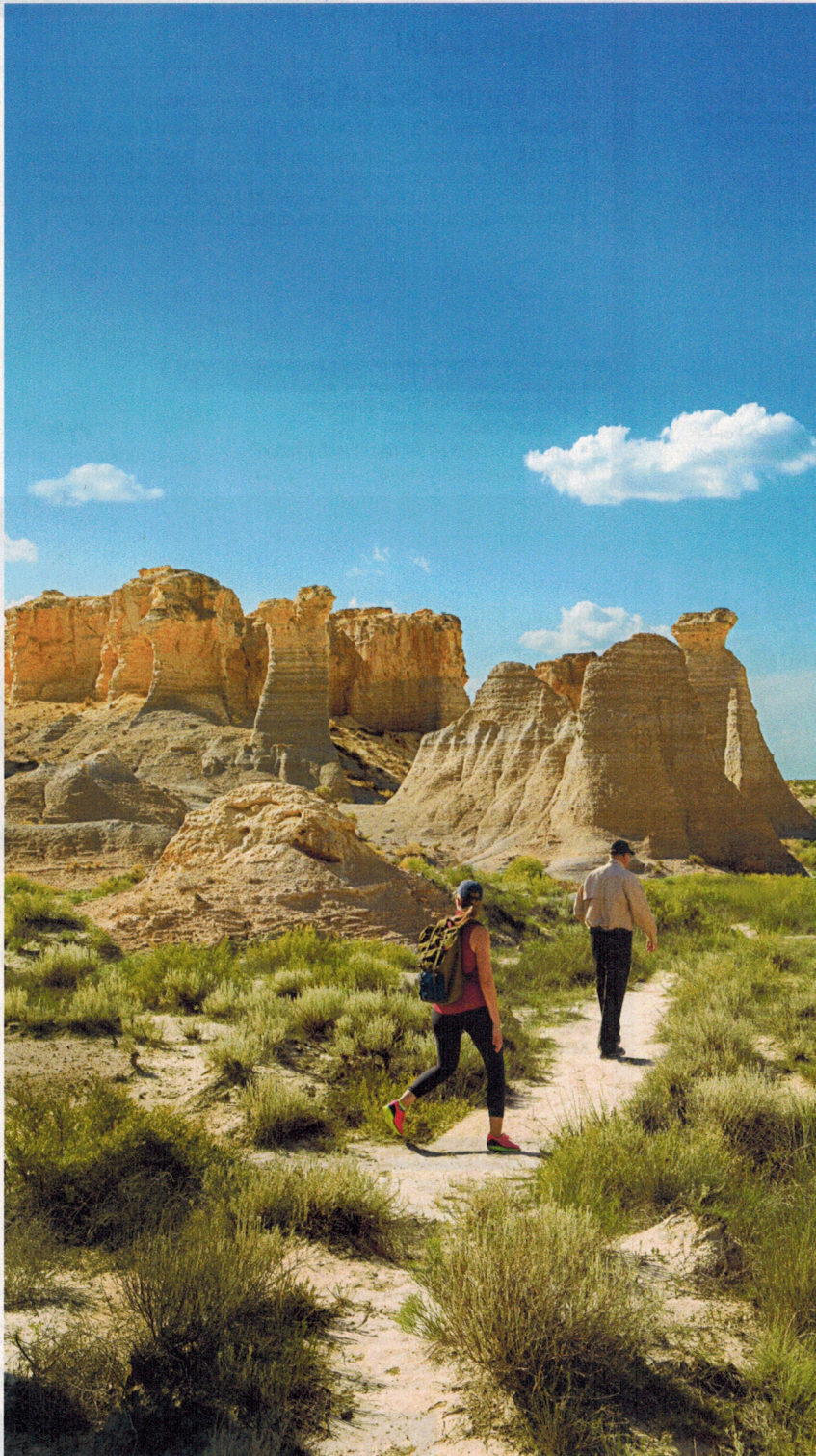


A Midwest traveler's

Great getaways, new attractions, and landmark events to enjoy.

BY KATHERINE RODEGHIER



Forget the usual New Year's resolutions; you know you'll stop going to the gym by the end of February. Instead, make plans to check out these 10 attractions, events, or destinations worthy of your attention in 2020.

DESTINATIONS

Dive into the water world at two new attractions in **Branson, Missouri**. Aquarium at the Boardwalk will bring the oceans to the Ozarks after it opens this summer on Country 76 Boulevard at the former Grand Palace site. Experience bioluminescence in the Jelly Fish Infinity Room, watch sharks swim around you from a clear tunnel, feel a cownose ray in a Touch Pool, and climb through a "Kelp Forest" in this 46,000-square-foot aquarium.

Silver Dollar City marks 60 years with a splash on what's touted as the tallest raft-ride drop in the Western Hemisphere. The park launches the anniversary celebration the weekend of May 1. Its new ride, Mystic River Falls, which begins when eight-passenger

Left: In Kansas, Little Jerusalem State Park is now open.

must-do list for 2020

rafts ascend an 82-foot tower to a water channel nearly a half-mile long, will open sometime this summer.

INFO: Branson/Lakes Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, (800) 296-0463 or explorebranson.com

Indianapolis, Indiana celebrates its 200th birthday beginning in June and continuing through 2021. Originally the settlement of Fall Creek, it became the capital in 1821 and was given a new name: Indiana plus polis, Greek for city.

The Indiana Historical Society will exhibit never-before-seen items and reenact a 1920 centennial celebration. Check out the Bottleworks District's new food hall and art deco Bottleworks Hotel in what was the world's largest Coca-Cola bottling plant.

A renovated Madam Walker Legacy Center, celebrating America's first self-made African-American millionaire, will have a grand reopening of its first phase targeted for January. Indiana University will be the main tenant, and artifacts from Walker's life will be displayed throughout the space. In addition, the historical theater will return refreshed and ready for visitors. Also this year, watch for a Netflix series on Walker's life featuring Octavia Spencer in the title role.

Additional bicentennial event details

had yet to be released at press time.

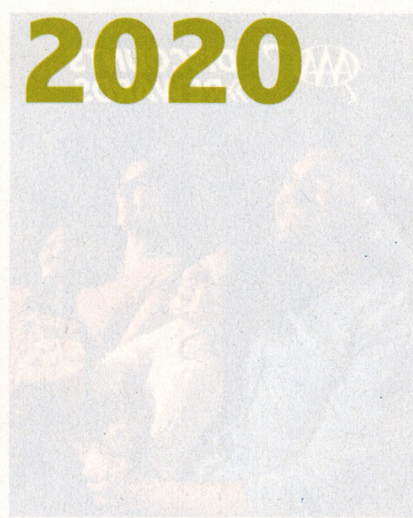
INFO: Visit Indy, (800) 323-4639 or visitindy.com

ATTRACTIONS

A mile-long valley of 100-foot-tall spires and cliffs owned by The Nature Conservancy near Oakley, Kansas, became accessible to the public for the first time in October 2019 as **Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park**. Encompassing the state's largest Niobrara Chalk formations, you'll meander on trails crossing territory where "Wild Bill" Hickok and "Buffalo Bill" Cody roamed and where fossils dating back 85 million years have been found. These fragile badlands provide a habitat for wildlife as well as the single largest area of Great Plains wild buckwheat that's found nowhere else in the world.

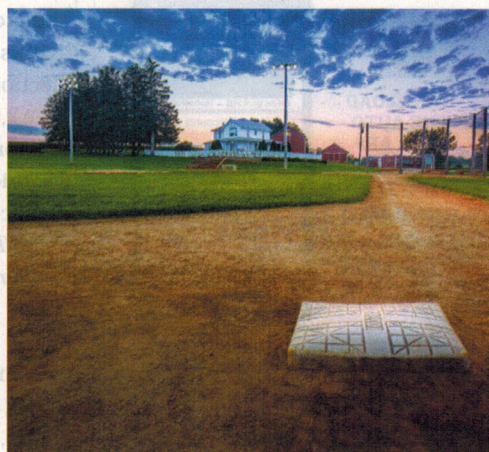
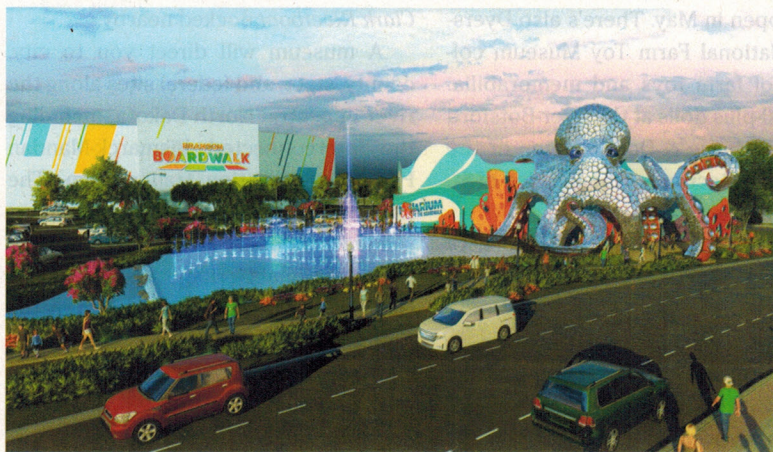
INFO: Travel Kansas, (785) 296-2009 or travelks.com/little-jerusalem

Triple-A baseball returns to **Wichita, Kansas**, in a \$75 million ballpark, the latest addition to the city's redeveloping riverfront. The new home of the Wichita Wind Surge, a farm team for the Miami Marlins, will be ready for opening day, April 14, and will seat 6,500 with a capacity for 3,500 more on berms and picnic areas. You'll find fan-friendly amenities such as a splash pad and play

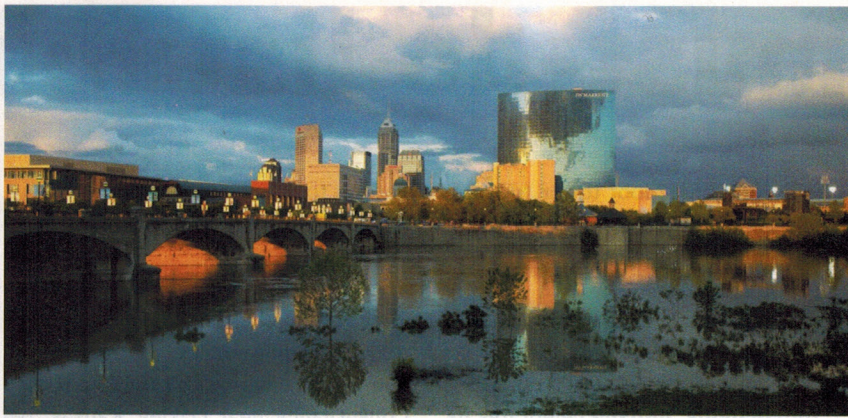


Below left: An artist's rendering of the new Branson Boardwalk Aquarium, which is set to open sometime this summer.

Below right: See the Yankees and White Sox play in Iowa near the Field of Dreams.



OPPOSITE COURTESY KANSAS TOURISM; COURTESY AQUARIUM AT THE BOARDWALK; EVEN GEARING



Indianapolis celebrates a bicentennial this year.

area for kids, fireworks, and concession stands with field views.

After the game, another new river-front attraction puts you on, as well as along, the Arkansas River. Boats and Bikes last spring launched its bike, kayak, and stand-up paddleboard rentals.

Prefer a cultural outing? Head to the Museums on the River District to explore its cluster of five museums.

INFO: Visit Wichita, (800) 288-9424, visitwichita.com

You may bump into a big leaguer in **Dyersville, Iowa**, when the **Chicago White Sox and New York Yankees** play on Aug. 13 near the *Field of Dreams* movie site. The regular-season game takes place in an 8,000-seat ballpark going up in a cornfield north of the field where the 1989 film was made. Ticket information from Major League Baseball wasn't yet available.

Not lucky enough to have a ticket? Take in the new downtown museum that's all about the movie and baseball due to open in May. There's also Dyersville's National Farm Toy Museum collection of farm toys and memorabilia. See 2,000-plus dolls at the Dyer-Botsford Victorian House & Doll Museum or the Gothic architecture of the Basilica of St. Francis Xavier.

INFO: Dyersville Area Chamber of Commerce, (563) 875-2311 or dyersville.org

This year marks the 25th year that the **Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio**, has occupied the I.M. Pei-de-

signed building, and rock's greatest stars will show up in the city for the annual induction ceremony on May 2.

Until then, check out the new interactive exhibit, *The Garage*, where you can play and record your own hits on drums, guitars, and keyboards.

Pay special attention to artifacts from Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix; this year marks the 50th anniversary of their deaths. See a Mosrite double-neck guitar played by Hendrix and Joplin's eyeglasses and beads. You also will see John Lennon's glasses and British passport showing his birth 80 years ago on Oct. 9, 1940.

INFO: Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, (216) 781-7625 or rockhall.com

Heritage River Landing opens this spring overlooking the Missouri River in Bismarck, North Dakota. The historically inspired post-and-beam warehouse will house a café and bar with patio overlooking the river, as well as the ticket office for the 150-passenger *Lewis & Clark Riverboat* docked nearby.

A museum will direct you to city, county, state, and federal sites along the river in central North Dakota, including the interconnected Bismarck-Mandan Parks & Recreation trail system. The Landing also will serve as the interpretive headquarters for the Northern Plains National Heritage Area, one of 49 National Heritage Areas overseen by the National Park Service.

INFO: Bismarck-Mandan Convention & Visitors Bureau, (800) 767-3555 or boundariesnd.com

EVENTS

Join thousands of Frank Lloyd Wright fans for the annual **Wright Plus House-walk** in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Illinois, which boasts the highest concentration of buildings designed by the architect.

Wright spent his formative years living and working here, designing homes for neighbors. His own home and studio and recently restored Unity Temple—designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2019—remain open year-round, but on May 16, the Wright Plus House-walk adds tours of private homes designed by Wright and his contemporaries.

INFO: Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, (312) 994-4000 or flwright.org/wrightplus

After switching to a biennial schedule, **ArtPrize** returns Sept. 16 through Oct. 4 to Grand Rapids, Michigan. This international art competition draws about 500,000 people to see art from across the globe at a variety of venues.

Don't miss Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, a past ArtPrize venue

that this year will be celebrating its 25th anniversary. More than 300 sculptures in its permanent collection include the 24-foot-tall *The American Horse* inspired by Leonardo da Vinci.

INFO: ArtPrize, artprize.org; Experience Grand Rapids, (877) 847-4847 or experiencegr.com

Motorcycle enthusiasts from 50 states and several foreign countries converge on **Sturgis, South Dakota, for its annual motorcycle rally**, which celebrates 80 years in 2020. The fun includes motocross events, hill climbs, bike shows, and drag races. Above the sound of grinding gears, you will hear big names in rock and country music.

Follow riders on day trips to Mount Rushmore, Deadwood, Custer State Park, and the Crazy Horse Memorial. Held annually since 1938—except for two years of World War II due to gas rationing—the rally this year will be Aug. 7–16 with an official Mayor's Ride and Military Day with flyover on Main Street. Last year 500,000 people attended, but the 2020 rally may reach more than



Thousands come to Sturgis, South Dakota, for the motorcycle rally.

770,000 as it did during the 75th anniversary.

INFO: Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, (605) 720-0800 or sturgismotorcyclerrally.com

The Midwest is a diverse region that's worthy of exploration. This year, pick a place you've not yet visited and start your 2020 with a plan to make new memories. •

Katherine Rodeghier is a contributor from Western Springs, Ill.