully paved end-to-end
- Promote it as "the shortest, best, and most scenic route from Chicago through St. Louis to Los Angeles"



Postcard image of bluffs view along Route 66 showing Hardstone Brick Company.
Photo courtesy of the Missouri State Archives

- Attract traffic and revenue to towns along the way

And they succeeded. Route 66 became the most famous road in the world.

Making 66 Famous

The 66 Association began with billboards and full-page magazine ads, then they hired C.C. Pyle, the leading sports promoter of the time, to stage what one fan called "The zaniest sporting event of all time" – a 3,423.5-mile footrace from Los Angeles along the whole of US 66 – still only one-third paved – to Chicago and then east to Madison Square Garden in New York.

Pyle and the Route 66 Association opened the Great International Transcontinental Footrace to all comers – all nationalities and all races – and promised \$25,000 to the winner. Suddenly, in a world on the edge of the Great Depression, Route 66 became an embodiment of the American dream.

On March 3, 1928, 199 runners from twenty-four countries lined up at the Ascot Speedway in Los Angeles. At least two Missourians — John Gober, a Greek immigrant from Moberly and Pat Harrison, a school teacher born in Sullivan — were among a wildly diverse group that included European Olympians, an Alaskan mailman, several black athletes, a movie actor, chanting Hindu philosopher, part-Cherokee farm boy from Oklahoma, and a variety of others. Support vehicles carried trainers, family members, a shoe repair shop, medical care, the first mobile radio station, even a carnival that set up in towns where the runners spent nights, plus Pyle in a luxury bus.

Not surprisingly the spectacle – which lasted eighty-four days – attracted hundreds of sportswriters, photographers, and newsreel crews. Then-Chicago Tribune writer Westbrook Pegler derisively dubbed it the "Bunion Derby," but the media took it seriously. Reports on the long grueling footrace regularly appeared in the world's newspapers and newsreels.

Even though about half the racers dropped out within the first few days, the public stayed interested. Crowds lined the roadside to see the athletes. Small towns closed schools, gave dinners, and promised jobs to local boys when they returned home. When eighty footsore racers crossed into Missouri, Gober led the way, though he was not first in overall time. He sprained his ankle just before the start of the race, and used a cane for the first twenty-one days. He also led the runners into Miller and was second among the seventy-seven racers who limped into Springfield.

Pyle had intended that cities would pay to have the runners spend the night. Unfortunately, that didn't happen every time – and in western Missouri, although Carthage had paid, Joplin later came up with more money, so the runners stopped there instead. The next morning, when the caravan came through Carthage, unhappy locals threw eggs at Pyle's bus – which also made the news.

All across Missouri, people rallied. Thousands lined the as-yet unpaved highway into Springfield. Two thousand lined the streets in Lebanon. In Sullivan, the excited crowd escorted Harrison to his mother's home for dinner. In Cuba, the local News and Review reported that the "motley crew" of seventy-two runners "kept passing from 10 am until 4:30." In St. Louis, the throng along Manchester Avenue stood six deep.

By late May, when fifty-five exhausted racers – including Harrison – struggled into Madison Square



Secretary of State Publications Vanishing Missouri Photograph Collection.
Photo courtesy of the Missouri State Archives

Garden, people around the world knew US 66. Andy Payne, the Oklahoma farm boy, won the \$25,000, but when the world learned that the top ten finishers included two Canadians, a black runner, Finnish immigrant, Englishman, and an Italian, they knew 66 was no longer just an American road.

The global media coverage the race drew ensured that Route 66 became more than a road, it became a symbol of possibility.

A Road Through the Decades

1920s: Early travelers packed tools, tires, and chains—and relied on Missouri mules. They camped or rented tents at places like Camp Joy in Lebanon, which eventually added cabins and became one of the first tourist camps between St. Louis and Springfield.

1930s: During the Great Depression, Route 66 was an escape route for more than 200,000 Midwesterners heading west—and a lifeline for Missourians who opened roadside businesses.

- Meramec Caverns opened in 1933, promoted via barn roofs and the first bumper stickers.
- The Wagon Wheel in Cuba offered lodging from 1938 onward and remains the longest continuously operating motel on Route 66.
- Boots Court in Carthage, opened in 1939, advertised radios in every room and hosted Clark Gable.

1940s: WWII transformed Route 66 into a military corridor.

- The highway became home to military bases like the US Army's Fort Leonard Wood near St. Robert. As an Infantry training site and an Engineer Replacement Training Center, Fort Wood welcomed than 300,000 soldiers during those years.
- In 1941, highway travelers going through St. Louis discovered Ted Drewes Frozen Custard, another long-lasting highway landmark. Today, Ted Drewes still draws customers for sweet-tasting concretes, malts, shakes, sundaes, and ice cream sodas after more than eighty years.
- Shortly after the war, a returning GI named Bobby Troup drove down 66 to make his living in Los Angeles as a songwriter. On leaving St. Louis, his wife suggested he write a song about the trip. "Get Your Kicks on Route 66," first recorded by Nat King Cole, and subsequently by dozens of other groups, has become the Route 66 anthem.

1950s: Postwar families hit the road.

- After GIs came home from World War II and went to work, many of them loaded up their families and drove down 66 to enjoy the wonders of the Golden West.
- During those years, highway businesses proliferated. In Springfield, the Rail Haven motel opened sixteen sandstone cottages in 1950, began expanding in 1957, and today welcomes Route 66 travelers with ninety units and a pool.
- Another Springfield favorite during the 1950s was Red's Giant Hamburg, a small restaurant opened by returning GI Red Chaney. Original-

ly, Red intended to call his place "Red's Giant Hamburgers" but his sign wasn't long enough, so he stopped at "Hamburg" — which, of course, made the café even more memorable. Red's may have been the country's first drive-through restaurant, as he hooked up a speaker where drivers could order, and opened a window on the side of the building for pick-up. Chaney retired and closed the restaurant in 1984.

- Further west, the 66 Drive-in Theater, built before television signals reached Carthage, offered evening entertainment to highway travelers and the local community. The drive-in, boasting a retro look and concession stand, still offers current feature films on weekends.

Interstate Era and Beyond:

By the 1950s, "Bloody 66" had too much traffic. Interstates replaced it: I-55, I-44, I-40, I-15, and I-10. The final Missouri section, at Devil's Elbow, was bypassed in 1981. Route 66 was decommissioned in 1985.

But the road wasn't forgotten.

- It inspired the Route 66 TV series in the 1960s and Pixar's Cars in 2006.
- Missouri formed the first Route 66 Association in 1990 and erected the first Historic 66 sign.
- In 1999, President Bill Clinton signed the National Route 66 Preservation Bill.
- The highway was named a Scenic Byway in Missouri in 2005.
- The World Monuments Fund listed it as endangered in 2008.
- The National Park Service now oversees preservation efforts.

Still Kicking

As Route 66 turns 100, it continues to connect travelers to the past and each other. Across Missouri, celebrations will mark the occasion—but the road's story isn't finished.

The Mother Road lives on wherever people take the scenic route, chase adventure, or simply "get their kicks."

Susan Croce Kelly is author of two books about historic Route 66: *Father of Route 66, the Story of Cy Avery*, and *Route 66: Photographic Essay*. She also wrote *Newspaperwoman of the Ozarks: The Life and Times of Lucile Morris Upton*.

Photos courtesy of the Missouri State Archives, a division of the Missouri Secretary of State's Office.

As part of the Blue Book's rich tradition, many past editions feature photos submitted by Missourians showcasing the beauty and diversity of our state. This year's photo contest winners were selected through public voting on social media, giving Missourians the opportunity to help shape the documented visual story of their state. The winning entries are proudly featured on the following pages. The Missouri Secretary of State's Office appreciates the beauty of all photos entered into the contest and the opportunity to share with Missourians. Photos were displayed at the Secretary's booth at the Missouri State Fair and are on exhibit at the Missouri Secretary of State's Office in Jefferson City.

2025–2026 Missouri Official Manual

Photo Contest Winners

Missouri Sunrises

First Light on Hannibal, 2024

Photographer: Jason Ayers

Location: Hannibal, Missouri





Sunrise with Lightning, 2024
Photographer: Pam Stewart
Location: Higbee, Missouri

Morning Harvest, 2024
Photographer: Bob Crow
Location: Hartsburg, Missouri



2025–2026 Missouri Official Manual

Photo Contest Winners

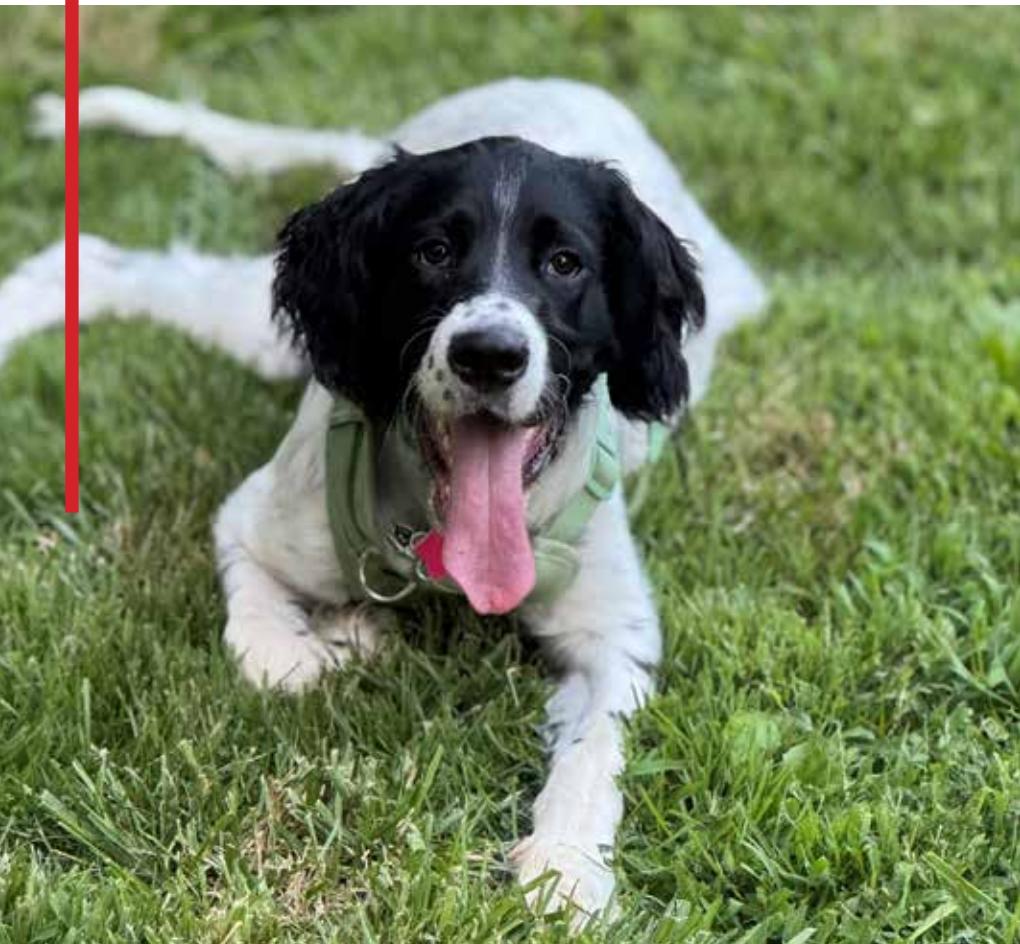
Man's Best Friend

Walter, 2024

Photographer: Marianne Cline

Location: near Cole County Fairgrounds

Submitted by: Maeve Prusnick





Rigi, Brown Eyed Girl; 2024

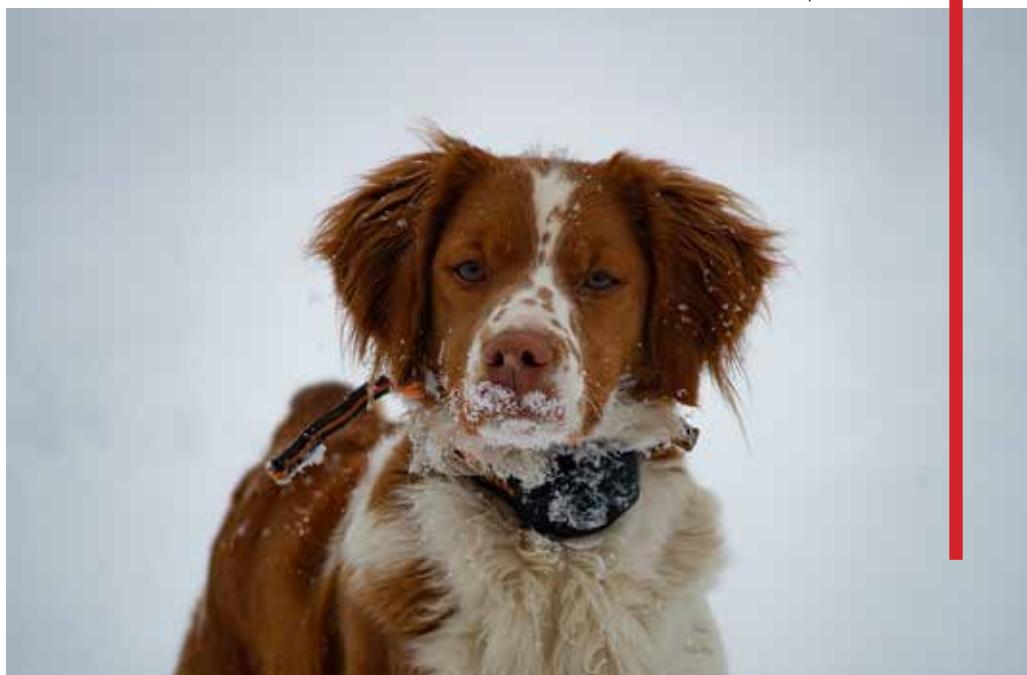
Photographer: Kim Verslues

Location: Bonnotts Mill, Missouri

Heidi, 2025

Photographer: Geren Revis

Mountain View, Missouri



STATE SYMBOLS OF MISSOURI



THE GREAT SEAL OF MISSOURI

The Great Seal was designed by Judge Robert William Wells and adopted by the Missouri General Assembly on Jan. 11, 1822. The center of the state seal is composed of two parts. On the right is the United States coat-of-arms containing the bald eagle. In its claws are arrows and olive branches, signifying that the power of war and peace lies with the U.S. federal government. On the left side of the shield, the state side, are a grizzly bear and a silver crescent moon. The crescent symbolizes Missouri at the time of the state seal's creation, a state of small population and wealth which would increase like the new or crescent moon; it also symbolizes the "second son," meaning Missouri was the second state formed out of the Louisiana Territory.

This shield is encircled by a belt inscribed with the motto, "United we stand, divided we fall," which indicates Missouri's advantage as a member of the United States. The two grizzlies on either side of the shield symbolize the state's strength and its citizens' bravery. The bears stand atop a scroll bearing the state motto, "*Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto*," which means, "The welfare of the people shall be the supreme law." Below this scroll are the Roman numerals for 1820, the year Missouri began its functions as a state.

The helmet above the shield represents state sovereignty, and the large star atop the helmet surrounded by 23 smaller stars signifies Missouri's status as the 24th state. The cloud around the large star indicates the problems Missouri had in becoming a state. The whole state seal is enclosed by a scroll bearing the words, "The Great Seal of the State of Missouri." (RSMo 10.060)



THE STATE FLAG

Nearly 100 years after achieving statehood, Missouri adopted an official flag on March 22, 1913. The flag was designed by the late Mrs. Marie Elizabeth Watkins Oliver, wife of former State Senator R.B. Oliver. The Oliver flag embraced national pride, and at the same time represented the characteristics of Missouri and its people.

The three large stripes are symbolic of the people of the state—the blue stripe represented vigilance, permanency and justice, the red represented valor, and the white stripe symbolized purity. The Missouri coat-of-arms appears in the center of the flag, signifying both Missouri's independence as a state, and its place as a part of the whole United States. Having the coat-of-arms in the center of the national colors represents Missouri, as it is—the geographical center of the nation. By mingling the state coat-of-arms with the national colors of red, white and blue, the flag signified the harmony existing between the two. Twenty-four stars surrounded the coat-of-arms, representative of Missouri's position as the 24th state admitted to the Union. (RSMo 10.020)

MISSOURI DAY

On March 22, 1915, the 48th General Assembly set aside the first Monday in October each year as "Missouri Day," due to the efforts of Mrs. Anna Brosius Korn, a native Missourian. In 1969, the 75th General Assembly changed the date to the third Wednesday in October. Missouri Day is a time for schools to honor the state and for the people of the state to celebrate the achievements of all Missourians. (RSMo 9.040)

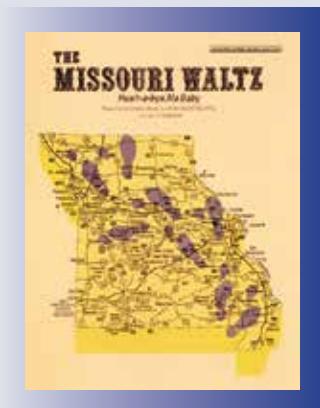


THE STATE FLORAL EMBLEM

On March 16, 1923, a bill was signed naming the **white hawthorn blossom** the official state floral emblem of Missouri. Known as the “red haw” or “white haw,” the hawthorn (*Crataegus*) is a member of the great rose family. The hawthorn blossoms have greenish-yellow centers and form in white clusters. More than 75 species of the hawthorn grow in Missouri, particularly in the Ozarks. (RSMo 10.030)

THE STATE BIRD

On March 30, 1927, the native **bluebird** (*Sialia sialis*) became the official state bird of Missouri. The bluebird, considered a symbol of happiness, is usually 6½ to 7 inches long. While its upper parts are covered with light blue plumage, its breast is cinnamon red, turning rust-colored in the fall. The bluebird is common in Missouri from early spring until late November. (RSMo 10.010)



THE STATE SONG

The “**Missouri Waltz**” became the state song under an act adopted by the General Assembly on June 30, 1949. The song came from a melody by John V. Eppel and was arranged by Frederic Knight Logan, using lyrics written by J.R. Shannon. First published in 1914, the song did not sell well and was considered a failure. By 1939, the song had gained popularity and six million copies had been sold. Sales increased substantially after Missourian Harry S Truman became president. (RSMo 10.050)

THE STATE TREE

On June 20, 1955, the **flowering dogwood** (*Cornus florida* L.) became Missouri’s official tree. The tree is small in size, rarely growing over 40 feet in height or 18 inches in diameter. The dogwood sprouts tiny greenish-yellow flowers in clusters, with each flower surrounded by four white petals. The paired, oval leaves are olive green above and covered with silvery hairs underneath. In the fall, the upper part of the leaves turn scarlet or orange and bright red fruits grow on the tree. (RSMo 10.040)





THE STATE MINERAL

On July 21, 1967, the mineral **galena** was adopted as the official mineral of Missouri. Galena is the most important ore of lead and is also a major source of silver. The recognition of this mineral by the state legislature was to emphasize Missouri's status as the nation's top producer of lead. Galena is dark gray in color and breaks into small cubes. Mining of galena has flourished in the Joplin-Granby area of southwest Missouri, and rich deposits have been located in such places as Crawford, Washington, Iron and Reynolds counties. (RSMo 10.047)

THE STATE ROCK

Mozarkite was adopted as the official state rock on July 21, 1967, by the 74th General Assembly. An attractive rock, mozarkite appears in a variety of colors, most predominantly green, red or purple. The rock's beauty is enhanced by cutting and polishing into ornamental shapes for jewelry. Mozarkite is most commonly found in Benton County. (RSMo 10.045)

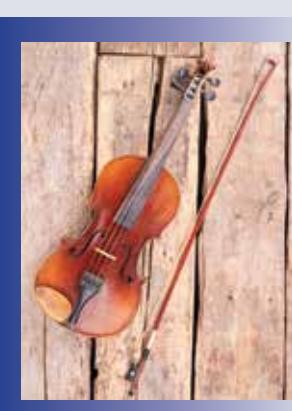


THE STATE INSECT

On July 3, 1985, the **honeybee** was designated as Missouri's state insect. The honeybee, (*Apis mellifera*) yellow or orange and black in color, is a social insect which collects nectar and pollen from flower blossoms in order to produce honey. The honeybee is common to Missouri and is cultivated by beekeepers for honey production. (RSMo 10.070)

THE STATE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

The **fiddle** became the state's official musical instrument on July 17, 1987. Brought to Missouri in the late 1700s by fur traders and settlers, the fiddle quickly became popular. The instrument was adaptable to many forms of music, could be played without extensive formal training and was light and easy to carry. For generations, the local fiddle player was the sole source of entertainment in many communities and held a position of great respect in the region. (RSMo 10.080)





THE STATE FOSSIL

The **crinoid** became the state's official fossil on June 16, 1989, after a group of Lee's Summit school students worked through the legislative process to promote it as a state symbol. The crinoid (*Delocrinus missouriensis*) is a mineralization of an animal which, because of its plant-like appearance, was called the "sea lily." Related to the starfish, the crinoid lived in the ocean which covered Missouri more than 250 million years ago. (RSMo 10.090)

THE STATE TREE NUT

The nut produced by the black walnut tree (*Juglans nigra*), known as the **eastern black walnut**, became the state tree nut on July 9, 1990. The nut has a variety of uses. The meat is used in ice cream, baked goods and candies. The shell provides the soft grit abrasive used in metal cleaning and polishing, and oil well drilling. It is also used in paint products and as a filler in dynamite. (RSMo 10.100)



THE STATE ANIMAL

On May 31, 1995, the **Missouri mule** was designated as the official state animal. The mule is a hybrid, the offspring of a mare (female horse) and a jack (male donkey). After its introduction to the state in the 1820s, the mule quickly became popular with farmers and settlers because of its hardy nature. Missouri mules pulled pioneer wagons to the Wild West during the 19th century and played a crucial role in moving troops and supplies in World Wars I and II. For decades, Missouri was the nation's premier mule producer. (RSMo 10.110)

THE STATE AMERICAN FOLK DANCE

The **square dance** was adopted as Missouri's official American folk dance on May 31, 1995. Square dances are derived from folk and courtship dances brought to the United States by European immigrants. Lively music and callers are hallmarks of square dancing. The caller directs the dancers by singing the names of figures and steps to be performed. (RSMo 10.120)





THE STATE AQUATIC ANIMAL

The **paddlefish** (*Polyodon spathula*) became Missouri's official aquatic animal on May 23, 1997. Only three rivers in Missouri support substantial populations of the paddlefish: the Mississippi, Missouri and the Osage. They are also present in some of the state's larger lakes. The paddlefish is primitive, with a cartilage skeleton, rather than bone. They commonly exceed five feet in length and weights of 60 pounds; 20-year-olds are common, and some live 30 years or more. (RSMo 10.130)

THE STATE FISH

On May 23, 1997, the **channel catfish** became the official fish of Missouri. The channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*) is slender, with a deeply forked tail. Young have spots that disappear with age. The catfish does not rely on sight to find its food; instead, it uses cat-like whiskers to assist in the hunt. The channel cat is the most abundant large catfish in Missouri streams. Its diet includes animal and plant material. Adults are normally 12 to 32 inches long and weigh from a half-pound to 15 pounds. (RSMo 10.135)



THE STATE HORSE

On June 4, 2002, the **Missouri Fox Trotter** became Missouri's official state horse. Missouri fox trotters were developed in the rugged Ozark hills of Missouri during the early 19th century. Bloodlines can be traced from early settlers to Missouri from the neighboring states of Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee and Arkansas. The distinguishing characteristic of the fox trotter is its rhythmic gait, in which the horse walks with the front feet and trots with the hind feet. This gait gives the rider a smooth, gentle ride. (RSMo 10.140)

THE STATE GRAPE

On July 11, 2003, the **Norton/Cynthiana grape** (*Vitis aestivalis* 'Norton') was adopted as the official state grape. This adaptable, self-pollinating variety has been cultivated since the 1830s and is likely North America's oldest grape variety still commercially grown. Norton/Cynthiana has long been prized by Missouri vintners for its hardy growth habit and intense flavor characteristics, which produce lush, dry premium red wines of world-class quality and distinction. (RSMo 10.160)



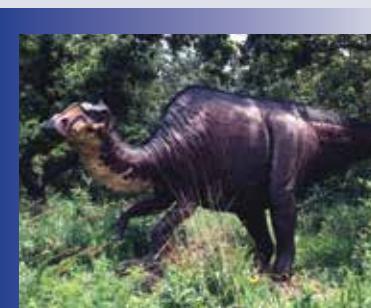


THE PURPLE MARTIN CAPITAL

The **City of Adrian**, located in Bates County, was declared the purple martin capital of the state of Missouri on Aug. 28, 2003. Purple martins are largely dependent on humans to build and maintain their housing and are happy in large bird houses or in gourds. These creatures are partial to living near water, in open parts of a yard, or along rural roadsides. Purple martins are popular among bird lovers because of their melodic singing and aerial feats. (RSMo 10.141)

THE STATE DINOSAUR

Parrosaurus missouriense is a type of dinosaur called a Hadrosaur or “duck billed” dinosaur. It was a herbivore with jaws that contained over 1,000 teeth. *Parrosaurus* had evolved specialized teeth to handle the tough, fibrous vegetation of the time. *Parrosaurus* lived in Missouri during the Late Cretaceous Period. *Parrosaurus* was first discovered in 1942 by Dan Stewart, near the town of Glen Allen, Missouri, and became the official state dinosaur on July 9, 2004. The name was changed from *Hypsibema missouriense* in 2022, due to legislation (House Bill 1738) in the 101st General Assembly, Second Regular Session.



THE STATE AMPHIBIAN

On June 5, 2005, the **American Bullfrog** (*Rana catesbeiana*) became the official state amphibian. The bullfrog is the largest frog native to Missouri and is found in every county. Most Missourians are familiar with the deep, resonant “jug-of-rum” call, which is typically heard on warm, rainy nights between mid-May and early July. The idea for the bullfrog designation came from a fourth grade class at Chinn Elementary School in Kansas City. (RSMo 10.170)

THE STATE GAME BIRD

The **bobwhite quail** (*Colinus virginianus*), also known as the northern bobwhite, became the official state game bird on July 13, 2007. The northern bobwhite is found throughout Missouri in a variety of habitats. In the fall and winter, northern bobwhites form loose social groups better known as a covey. A covey will generally contain 10 to 12 quail, but can have as many as 20 or 30 birds. The familiar two- or three-note “bobwhite” whistle is made by males in the spring and summer to attract females. (RSMo 10.012).



THE STATE INVERTEBRATE



On June 21, 2007, the **crayfish** (also known as crawfish and crawdad) became the official state invertebrate. Crayfish are an important food source for Missouri fishes. Missouri supports more than 30 species of crayfish (including seven species that occur nowhere else in the world). Crayfish are found in every county of the state and contribute to our unique biodiversity and conservation heritage. The nomination of crayfish for state invertebrate came from Mrs. Janna Elfrink's elementary school class in Reeds Spring, Missouri. (RSMo 10.125)

THE STATE REPTILE

On June 21, 2007, the **three-toed box turtle** (*Terrapene carolina triunguis*) became the official state reptile. Most Missourians are familiar with this land-dwelling turtle. Three-toed box turtles, as their name implies, typically have three hind toes. The hinged bottom shell allows the turtle to retreat inside as if enclosed in a box. Males have red eyes and females have brown eyes. (RSMo 10.175).



THE STATE GRASS



Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) was designated as Missouri's stategrass on June 11, 2007, as a result of efforts by the fourth-grade class at Truman Elementary School in Rolla. Big bluestem is native to Missouri and occurs throughout the state, with the exception of a few southeastern-most counties. It is a major component of Missouri's tallgrass prairies where it impressed the first explorers by sometimes growing tall enough to hide a person on horseback. The name bluestem comes from the bluish-green color of the leaves and stems that turn an attractive reddish-copper color in autumn. (RSMo 10.150).

THE STATE DESSERT

The **ice cream cone** became the state of Missouri's official dessert on Aug. 28, 2008. The 1904 World's Fair in St Louis was the birthplace of the treat and has become a staple at many community events across the state, such as the State Fair. The University of Missouri–Columbia has played a large role in the development of ice cream products for over a century. Missouri ranks among the top five states in ice cream production. (RSMo 10.180).

Louise and Omar Putman Collection, photograph by Louise Putman
Missouri State Archives





THE STATE SYMBOL FOR CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

The **blue ribbon** became the state of Missouri's official symbol for child abuse prevention on Aug. 28, 2012. It is a symbol of efforts to increase awareness of the prevalence and warning signs of child abuse and the prevention methods and measures available to reduce the incidence of child abuse in Missouri. (RSMo 10.185).

THE STATE EXERCISE

The **jumping jack** exercise was invented by Missouri-born Army General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing as a training drill for cadets when he taught at West Point in the late 1800s. The idea for the jumping jack designation came from students at Pershing Elementary School in St. Joseph. (RSMo 10.115)



THE WONDER DOG

On Aug. 28, 2017, "**Jim the Wonder Dog**" was designated as Missouri's Wonder Dog. A Llewellyn Setter, born in 1925, Jim first gained notoriety for his prowess as a hunting dog. He tracked over 5,000 birds, a total no other dog had ever achieved, earning him the *Outdoor Life Magazine* designation of "The Hunting Dog of the Country." Eventually Jim began to exhibit a wide range of other talents not typically associated with dogs. He could pick a car on the street by license number, recognize unknown people in a crowd and carry out instructions, oral or written, given to him in any foreign language, Morse Code or shorthand. Jim predicted seven Kentucky Derby winners and was known for accurately

determining the gender of unborn babies. He performed before the Missouri Legislature and was featured in *Field and Stream*, *The Kansas City Star*, *Missouri Ruralist* and *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. Jim is buried in Marshall, Missouri's Ridge Park Cemetery. His grave is the most visited spot in the cemetery. (RSMo 10.113)



THE HISTORICAL DOG

On Aug. 28, 2017, **Old Drum** was designated the historical dog of Missouri. Old Drum was a black and tan hunting hound whose shooting death became the subject of an 1870 Missouri Supreme Court case. The closing arguments for the plaintiff, delivered by attorney George Graham Vest, brought tears to the eyes of jurors and became famously-known as the *Eulogy of the Dog*. Although the words of the speech were not written down until sometime after the trial, it became renowned for its appeal to dog lovers in its praise of the dog as a man's "best friend." Both Old

Drum and the *Eulogy of the Dog* are memorialized with a statue and plaque at the Johnson County courthouse in Warrensburg, Missouri. (RSMo 10.112)

THE STATE FRUIT TREE

The **Pawpaw tree** (*Asimina triloba*) was designated as Missouri's official state fruit tree on Aug. 28, 2019. The pawpaw tree is a small, deciduous tree, typically growing in forest understorey. Pawpaws can grow to a height of 11 feet, although taller ones have been measured. They have the distinction of producing the largest edible fruit that is also native to the U.S. The richly-colored maroon flowers ripen into a green, then yellow or brown fruit, 2-6 inches in length and 1-3 inches wide. The flesh of the pawpaw fruit is pale yellow, with a custard-like texture and large black seeds. The flavor is often compared to that of banana, mango or kiwi. Pawpaw fruit is also known regionally, by colloquial names such as "Missouri banana," "Ozark banana" and "hillbilly mango." (RSMo 10.105)



THE OFFICIAL ENDANGERED SPECIES

On Aug. 28, 2019, the **Hellbender Salamander** (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*) was designated as Missouri's official endangered species. It is also known as the "snot otter" or "lasagna lizard," and is an aquatic salamander. There are two subspecies, the Ozark and the Eastern. The Hellbender can live up to 30 years and grow up to two feet long. They breathe through their skin and are nocturnal

foragers. Missouri is the only place to have both subspecies of the Hellbender and both are listed as endangered. The salamander is important due to its role as an indicator of overall stream health. The Ron Goellner Center for Hellbender Conservation's successful breeding program at the St. Louis Zoo currently has released over 5,000 back into the wild. Westminster College student Cameron Gehlert submitted the suggestion. (RSMo 10.200)



THE STATE TARTAN

The “Show-Me Tartan” was designated as Missouri’s official tartan on Aug. 28, 2019. Missouri is one of 29 states to adopt an official tartan, and the design is registered with the Scottish Tartan Authority. The design, a criss-crossing line pattern of blue, brown and silver on a field of dark blue and green, was inspired by four of Missouri’s state symbols; the Eastern Bluebird, the Missouri mule, and the crescent moon and bear present on the Great Seal. The dark green and blue are symbolic of Missouri’s lands, waters and the Ozark Mountains. The Eastern Bluebird is symbolized by stripes of light blue, white and red. A band of brown represents the Missouri mule. A narrow band of light blue reflects the crescent moon symbol of the Seal, and another brown band represents the grizzly bear of the Seal. The pattern is intended to reflect the concepts of “vigilance and justice, valor, purity, steadfastness, hope and strength.”(RSMo 10.190)

THE OFFICIAL STATE HOCKEY TEAM

On Aug. 28, 2019, the **St. Louis Blues** was selected and shall be known as the official state hockey team of Missouri. In 2019, the Blues won the first Stanley Cup championship in the team’s history. (RSMo 10.225)



THE OFFICIAL STATE MONUMENT

The **Gateway Arch** is perhaps Missouri’s most iconic and recognizable structure. Architect Eero Saarinen designed the winning monument in 1947 in the shape of a weighted catenary arch. Construction began in 1963 and was completed in 1965. Today, approximately 4,000,000 tourists visit the site every year. Visitors to the Gateway Arch may explore an underground museum and ride a tram up the inside of the Arch to the top where an observation deck provides a stunning view of St. Louis, the Mississippi River and surrounding areas. In February 2018, the Gateway Arch and nearby Old Courthouse were designated as Gateway Arch National Park, the first national park in Missouri. Gov. Mike Parson signed a bill in 2021 designating the Gateway Arch as Missouri’s official state monument.



THE OFFICIAL STATE SPORT

Archery is a method of shooting a projectile point secured to the tip of a shaft propelled by a bow: the age-old “bow and arrow.” In Missouri, archery took on special significance when in 1966 Kansas City resident Holless W. Allen submitted a patent for the compound bow, which was approved in 1969. Other Missouri archery connections include the Archery Hall of Fame & Museum in Springfield; the Missouri National Archery in the Schools Program run by the Department of Conservation; and, the Grayson Archery Collection and Library at the University of

Missouri Museum of Anthropology, one of the largest and most comprehensive collections in the world containing over 5,500 pieces representing six continents.

THE STATE RIFLE

The **Hawken rifle** was originally manufactured by brothers Jacob and Samuel Hawken in St. Louis. Their double-trigger muzzleloader was also called the prairie rifle and the Rocky Mountain rifle because its intended purpose was to arm fur traders in the West. They never patented the gun. The brothers produced their first rifle in 1823 or 1825 and continued working together until Jacob’s death in the cholera epidemic of 1849. Samuel retired around 1855 and left the business to his son William. William carried on until he sold the company around 1862. The name Hawken remained attached to the gun shop until it closed in 1915. The Hawken family made an estimated 1,000 rifles over nearly 40 years. Famous “mountain men” known to have owned Hawken Rifles were Kit Carson, Hugh Glass, Theodore Roosevelt and Missouri’s own Daniel Boone and William Henry Ashley. Missouri is the tenth state to have an official firearm.



STATE UFO CAPITALS OF MISSOURI

To mark the 50th anniversary of alleged unidentified flying object (UFO) sightings in Piedmont, the Missouri General Assembly passed SB139 designating **Piedmont** and **Wayne County** as the UFO Capitals of Missouri. The purpose of codifying the designation in state statute was, according to the original bill sponsor Rep. Chris Dinkins, to increase tourism. (Committee) Between February and April 1973, residents of Piedmont and the surrounding area witnessed unexplained activity in the sky. Several hundred

calls were made to local police, sheriffs and newspapers. The incidents made local headlines and eventually national news outlets began reporting the sightings. There was no official government investigation of the sightings (Project Blue Book was discontinued in 1969); however, Southeast Missouri State University physics professor Dr. Harley Rutledge investigated with his own team. He issued a public paper in 1973, which he later turned into a book called *Project Identification: The First Scientific Field Study of UFO Phenomena* (1981). Today, Unexplained Aerial Phenomena reports, as they are now called, are handled by the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office under the U.S. Secretary of Defense.

STATE GOLD STAR MEMORIAL MONUMENTS



In 2020, the governor signed a bill designating three separate **Gold Star Memorials** as official state symbols. The federal Gold Star Families program is for individuals whose immediate family member died during U.S. military service. The Gold Star tradition dates back to the World War I Service Flag families would fly at their homes. A blue star on the flag represented a serving member of the family; a gold star meant that family member had died during his or her service. The Service Flag was formalized by Congress

in 1942. The nation observed its first Gold Star Mother's Day in September 1936; Gold Star Mother's and Father's Day is now marked annually on the last Sunday in September and Gold Star Spouse's Day is April 5. The Gold Star lapel button (pin) was established by Congress in 1947. A U.S. Gold Star is issued by the Department of Defense or the deceased's specific branch of the military. Each Gold Star honoree receives an official Gold Star lapel pin and survivor support services.

STATE KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL

In January 2020, Sen. Mike Cierpolt submitted SB656, which would designate the **Missouri Korean War Veterans Memorial** in Kansas City as the official Korean War Veterans Memorial for the state. Cierpolt was following an earlier attempt made in 2013 by Sen. Jason Holsman's SB399, which died in committee. Gov. Mike Parson signed the 2020 bill into law, effective Aug. 28, 2020. United States involvement in the Korean War officially began with hostilities on June 27, 1950 and lasted through July 27, 1953, with veteran benefit eligibility

extending up to Jan. 31, 1955. With the 1955 extension, 6.8 million Americans qualified as Korean War veterans. As of 2018, the official number of casualties from Missouri was 944 (NARA). Unofficially, the number has risen to 1,056 as of 2023 (Korean War Project). The Memorial was dedicated Sept. 28, 2011, in Washington Square Park, Kansas City. According to the Memorial's official website, the purpose of the Memorial is, "To perpetuate the legacy of Korean War Veterans present and past and the over 900 from the State of Missouri who paid the supreme sacrifice and gave their lives in defense of South Korea." (MKWVM). Other statewide Missouri Korean War monuments are in St. Louis (Forest Park), Jefferson City (Capitol grounds) and College of the Ozarks (Patriots Park).



STATE LIVE ENTERTAINMENT CAPITAL



Branson, Missouri, has long billed itself as the “live entertainment capital of the world.” That isn’t something that can be legislated, so Branson’s State Rep. Brian Seitz proposed the next best thing: making Branson the **live entertainment capital** of Missouri. In a 2024 interview, Rep. Seitz stated, “Branson has long been synonymous with world-class entertainment, drawing millions of visitors each year to experience its unique charm and hospitality. ... By officially designating Branson as the “Live Entertainment

Capital” of Missouri, we are not only celebrating its cultural significance but also laying the foundation for sustained economic prosperity for our state.” (Dereuck) Although Seitz’s efforts failed in 2024, he tried again in 2025. This time, the statute made it into SB348, which was signed by Gov. Mike Kehoe on a stage in Branson on June 26th.

STATE PATRIOTIC MURAL CITY

Concordia’s mural project began in 2022 with the local Lions Club, who commissioned artist Ray Harvey to paint a U.S. flag mural on a building in the small town of just under 2,400 people. According to Harvey, “...within a month of completion with such a groundswell of appreciation, the residents wanted more.” The Lions Club formed a mural committee with a five-year plan to fund additional paintings. It was Harvey who suggested branding **Concordia** as the **patriotic mural city** of Missouri. Concordia’s state Senator Kurtis Gregory brought HB2172 to the General Assembly in 2024 to try to designate the town as the patriotic mural city of Missouri. Though the effort failed in 2024, both Sen. Gregory and Rep. Mark Nolte made a second effort in 2025 with SB674 and HB133 respectively. Those, too, failed to leave the House and Senate floors. However, they received a helping hand from their colleague Rep. Brian Seitz, who proposed an amendment to SB348 adding Concordia’s designation to a long list of state holidays and other designations. SB348 headed to Gov. Kehoe’s desk, and he signed it into law, effective Aug. 28, 2025.



STATE APPLE CAPITAL



In summer 2025, Gov. Mike Kehoe signed SB348 designating **Waverly** in Lafayette County the official **apple capital of Missouri**. Waverly and Lafayette County have long been known as prolific apple producers, due to the presence of loess soil, which is particularly well-suited to grow fruits. The main apple crops for Waverly are Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, and Jonathan. Because apples are a late summer and fall produce, they are usually not judged or exhibited at the Missouri State Fair held in August. Instead, Waverly hosts the annual State of Missouri Apple Judging Contest and Auction in September during its Apple Jubilee.



Mt. Sterling Bridge of Highway 50 (then Highway 12) over the Gasconade River.

Photo courtesy of the Missouri State Archives.