**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Iola Historical Society to host 33rd annual Strawberry Fest**

**along with Antiques Appraisal Fair and crafters on June 25**

IOLA, WI: Strawberries and local history are on the schedule for the Iola Historical Society’s 33rdAnnual Strawberry Fest, to be held Sunday, June 25, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Society’s Historical Village complex on Depot Street just west of downtown Iola. Local crafters will also show off their handiwork, and an Antiques Appraisal Fair provides experts on a wide range of collectibles on hand to ascertain the value of people’s attic and basement treasures.

Admission to the event is free, although goodwill donations are being accepted. Food items include strawberry shortcake – homemade! – with ice cream or Cool Whip, for $4; pulled pork sandwiches, $3.00; and hot dogs, $2.50. Assorted sodas and bottled water will also be available for purchase from Iola’s Boy Scout Troop 631. The food offerings will be available in the historical society’s *Machine Shed* at 222 Depot Street.

All proceeds from the event go to benefit restorations of the historic Iola & Northern Railroad Depot, a vintage caboose, and other Iola Historical Society projects.

**Historic building tours**

The Historic Iola Village buildings will be open for visitors, including the original vintage Iola And Northern Railway depot, which is undergoing restoration to its original design. The other buildings include a replica of a local one-room schoolhouse; a 1930s log cabin used in the area by hunters; a replica of Iola’s original fire station containing Iola’s vintage first three firefighting vehicles; the original Helvetia Town Hall; The Machine Shed, filled with vintage farm and manufacturing equipment along with the recently acquired Anderson Machine Shop equipment; a vintage caboose (currently closed for renovation); and the historical society’s newly remodeled and expanded museum.

The museum, which recently unveiled new display cases for its exhibits, and other buildings feature recently acquired collections:

* Ray Towne Collection of Native American artifacts from the first Native Americans to live in Wisconsin, dating back more than 10,000 years ago. Towne, his father and his grandfather collected the artifacts in Waupaca, Waushara, and Portage counties.
* The Bert Stromberg violin collection. Stromberg was a former constable of Iola who made and sold violins in the area in the mid-20th century. The collection includes violins in various stages of production plus Stromberg’s original violin-making tools.
* The Lee Nelson exhibit. A decorated World War II veteran from Iola who flew 31 bombing missions in a B-17 “Flying Fortress” over Germany and German-occupied France. Nelson was also an accomplished woodcarver and his carvings are also in display.
* R.I. Anderson machine shop: Features the original equipment used by Anderson, who built, among other things, brass fittings for Iola’s 1942 fire engine (also on display at the replica firehouse). The equipment is located in a replica building inside the society’s Machine Shed, and is still in working condition. Originally located on State Street, the machine shop’s machinery was moved by R.I.’s descendants, first to southern Wisconsin, then to Minnesota before finding its way back to Iola -- just a ½ mile from its original location.

Other items of local historical significance are also on display in the museum and in all of the buildings. Docents will be at each building to talk about their historic significance and answer any questions.

**Antique Appraisal Fair**

Area residents can bring items from their attics and basements for evaluation and pricing information to a wide-ranging group of experts at the Antiques Appraisal Fair. Cost is $3 per item or $5 for three items, with all proceeds benefitting the Iola Historical Society.

Antiques and collectibles appraisers include experts on general antiques, books, comics and popular-culture collectibles, sports collectibles, militaria and medals, toys, coins, and paper money. Find out if you have something valuable stashed away in your home!

**Crafters showing their skills**

A craft show will also be held on the grounds. Crafters are featuring jewelry, doll clothes, baskets, jams and jellies, woodworking, hand-painted items, honey, stained glass, embroidered items, wood signs, tie-dyed items, pet products, and lots more.

Attendees are also encouraged to walk on the nearby Iola River Walk along the Little Wolf River and see the historic Iola Mills, built in 1860.

The Iola Historical Society’s village is open on Saturdays from noon to 3:00 p.m. in June, July and August.

The Society’s next special event is Taste of Norway & Lost Arts Fair which will be held on Saturday, Oct. 7, 2017.

For more information, go to the Society’s website at www.iolahistoricalsociety.org or visit the Iola-Scandinavia Chamber’s website at [www.ischamber.org](http://www.ischamber.org).

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