

Armstrong: Shabbona Lake State Park serving millions since 1975

In August, Shabbona Lake State Park welcomed its 12 millionth visitor. About 425,000 visitors enjoy this treasured northern Illinois attraction annually. The public is invited to attend a special ceremony to honor Shabbona Lake State Park's effect on local tourism, outdoor recreation and environmental preservation.

The event will be hosted by state Sen. Christine Johnson, R-Shabbona; state Rep. Robert Pritchard, R-Hinckley; special guest Marc Miller, director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources; and Lions Club District Gov. Jim Addington. The ceremony will be held at 10:50 a.m. Monday at Indian Creek High School in Shabbona.

A resolution adopted by the state House and proclamations from the Senate and Shabbona Business Association will be presented to Park Superintendent Kerry Novak at the ceremony.

The DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau congratulates the park's staff and volunteers for their dedication and tireless work. They take pride in being entrusted with the care and maintenance of this beautiful place. Their devotion provides visitors with a serene and inviting getaway.

The economic effect Shabbona Lake State Park generates comes from a combination of campground fees, fishing and hunting licenses, boat rental and fuel, supplies and concessions. It is estimated that a leisure visitor who stays overnight spends \$106 per day, according to numbers provided by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

The park was developed in 1975 and is recognized as the "Muskie Capital of Illinois" and as "Illinois' Best Fishing Lake." The park was originally the home to tribes of Native Americans and derives its name from Chief Shabbona. It includes 1,550 acres of rolling grass-covered meadows, upland mesic woods, bottomland woods, a man-made fishing lake, prairie grasses and a 15-acre seasonal nesting area for migratory waterfowl.

All features of the park are accessible to those with physical disabilities. It offers nine hiking trails, a fishing pier and dock, camping, bow and shotgun hunting, boat rental, bait and tackle shop and a restaurant.

The campground has 150 Class A sites with electricity, a shower building and restroom facilities. Reservations can be made at www.reserveamerica.com or call the office at 815-824-2565 for more information. Each campsite has a gravel parking space, picnic table and a campfire ring.

Shabbona Lake State Park provides a convenient nature haven and retreat from the hustle and bustle of daily life. It's an ideal location for natural relaxation, exploration and outdoor activity. It's located just 25 miles southwest of DeKalb, 30 miles west of Aurora and 80 miles west of Chicago. If you haven't visited Shabbona Lake, I encourage you to explore all that it has to offer. If you have visited, I know that you have been back many times.

The park is open all year. For more information, visit www.shabbonalake.com or call 815-824-2106.

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• *Debbie Armstrong is executive director of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau.*

Shabbona Lake State Park highlights

- Home of four state-record muskie
- Home of two state-record hybrid crappie
- 150 Class A campsites with shower facilities and restrooms
- Picnic areas have water, restrooms, playground equipment and horseshoe pits
- Four-and-a-half miles of scenic hiking and cross-country skiing trails
- Archery deer hunting and firearm dove hunting
- Ice fishing
- Seven-mile snowmobiling trail opens Jan. 1

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