

Rediscover Danville

Balloons Over Vermilion

By Carol Nichols, Director, Illinois SBDC at DACC

Thanks to the hard work of many volunteers, balloonists and the support of area sponsors, Vermilion County skies will once again be dotted with colorful hot air balloons.

Get to know the 30 hot air balloons and their pilots that will be on hand at balloonsoververmilion.com. Photos of the balloons are available along with bios on the pilots. Many of this weekend's pilots fell in love with ballooning as a result of the former Balloon Classic event. One of the events this weekend, Balloon School, will give kids and their parents a hands-on look at hot air balloons (without the fire and hot air) and everything that goes into the sport.

Organizers are hoping to create a whole new generation of pilots and crew members.

More fun for kids will be available from 3 pm to 10 pm Friday and 1 pm to 10 pm on Saturday in the Kid Zone. Fun to Go Inflatables, a video game trailer, Joyful Bubbles, face painting, a Civil War Photo Booth, a reptile show from DACC, minute-to-win-it game challenges, story time and free movies on the City of Danville media monster screen will be offered.

The Vermilion County Airport

will be the site for most events starting on Friday afternoon at 5 pm with Steve Rodman and Rodman Rail performing, followed by Chad Hays Boat Drink Caucus at 7 pm and 90's Daughter at 9 pm. In between the music, tethered balloon rides will be offered at 5:30 pm, a balloon flight is scheduled for 6:30 pm and a balloon glow at 8:30 pm.

Saturday's schedule includes 6 am balloon flights around Danville with events beginning at the airport at 1 pm with the Illiana Antique Car Show and the band, El Quapo. Balloon School for Kids will be from 2 to 3:30, Bob Schifo Band at 3, tethered balloon pictures from 3 to 5:30 pm, the band, Katapult at 4:45 pm and tethered balloon rides from 5:30 to 10 pm. My Brother's Keeper will play at 6:45 and 9 pm with Willard Cratchelow at 10 :15 pm. A Balloon Fly-In and Glow is scheduled for 7:30 pm.

Admission to the grounds is \$5/person. One child 10 & under free with each paid adult. Parking is \$5 (cash only) per vehicle but parking is limited so you might want to consider riding the shuttle bus from Walmart, Lowes or Heavenly Square – see the website for a map showing shuttle routes.

There will be lots of fun things to do on the grounds at the airport during Balloons Over Vermilion but always remember, weather impacts ballooning. For safety's sake, balloons will not fly in winds higher than 10 mph (wind speeds in the air not on the ground). Balloon pilots operate under FAA VFR conditions which means they must have good visibility for at least 3 miles. Balloons do not launch in the rain. Weather fronts may bring in a change in wind speed and direction that impact launch or launch times. Plus there must be no thunderstorms within 100 miles of the launch point for a launch to take place.

The uncertainty of it all is part of what makes hot air balloon events special. There is no guarantee balloons will fly – but oh, when they do – it is a beautiful sight and one that

shouldn't be missed. Rediscover hot air balloons this weekend in Danville!

Carol Nichols is the executive director of the Illinois Small Business Development Center at DACC in Danville. She can be reached at [217-442-7232](tel:217-442-7232) or sbdc@dacc.edu.



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