



Agriculture & Tourism Partners of Illinois
c/o Central Illinois Tourism Development Office

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Absolutely Ament

By Ross Ament, ATPI President

For those of you on the “front lines” of agritourism, that is operating an agritourism business, serving the general public, it helps to have as many people working for you as possible. It is a full time job just operating the agriculture business, let alone the tourism component. As I listen to people around the state, the one common lament is that there isn't enough time or resources to market your business. This is where your investment of an annual membership in ATPI is a great choice. Your \$50 membership dues help to support the marketing efforts of ATPI. The website: www.agfun.com provides an easy-to-search avenue for visitors to reach your farm, business or destination. (Which has reached over 5,000 visitors in the past three months.) The internet reaches people all over the world. By pulling together with the other producers and supporters of agritourism in Illinois, the whole can do what the individual may not. ATPI also represents you with a booth at other marketplaces to connect with potential consumers.



ATPI brings together in a unique partnership two of our state's larger businesses, agriculture and tourism. Organizations, businesses, government agencies and individual producers work together for the advancement of agritourism in Illinois.

Another important benefit offered because of your membership support is that of education. ATPI organizes and implements the agritourism track at the Illinois Specialty Growers Conference each year. This partnership with the Specialty Growers group also provides important networking opportunities for you with people from across the state to learn best practices.

So, if you have already paid your dues renewal to ATPI, thank you very much. If you have not sent in your renewal, I ask you to help us expand your marketing efforts through this partnership. We want to continue our support of agritourism in Illinois as well as your continued success.

Are You Member of ATPI Yet???

Agriculture and Tourism Partners of Illinois exists to encourage, foster, support and stimulate tourism development, especially Agritourism, in Illinois through support of existing businesses and development of new businesses. Agritourism is a commercial enterprise at a working farm, ranch or related facility operated for the enjoyment of visitors and generating income for the owner. ATPI offers information and assistance, educational opportunities and marketing opportunities. ATPI has secured over \$50,000 of grant funding to promote Illinois Agritourism and provide educational programming. We have developed a partnership with the Illinois Specialty Growers Association to incorporate a dedicated Agritourism and marketing tract into the Illinois Specialty Crop and Agritourism Conference. This year, ATPI plans to develop and print a map of Agritourism sites throughout Illinois, a benefit only available to our members! Please remember to renew your ATPI dues or become a new member by visiting our website www.agfun.com!!

Country Corner

5333 US Highway 150

Alpha, IL 61413

(309) 629-2359

countrycornr@winco.net



Country Corner is a boyhood dream come true for the farm owner, Bruce Curry. "When I was a boy, my neighbors sold pumpkins," Bruce says. "When they moved away, my dad suggested I grow pumpkins, so I did! I grew 100 pumpkins and put them in a pile on the front yard. Beside the pile, I nailed a coffee can to a post and a sign saying 'for sale \$3, please leave money in the can.' Everyday I got off the school bus and ran to the can, and there was money! I was hooked!"

Now, thirty years later, Bruce is farming over eighty acres of working farm land with a market offering great tasting vegetables and fruits. Country Corner takes pride in their outstanding customer service, the quality of their produce, and the farm fresh fun! In addition to the produce, also available in the market are other farm specialties including jams & jellies, Amish cheeses, home grown meats, eggs, cookbooks, BBQ sauces, and much more! The fully stocked market is complemented by a beautiful park in a timber setting, a large covered pavilion, picnic area, and playground. Country Corner also features a twenty acre pick your own pumpkin patch in the fall, a barnyard zoo with over fifty animals, and an outdoor education center. The farm welcomes over 35,000 customers every year, including over 5,000 people on private farm tours. It is a great place for your school field trip, birthday party, or company picnic!

In addition to the pumpkin patch, the fall season offers a corn maze, horse drawn hayrack rides, a corn cannon, and fall decorative items. There are many festivals held at the market every year from May through October. During these special events a variety of crafts, live entertainment, and exhibitions of antique machinery and autos are featured.



Country Corner Farm Market is also involved in the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program. A CSA is a partnership between a farm and a community of supporters (shareholders) which fosters a relationship that is mutually beneficial in the production and consumption of food. The shareholders cover part of the farm's operating expenses by purchasing a share of the season's harvest in advance. In return, the farm provides regular pick-up fresh, seasonal produce throughout the growing season. This economic model continues to encourage local, environmentally sustainable food production practices that are mutually beneficial to farmers and shareholders alike.

Country Corner is open for visitors daily in May through October. They are located two miles north of Alpha, IL on US 150. Please call for seasonal information and special events. More information and directions are available by visiting their website at www.country-corner.com.

ILLINOIS
AG FUN

ATPI's recently launched website, www.agfun.com, is seeing tremendous results in accomplishing its goal of marketing your attraction!! The site is consistently seeing at least 100 new visitors per day. Visitors are geographically located in cities throughout Illinois, as well as out of state visitors from Missouri, California, Florida, New Jersey, and many more. We have even had international visitors to agfun.com!! If you currently have a website on record with ATPI, it is listed and linked with your attraction's information. Remember, you can update your attraction's information listing through agfun.com as well by clicking on the link at the bottom of the opening page. We encourage you to visit the site to make sure your information is current and explore other agritourism attractions in your area! _

National Value Added Agriculture Conference

Registration is now open for the 11th Annual National Value Added Agriculture Conference to be held June 2-4, 2009 in Moline, IL. Sponsored by Iowa State University Extension Value Added Agriculture Program, University of Illinois, National Food Industry MarketMaker and the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, the conference promises dynamic speakers, great networking opportunities and a ride on the mighty Mississippi River! General Session speakers include: Gary Zimmerman of Midwestern Bio-Ag, Mary Holz-Clause of Iowa State University Extension, Sara Wyant from AgriPulse Communications, and David Dahlquist of RDG Planning & Design. Breakout sessions will cover topics including regional foods, agritourism, and business development. The cost of the conference is \$150 which includes your opening night reception, lunches and the wrap up dinner on board the Celebration Belle riverboat. Accommodations are available at the Stoney Creek Inn and Conference Center for an additional cost. For more information and registration, please visit www.nvaa2009.homestead.com.

