



WELCOME TO  
**LAFAYETTE COUNTY**

LAND OF HISTORY AND ADVENTURE

Photo credit: Danika Wehling

ARGYLE • BELMONT • BENTON • BLANCHARDVILLE • BROWNTOWN • CUBA CITY  
 DARLINGTON • GRATIOT • MONTICELLO • NEW DIGGINGS • SHULLSBURG • SOUTH WAYNE  
 WIOTA

## FARMING, OUTDOOR RECREATION, AND WISCONSIN HISTORY ARE THE HALLMARKS OF LAFAYETTE COUNTY.

Lafayette County played a significant role in the state's beginnings. Settlers arrived in the early 1820s to mine the lead in the region. They had no time to build permanent homes, so they dug crude dwellings into the hillsides, resembling badger holes. These rustic homesteads inspired Wisconsin's nickname as the Badger State.

When the Wisconsin Territory was established in 1836, Lafayette County housed the First Capitol in Belmont. Two restored buildings are open for prearranged tours: the Council House, which is furnished much like it was when the territorial legislature met there, and the Supreme Court building. Be sure to explore this Wisconsin State Historic Site for a flashback to what frontier Wisconsin looked like.

Shullsburg was the third established community in Wisconsin. The area boasted the most productive lead mining in the country leading to a population boom in the 1820s. In fact, the majority of lead musket balls used during the Civil War came from Shullsburg. The city is said to have five miles of mining tunnels running beneath its streets and homes. Shullsburg's Badger Mine and Museum takes visitors underground into a hand-dug 19th-century mine and exhibits the primitive tools used to extract the ore. To continue with Lafayette County's mining history, visit Swindler's Ridge Museum in Benton, where you will find more mining artifacts and a working diorama of a lead and zinc mine.

Another noteworthy historic site is the Lafayette County Courthouse in Darlington. Built between 1905 and 1907, it is the only active courthouse in the country that was paid for by one man—a citizen named Matthew Murphy who left most of his estate for the building's construction. The monumental limestone structure features a central rotunda with an elaborate dome and evidence of Johnny Depp's visit to the Courthouse when it was featured in the 2009 movie "Public Enemies".

Lafayette County is farm country. With 1,400 farms, Lafayette County's economy depends on agriculture more than any other county in Wisconsin. With many cheese factories, dairy farms, farmers markets, vegetable farms, and fiber producers, agriculture is the heart of many of the county's communities. For those who appreciate agriculture and local traditions, the Lafayette County Fair is a must-visit event. This long-standing fair showcases livestock exhibitions, thrilling rides, and live entertainment, offering a true taste of rural Wisconsin culture. Shullsburg highlights the area's dairy industry with its annual Cheesefest, held in October, featuring wine and cheese tasting, hay rides, and a cheese curd eating contest.

Lafayette County is also a haven for those seeking nature and outdoor recreation. Hiking, bicycling, fishing, hunting, canoeing, swimming, ATV riding, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling are all available in Lafayette County's scenic Driftless countryside. The Cheese Country and Pecatonica State trails offer more than 60 miles of off-road riding, and the Mound View State Trail is open to bicyclists and hikers.

Camping, hiking, and fishing are popular activities at Lafayette County parks, including Yellowstone Lake State Park—between Blanchardville and Argyle—and the nearby Yellowstone Wildlife Area, which also provides horse trails and a shooting range. Blackhawk Memorial Park, south of Argyle, is a picturesque place to camp, hike, canoe, and fish along the Pecatonica River.

Lafayette County Speedway, located in Darlington, has a 70-year auto-racing legacy. The slightly banked three-eighths mile clay track has been in existence since the 1950's. Racing begins each April and continues into August, with a full weekly schedule, including several large specials throughout the season.

FOR CALENDAR OF EVENTS & CURRENT INFORMATION: [WWW.HIDDENVALLEYS.COM](http://WWW.HIDDENVALLEYS.COM)

# TOP 10 LAFAYETTE COUNTY DESTINATIONS

1

**THE WORLD'S LARGEST M**

Platteville/Belmont

2

**YELLOWSTONE LAKE STATE PARK**

Blanchardville

3

**GRAVITY HILL**

Shullsburg

4

**FIRST CAPITOL IN BELMONT**

Belmont

5

**BLUE ASH FARM TASTING LODGE**

Argyle

6

**TRAIN DEPOT MUSEUM AND CABOOSE**

Darlington

7

**TOY TRAIN BARN MUSEUM**

Argyle

8

**SAXTON HOUSE**

Argyle

9

**BLACKHAWK MEMORIAL PARK/BLOODY LAKE**

Woodford

10

**FATHER MAZZUCHELLI'S GRAVE AT ST. PATRICK'S CEMETERY**

Benton



World's Largest M



Yellowstone Lake State Park.  
Photo Credit: Dane Nechkash



Saxton House



Pec State UTV/ATV Trail.  
Photo Credit: Dena Nechkash



Caboose and Train Depot



Belmont Mound State Park



Belmont Mound State Park. Photo Credit: Dena Nechkash



Gravity Hill

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Belmont Mound State Park. Photo Credit: Dena Nechkash



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**QR Code**

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The Village of Belmont is in picturesque Lafayette County, surrounded by rolling hills and scenic farms. In 1836, Belmont was the first capitol of the Wisconsin Territory. You can visit First Capitol Historic Site just north of Belmont. On your drive there, pull into the Belmont Mound State Park to take in the panoramic views of the countryside and check out the many scenic trails.

Belmont is a family-friendly community boasting recreational opportunities as well as a healthy business district. The village also features two beautiful murals and two versatile parks—Bond Park and Leahy Park—for families to enjoy. Belmont's growing business community includes specialty cheese factories, Branded Show Gear, a convention center and one of the area's largest greenhouse operations. It has a great truck stop, RV dealership, mini mart, motel, and spa & salon just off Highway 151. Drive into downtown Belmont for more restaurant, tavern, and pub choices.

Belmont is the intersecting point of the Mound View State Trail and the Pecatonica State Trail. Mound View State Trail travels parallel to Hwy. 151 toward Platteville. This 7-mile trail connects to the Platteville Rountree Branch Trail, both of which are non-motorized trails. If you head east, the trail changes over to the Pecatonica State Trail, which is a popular 10-mile shared use trail open to ATVs, horseback riding, walking, biking and seasonally skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. The scenic Pecatonica Trail travels east out of Belmont to Calamine where it connects to the Cheese Country Trail. The Pecatonica State Trail follows the old Milwaukee Railroad Corridor that at one time hauled lead through our valleys, reminiscent of the mining era which once dominated this region of Wisconsin.

For more info. [www.belmontwi.com](http://www.belmontwi.com) or call 608.762.5142

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