

## Covered Bridge Festival Brings Visitors to Matthews

REBECCA SEXTON

CONTRIBUTOR

The 42nd annual Covered Bridge Festival will take place this weekend in Matthews, Ind. The Matthews Lions Club is expecting 10,000-12,000 people to join the festivities this year.

The festival will include food, crafts, flea markets, stage entertainment, kids' features, antique tractors, engines and garden tractor pulls. There will also be two steam-powered sawmills and a steam-powered wheat threshing machine.

According to Roger Richards, who has been the festival chairman for 21 years, the main attractions people look forward to each year will still be there, in addition to new events.

"There are always new vendors in the crafts and flea market area," Richards said. "This year there will be some new antiques and collectables to browse through. We will also have some new food vendors to add to our already outstanding selection of 'eats,' namely BBQ pulled-pork, corn-on-the-cob, and Italian sausage."

"It's a great family event. My family has been going since I was a kid," said senior Alyce Branham, who has lived in the area her whole life. "It's always fun to see the new additions to the festival each year."

The stage entertainment is always a major attraction for the festival.

"I expect all the entertainers will provide great entertainment for those whom attend the event," said Entertainment Chairman Joe Neely.

This year, country music artist Ken-

dall Phillips will kick off the entertainment at 7 p.m. Friday.

"Phillips was a top 25 finalist on American Idol in 2006 and won the Texaco Country Music Showdown in 2010," Neely said.

The Doug Hart Band will play at 1 p.m. Saturday. Doo-wop band Spike and the Bulldogs will perform for the 13th year at 8:30 p.m. Saturday. On Sunday, there will be a church service and country musicians Cook and Belle will entertain at 2 p.m.

"Cook and Belle is the best country show in central Indiana," Neely said. "Michelle (Belle) Cook is part of the Morning Brew Crew on WMDH 102.5 FM."

The Eastbrook Choir and bands will be performing Saturday morning.

Even though many changes have been made to the festival, the Cumberland Covered Bridge has remained the focal point and inspiration behind the festival.

"The Cumberland Covered Bridge Festival began in 1971 to provide the Matthews Lions Club a second fundraiser project, the frosted malt stand being the other," Richards said. "Over the years, many features have been added and some deleted, but the festival has always been centered around the Cumberland Covered Bridge."

The cost is \$2 per person. Children 10 years old and younger are free. For the complete schedule and for more information, visit [matthewscoveredbridgefestival.com](http://matthewscoveredbridgefestival.com).



Matthews Covered Bridge is the location of the weekend festivities.



A crowd watches local performers at the 2011 Covered Bridge Festival.

photos by Covered Bridge Festival organizers

## West Nile Outbreak Increases

Summer marks a higher number of outbreaks in US

MACKENZI KLEMANN

CONTRIBUTOR

The West Nile virus has quickly spread across the U.S. this summer with a record 1,993 confirmed cases as of Sept. 4, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). This year marks the highest number of infected persons in recent years following a steady decline since 2006.

More than 30,000 U.S. residents have been infected with West Nile since it first appeared in the country in 1999. The virus, which originated in Africa, lives in birds. Mosquitoes contract the virus from infected birds and then pass it along to humans.

Texas has had the highest number of infected patients this year, with 45 percent of all cases coming from the state. Indiana has seen 16 cases this year, two of which were fatal.

"Nationally, we are being hit harder than ever before, especially in some of the southern states like Texas," said State Health Commissioner Gregory Larkin, M.D. to local news agency WANE-TV. "Here in Indiana we are seeing more counties earlier in the year with positive mosquito pools, meaning a greater risk to Hoosiers."

This dramatic spike in persons infected with the virus has spawned media coverage and consumer anxiety.

But 80 percent of all West Nile cases are mild with no visible symptoms. Moderate symptoms, which are reported in 20 percent of cases, include

*"It is so important after a major rain*