

Press Release

Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau

July 11, 2011

Contact:

Cindy Willis 417-368-2113, George Deatz 417-840-5472 or Jeanne Duffey j-duffey@sbcglobal.net.

Susan Wade; Convention & Visitors Bureau; 800-678-8767, Ext. 101; 417-799-0401; 417-830-0645 or swade@springfieldmo.org.

Butterfly Festival July 16-17 Includes Live Butterfly Release

Springfield, Mo. – About 25 varieties of native butterflies will swirl, flit and hover as the “flying flowers” are released in the butterfly garden at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park during one of Springfield’s most popular events, the Friends of the Garden-sponsored Butterfly Festival July 16-17, 2011.

The live butterfly release will begin at 11 a.m. July 16 and the third annual Butterfly Festival will be 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and continue through July 17 from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission is free; donations for operational expenses are encouraged.

Children will name each butterfly as they release them from individual boxes, said Dr. Bill Roston, a Friends of the Garden volunteer who was instrumental in creating and constructing the Dr. Bill Roston Butterfly House three years ago.

“Children love to do this. It’s educational as well as enjoyable. We plan to emphasize that these butterflies are our native butterflies found right here in our local gardens,” said Dr. Roston. “We will explain the importance of conservation of our dwindling numbers of butterflies. Overall, it’s a chance to educate about the life cycle, including the very important host plants.”

Cindy Willis, a naturalist, environmental educator and three-time chair of the event, says “in school, children learn about plants and animals in the rain forest and in other parts of the world and that’s good, but insects and flowers closer to home—in fact, right in our own backyards—fascinate us as well.”

This year’s Butterfly Festival, for the first time, will add live music to its line up of activities. Bluegrass and Blossoms fans can find their favorite performers beginning at 1 p.m. until 4:30 or 5 p.m. July 16. Scheduled to play in the shady Walnut Grove southwest of the Butterfly House are Reel Greene performing traditional Irish and American music, Red Bridge playing traditional and contemporary bluegrass and members of Someone Still Loves You Boris Yeltsin playing indie pop rock.

The public park at 2400 S. Scenic Ave. is home to the new Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center and more than 25 botanical gardens created and maintained by volunteers with Friends of the Garden, Master Gardeners and other gardening groups. During the Butterfly Festival, the Botanical Center staff will host free classes and display photo and quilt contest entries.

Children and adults can visit the Caterpillar Petting Zoo, enjoy story times and crafts and bounce their way through a 35-foot long caterpillar. Nearly two dozen vendor booths will sell gardening-related items.

Each day, children up to 15 years old can dress in butterfly or caterpillar costumes and sign up at a contest table by 1:45 p.m. for a chance to win cash and other prizes. On Sunday, adults and children of any age can create butterfly hats and enter their creations at a contest table by 12:30 p.m. for a chance to win prizes. Everyone can show off their finery in “pollinator” parades each day.

For more information, visit www.FriendsoftheGarden.org or contact Willis at 417-368-2113, George Deatz at 417-840-5472 or Jeanne Duffey at j-duffey@sbcglobal.net.