

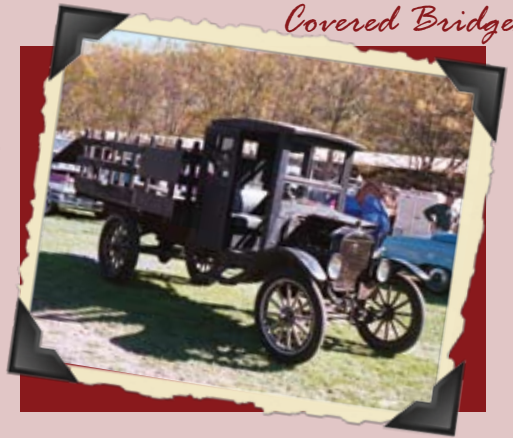


*Covered Bridge  
& Arts Festival*

The Columbia Montour area is well known for its covered bridges. What better way to celebrate these historic landmarks, than with a festival. The first; a two day event sponsored by what was then the Columbia Montour Tourist Promotion Agency (now known as the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau), was held in 1981 on a very cold and rainy weekend in October. The festival was held at Knoebels in the area that now houses their catering kitchen. A handful of craft and flea market vendors participated. The Thursday before the event, **all but two food vendors cancelled.** Ed Campbell (then proprietor of the Heritage House) served ice cream and another vendor sold French fries. Ed raided the kitchen at the Heritage House and was able to conjure up breakfast, sandwiches and burgers for the few festival goers who braved the inclement weather.

The second year saw the festival move to the Americana Arena at Knoebels. Fred Lawton used his **steam engines to power a water wheel to create wood crafts.** He also had a steam powered tractor that he drove through the park. The tractor had chain links attached to the front wheel for steering and the fledgling festival was also gaining speed!

In the third year, the festival was held at the current Knoebels location, in the pavilion area. This year saw the festival become exclusively a craft show (no more flea market items) and there was a Miss Covered Bridge pageant as well as the crowning of **Mr. & Mrs. Covered Bridge.** There were also participants dressed in period costume, bean soup being cooked over an open fire, and apple butter boiling in



a large kettle. Vendors demonstrated chair caning and spinning for the festival goers. Knoebels also started opening some of their rides for the weekend.

In 2009 the Covered Bridge Festival will celebrate 28 years of success. Nearly 300 crafters and over **30 food vendors** now attend annually. There are bus tours of the covered bridges and live performances by cloggers and square dancers. Folk, blue grass and oldies music are also some of the weekend highlights. A Fun Auction is held on Saturday, beginning at 1:00 PM, and on Sunday the car buffs can show off their antique and/or classic cars. If you are a more adventurous type, you can participate in the **100 mile scenic bike tour** through the countryside, passing through numerous covered bridges.

The festival has grown into a **three day event** and it is such a success due to the many dedicated volunteers and Knoebels personnel who have gone to great lengths year after year. An estimated 60,000 to 70,000 people attend the festival now and they travel from as far away as California. If you want to experience a great time, come and see why this festival has become a premier event.

**October 9-11, 2009 & October 8-10, 2010**

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