

CMM 438  
8 May 2025  
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Final Story

### **Bonded by Community: Ohio's Festival Frenzy**

DAYTON, Ohio— Places like public libraries, parks, malls, bookstores, and theaters all serve communities that are starved for connection. So, where do people go when those spaces start to disappear?

According to several articles, including one from the [American Osteopathic Association](#), there's been a recent [documented](#) loss of many "third places" in the U.S. which force many Americans to grapple with the feeling of loneliness.

One in three Americans feel lonely every week, [according](#) to the American Psychiatric Association. So, in an age of isolation and glowing screens, what acts as a light at the end of the tunnel for many Americans that live next door to strangers?

Well for nearly every city and small town in the Buckeye state of Ohio, the answer is simple: festivals, and lots of them. According to the 2025 Ohio Festival Guide on [Ohiofestivals.net](#), there's over 2,220 festivals scheduled across Ohio this year.

From major cities like Columbus and Cleveland, to smaller cities like Loveland and Celina, the list of festivals in Ohio is never ending. Themes range from maple syrup and cherry blossoms, to pirates, pickles, and reggae music.

For Seth Copenbaker, Economic Development Specialist and organizer of the [Oxford Bee Festival](#) that was held on April 12, creating a space where everyone welcomed is a key value to him since the festival's return from the 90's.



"I think we've got a really beautiful community, a really clean and safe community, so anytime we've got a chance to show that off I think is tremendous."

Copenbaker made sure there'd be a variety of activities for the Oxford community, with over 55 vendors, food trucks, and community organizations, live music, and free games for anyone to participate in present at the festival.

Just northeast of Oxford's Bee Festival week later was the city of Kettering's Tree Fest and Tree Love celebration, where Environmental Education Supervisor and festival organizer Kerri Miles led the charge of planting trees.

The Bartlett Tree Expert Company donated 125 trees to be planted by community members the morning of Tree Fest on April 19.

In the afternoon, the celebration continued at Eudora Brewing Company where locals indulged themselves in hops and participated in tree themed events including a raffle and the free opportunity to bring a tree home.

As tree expert Guy Fortner put it, “We partner up with Kettering to give trees away this time year, and in other cities as well, to give back to the community and encourage the excitement around trees.”

For Miles, Kettering is the perfect place for the Tree Fest and Tree Love celebration given the community attendance at the EcoFEST in September and the passion members show about the environment.

“Kettering is a festival friendly town and people love festivals; they love to come out, they love the friendly atmosphere, and they love the owl right behind you. Just fun things like that that you wouldn’t see in a normal day to day.”

## Source Sheet

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