

Smithville MO Historical Society

Preserving the past for
appreciation in the future.

Summer 2026

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Smithville MO Historical Society
P.O. Box 270, Smithville, MO 64089
K. D. Stafford, President
Carol Dawkins, Vice-President
Maria Justus, Secretary
Beth Reed, Treasurer
DeWayne Knott, Parliamentarian

Kathleen Bird, Newsletter Editor

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Historical Marker Arriving Soon

Dewayne Knott reported at our June board meeting that the historical marker commemorating the founding of Smithville will arrive soon. It will be temporarily displayed in Heritage Park. The permanent location will be on the walking trail along the Little Platte River where Smith's Mill was located. The Society received an additional grant from the Sons & Daughters of Greater Kansas City for this project. The American Legion has also reserved funds to support this project. Plans to acquire a white marble replica of Humphrey Smith's tombstone are underway.

Smithville Fourth of July Celebration

The Smithville Historical Society and American Legion are involved in the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. On Saturday, July 4th Nellie's children's parade will kick off the event at 10:00 am. The American Legion will then present the colors, followed by speeches by Mayor Boley, Judge Shane Alexander, and a brief recitation of our history by Society President K.D. Stafford. The closing prayer will be given by Becky Rose of D.A.R. The upcoming 25th anniversary of 9/11 will be commemorated. The American Legion Band will provide musical entertainment and free refreshments will be provided.

Society Tea Event

Society members gathered at the home of Arlene and Harold Smith on Saturday, June 6th to enjoy our annual tea party. Arlene was hostess and held games on tea etiquette and group camaraderie. Guests were given a copy of the newly released book *Nancy Walker Smith: Co-founder of Smithville*.



L to R: Arlene Smith, Marie Justus, Beth Reed, Carol Dawkins, and tea mascot Jackie. Not pictured: Marti Devers and Kathleen Bird

50 Years Ago in Smithville

News from the 1976 Smithville Democrat Herald, B.J. & Vera Bunch, editors, from the Clay County Archives.

June 3, 1976 Spelman Memorial Hospital is set to start providing 24/7 emergency medical care on July 1st.

June 10, 1976 Congressman Jerry Litton announced the town will receive \$42,000 for the second phase of its Community Development Program. This will contribute to work on Commercial Street to the new High School entrance and work on Maple Street. The Historical Society will hold its annual antique arts & crafts show this week with over thirty booths present.

June 17, 1976 Members of the Smithville Gun Club attended the City Council meeting seeking a permanent application for their trap shoot. It was unanimously approved. The City will contribute \$200 for bicentennial fireworks on July 4th. The flower boxes placed on the town square by the 4H Club have been taken leaving the flowers dumped on the streets. The High School Jazz Ensemble played tunes on an oceanliner from Florida to the Bahamas with seven other Missouri high school bands.

June 24, 1976 A \$5.1 million three story addition to Spelman Memorial Hospital will soon start construction, for completion in December 1977. The State Education Board of Arbitration heard a dispute between Smithville and Kearney over a change in the NE district boundary. It will remain the same.

July 1, 1976 The Girl Scouts, dressed in colonial costumes, will host a candlelight tour of the Patterson House Museum on July 4th. The City, Smithville Gun Club and the American Legion have donated fireworks for July Fourth.

July 8, 1976 The Breakfast Club placed flower planters at the corner of Bridge and Brasfield Streets for Bicentennial week. July 4th events were choir performances, pony rides, cakewalks, wheels parade, and baking contest.

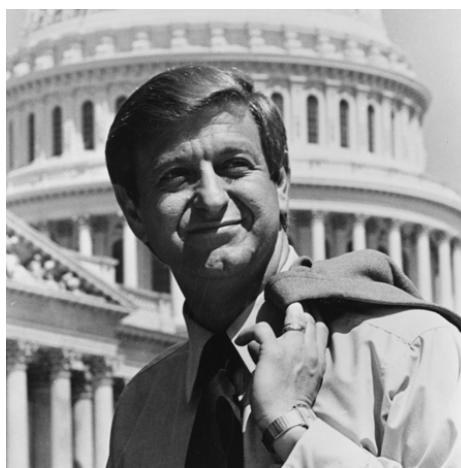
July 15, 1976 The Little Platte River was diverted through gates at the Smithville dam on July 13th to start completion of the dam over the present streambed. The dam is now 80% complete. It is 4,200 feet long and 75 feet high, impounded 7,190 acres of land in the 10,000 acre flood plain.

July 22, 1976 Annexation of the Woodland Heights was discussed by the City Council. The swine flu virus has been identified. Vaccines should be available by September. This year our nation is carrying out an effort to provide influenza vaccine to all U.S. citizens.

July 29, 1976 The PTA is urging a "no" vote on Amendment No. 7, which would permit public funds to be used for private schools.

Aug. 5, 1976 Three starters from Smithville are playing on the Tri-County Senior League All-Star baseball team, which won the district tournament in Omaha. Fourteen youths were arrested at an all-night concert near Smithville in possession of marijuana, hashish and other controlled substances.

Aug. 12, 1976 Congressman Jerry Litton, his wife Sharon and two children were killed near Chillicothe on a plane trip to Kansas City to celebrate his victory as a nominee as Democratic candidate for U.S. Senator.



Aug. 19, 1976 This is the 89th Anniversary issue of the Democrat-Herald. Governor Chris Bond urged all citizens to participate in the swine flu immunization program.

Aug. 26, 1976 A ground breaking was held on August 22 for the Emmanuel Bible Church north of city limits.

UPCOMING 2026 EVENTS

June 19-20 – Smithville Lake Festival

Sat. July 4 – Smithville America250 Celebration on the downtown square. Parade starts at 10am. Free refreshments and music.

Sat. Sept. 26 – Smithville Chamber Amateur BBQ contest and games from 10am – 7pm.

