

Missouri's LARGEST

Travel across the state to see all of the **BIG THINGS** happening here.

From the Mystery Spot in Santa Cruz, California, to Wall Drug in South Dakota, the United States is full of unusual tourist attractions. *And Missouri is no exception.*

The Show-Me State—where we have to see it to believe it—boasts not one but three giant balls of twine, the world's largest rocking chair, and a gargantuan goose amongst a host of other roadside stops. So get out your camera, fuel up, and take a road trip across the state to see Missouri's largest attractions.

WORLD'S LARGEST CHESS PIECE

The Jefferson National Expansion Memorial symbolizes St. Louis's status as the gateway to the West. Meanwhile, miles across town, the giant king piece outside of the World Chess Hall of Fame symbolizes St. Louis's status as the chess capital of the United States.

In 2013, the US Senate officially gave St. Louis the title of National Chess Capital because the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis hosts all major US chess competitions and educates children throughout the state. It was also given to the city to raise awareness of the educational benefits of chess and to encourage schools and community centers to engage in chess programs.

Taking only a month and a half to make, the world's largest chess piece was built by R.G. Ross Construction and is over fourteen feet high, six feet wide, and weighs about 2,280 pounds. The king piece was unveiled to kick off the US and Women's Chess Championships in 2012.

You can find the giant chess piece and visit the World Chess Hall of Fame at 4652 Maryland Avenue in St. Louis. Visit worldchesshof.org or call 314-367-9243 for more information.—*Lakshna Mehta*

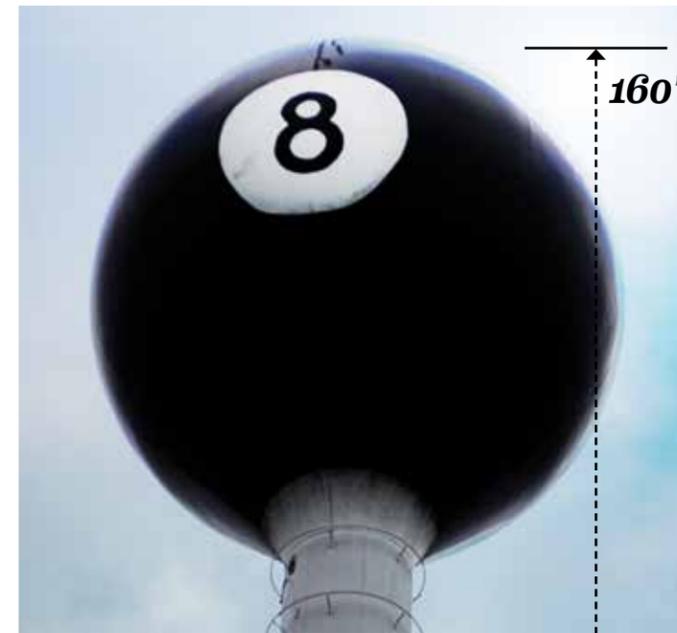




THE BIG PUMP

When King City businessman Rufus H. Limpp leased the Maryville Big Pump station in 1936, he also leased a giant gas pump built two years earlier by the Wayne Company. Limpp, who is responsible for the King City oil company, creamery, and ice plant, was known for his business-savvy practices, and his legacy is well-known throughout town. Danny Lewis, president of the Tri-County Museum, says Limpp often lowered gas prices so it was affordable for local college students, antagonizing the local competition.

The Big Pump remained in Maryville through several decades until 1994 when then-owner Jerry Jones offered to donate it to the Tri-County Museum. Have a gas in King City, and visit the museum at 600 N. Grand Avenue. —*Elissa Chudwin*



GIANT EIGHT BALL

The 160-foot tower was built in Tipton in 1968 by the Fischer Pool Table Company, which claimed to be the largest manufacturer of pool tables in the country at the time. The water tower was built for fire protection for the company. The eight-ball design was to promote Fischer, but it also became a landmark for the city and travelers. The plant closed in 1977, but the tower had become a town landmark. FASCO bought the property in 1981 and painted the eight-ball tower white with its own logo. FASCO closed in 1988, and the tower was returned to the city. When the tower needed repainting in 1999, the City of Tipton restored the landmark to its original glory and put the eight ball back up.

You can find the giant eight ball at 497 Meadowlark Lane or overlooking Highway 50 in Tipton. —*Lakshna Mehta*

THE GIANT FORK

In 1997, the advertising agency Noble Communications built Springfield's giant fork for the company-owned restaurant, The Greenhouse Market. After a year or so, The Greenhouse Market closed, so Noble Communications moved the fork to its headquarters in Springfield's Chesterfield Village.

The sturdy, stainless steel fork is thirty-five feet tall, weighs eleven tons, and is submerged six feet into a large concrete block to survive strong winds. "The fork entices many forkies for selfies throughout the year," says Keith Acuff, CEO of Springfield Noble Communications, "but other large visitors, like the World's Largest Potato, also pay visits."

To take your own selfie next to the fork, stop at 2215 W. Chesterfield Boulevard in Springfield. —*Elissa Chudwin*

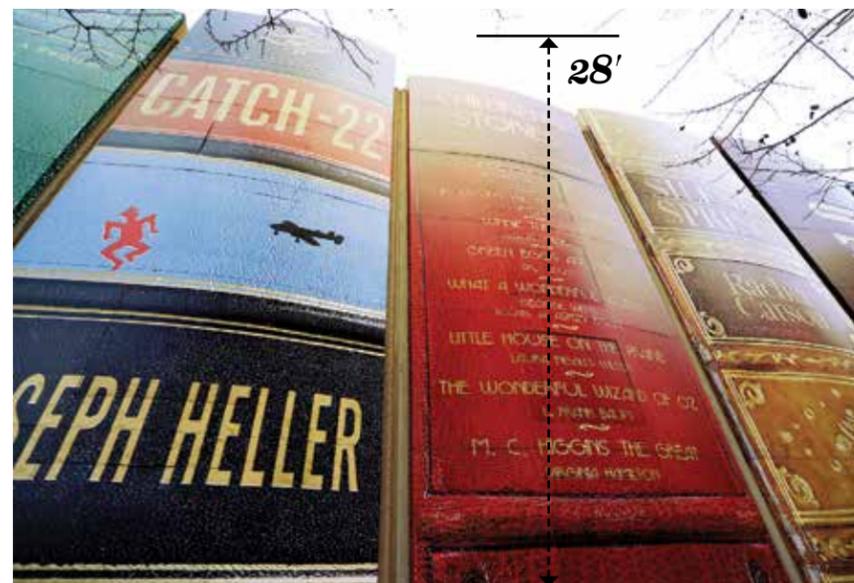


COMMUNITY BOOKSHELF

Imagine Paul Bunyan had a library, and in that library, he had books like *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien, *Truman* by David McCullough, *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, and Harper Lee's classic novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Well, that's almost what you get when you visit Kansas City's Community Bookshelf.

Completed in 2004 and made of signboard mylar on the south facade of a 480-car parking garage for the Central Library in Kansas City, the spines of the twenty-two books on this shelf are twenty-eight feet tall and nine feet wide. The project was commissioned to capture the imagination of the public and promote the library.

Visit this oversized bookshelf on Tenth Street between Wyandotte Street and Baltimore Avenue, or go to kclibrary.org/community-bookshelf for more information. —*Lakshna Mehta*



KELLY LUDWIG AND JILL VONDY



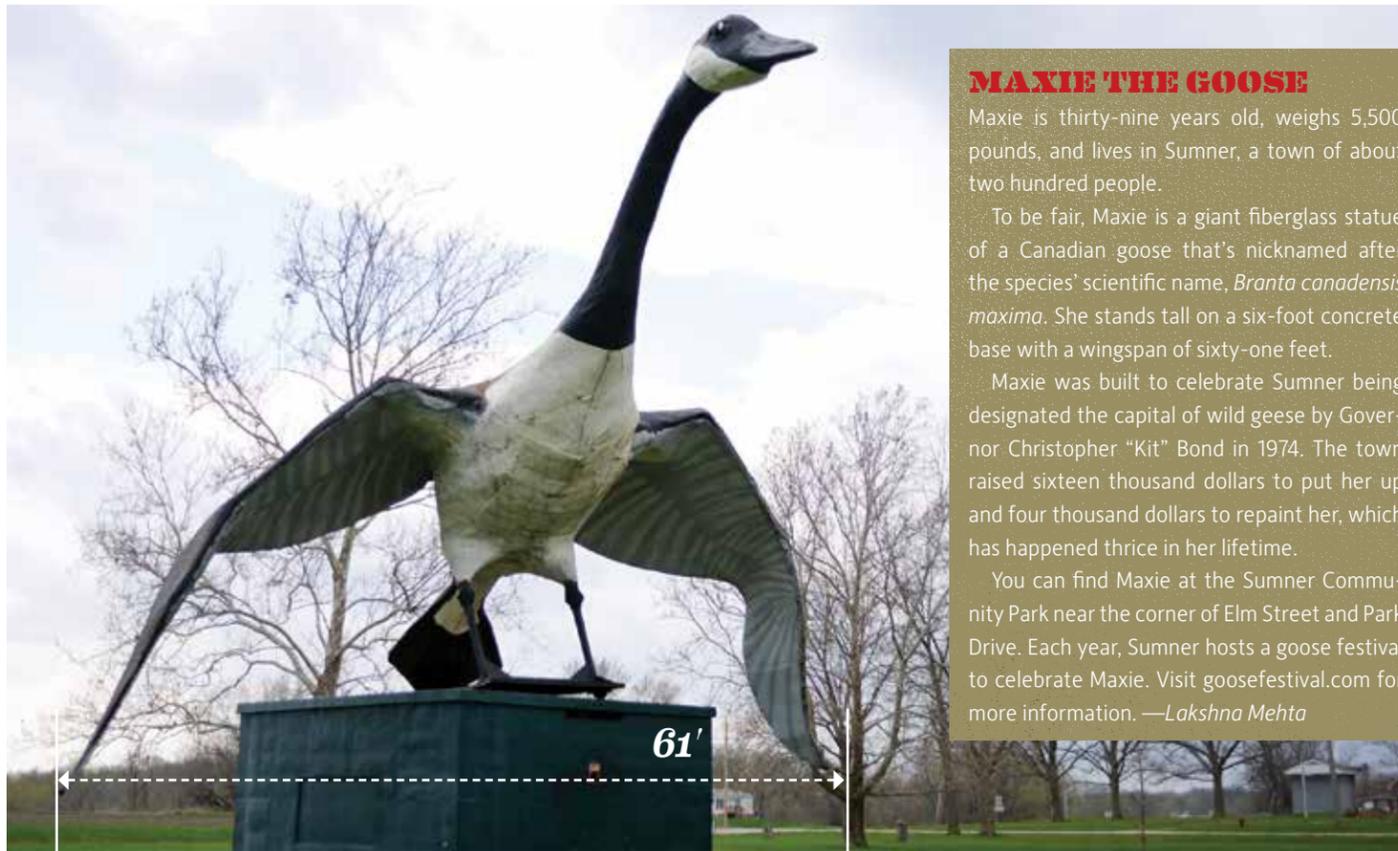
ANNIE RICE AND JILL VONDY

GIANT CAP GUN

In 2005, Joe Hammers opened the Pistol Social Club—a theater, venue, bar, and nightclub rolled into one—in Kansas City's West Bottoms neighborhood. To mark the venue's location at 1219 Union Avenue, Joe commissioned local artist Brock Venti to create a giant pistol sculpture to hang as a sign on the unremarkable industrial warehouse that housed the club.

Although the club closed in 2010, the cap gun pistol still hangs on the building.

"It's become kind of a building icon, so we just kept it up," says Patrick Ottesen of Architectural Reclamation, an antique store that rents a space in the building where the Pistol Social Club once was. —*Jonas Weir*



MAXIE THE GOOSE

Maxie is thirty-nine years old, weighs 5,500 pounds, and lives in Sumner, a town of about two hundred people.

To be fair, Maxie is a giant fiberglass statue of a Canadian goose that's nicknamed after the species' scientific name, *Branta canadensis maxima*. She stands tall on a six-foot concrete base with a wingspan of sixty-one feet.

Maxie was built to celebrate Sumner being designated the capital of wild geese by Governor Christopher "Kit" Bond in 1974. The town raised sixteen thousand dollars to put her up and four thousand dollars to repaint her, which has happened thrice in her lifetime.

You can find Maxie at the Sumner Community Park near the corner of Elm Street and Park Drive. Each year, Sumner hosts a goose festival to celebrate Maxie. Visit goosefestival.com for more information. —Lakshna Mehta

GIANT VESS BOTTLE

For decades, St. Louis was spinning the bottle. In its prime, this enormous Vess Soda Bottle rotated on a steel pole and was illuminated by six hundred feet of neon tubing. Constructed in 1953 for the Vess Bottling Company, the twelve-foot-tall bottle first found its home at the intersection of Hampton Avenue and Gravois Boulevard in South St. Louis before it was eventually removed. After being in storage for years, the lemon-lime soda bottle was relocated to O'Fallon Street in 1989 where it stands today. The bottle still sits on a pole, but it no longer spins.

To see the Vess Bottle, stop by 520 O'Fallon Street, west of Interstate 70. The St. Louis landmark is part of what is now called the Bottle District, which is north of downtown, near the Edward Jones Dome. —Elissa Chudwin



JILL VONDY



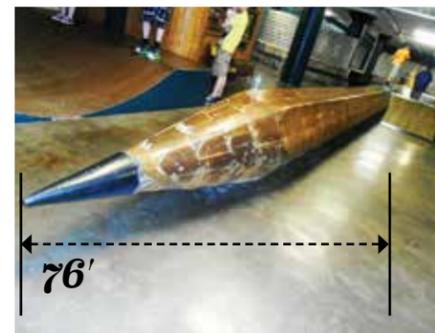
WORLD'S LARGEST PENCIL AND PAIR OF UNDERWEAR

As the home of the world's largest pencil and pair of underwear, City Museum in St. Louis is larger than life.

The seventy-six-foot-long pencil weighs about 21,500 pounds and had to be cut in half before it fit into the truck that delivered it to City Museum in 2008. The pencil's creation was spearheaded by Ashrita Furman, a New Yorker who has set hundreds of Guinness world records, including the official record for holding the most records.

The world's largest pair of underwear, which is seven feet wide and six feet tall, was stolen from the museum in July 2011. In September of that year, the pair was returned. It had not only been washed and folded, but it also came with another pair of red women's underwear of the same size.

To see the once-missing underwear and oversized pencil, stop by City Museum at 750 N. Sixteenth Street in St. Louis. Visit citymuseum.org for more information. —Elissa Chudwin



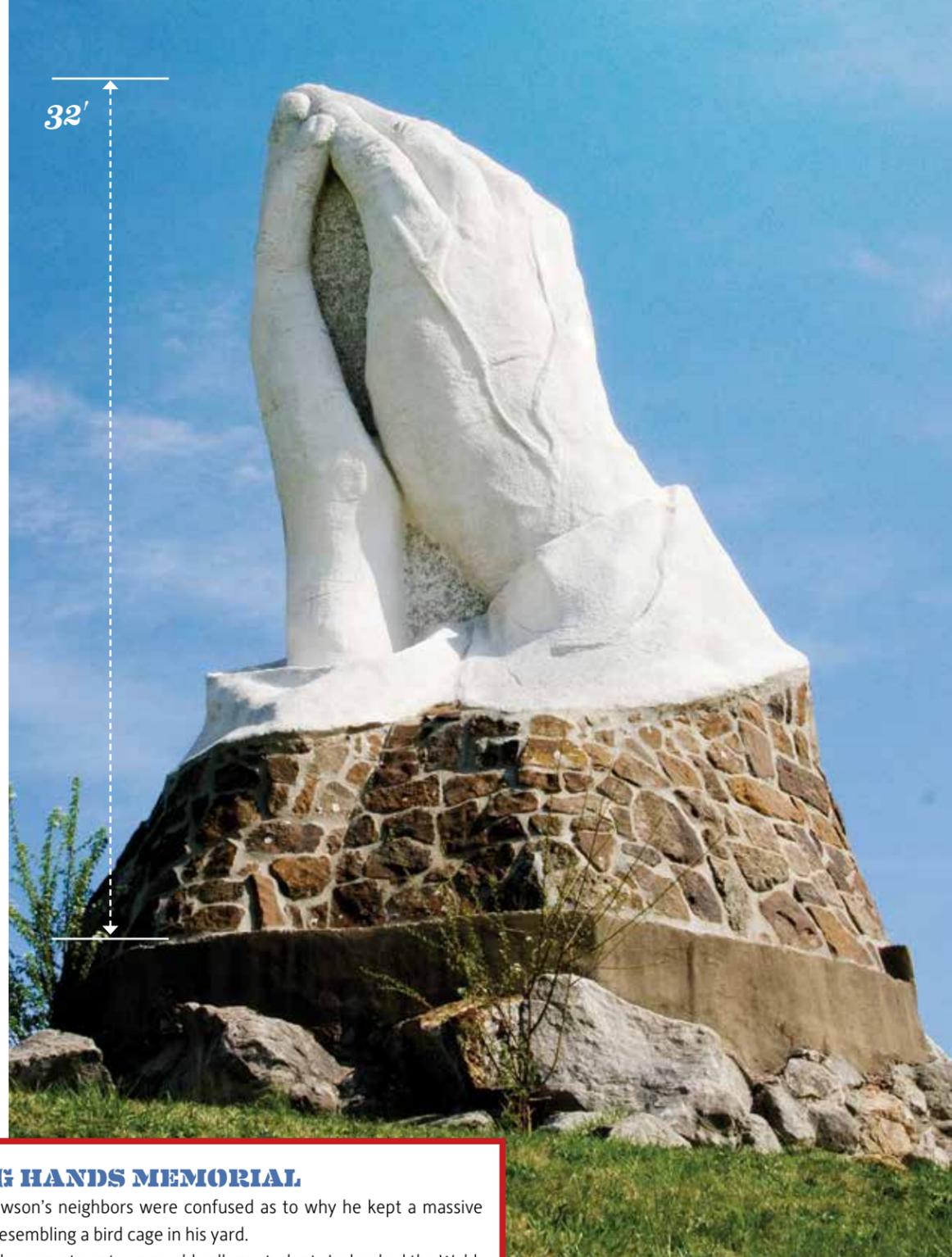
KELLY LUDWIG, JILL VONDY, AND VICIOUS BITS

THE NEEDLE

At the corner of W. Eighth Street and Broadway in Kansas City, there is a needle that would be impossible not to find in a haystack.

This twenty-two-foot sculpture—designed by artist Dan Stevens—commemorates Kansas City's historic garment district, which employed nearly four thousand women throughout the 1940s. To learn more about the city's garment history, and see over three hundred historic garments, visit the Kansas City Garment District Museum across the street from *The Needle* at 801 Broadway. Go to kcgarmntmuseum.org for more information. —Jonas Weir





PRAYING HANDS MEMORIAL

At first, Jack Dawson's neighbors were confused as to why he kept a massive steel structure resembling a bird cage in his yard.

In 1971, when he was a twenty-year-old college student, Jack asked the Webb City Park Board and Historical Society if he could build a sculpture for the city's King Jack Park on Highway 71. They approved, and Jack began building what would become Webb City's Praying Hands Memorial.

The thirty-two-foot-tall, one hundred-ton steel and white stucco memorial was completed three years later and dedicated on April 28, 1974. Created to serve as a reminder of the importance of prayer, the Praying Hands Memorial symbolizes faith, hope, love, and peace. To see the Praying Hands Memorial, travel down the south side of Highway 171 in Webb City near S. Ball Street. —
Elissa Chudwin

COURTESY OF MISSOURI DIVISION OF TOURISM



SHUTTLECOCKS

The massive shuttlecocks at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art are among Kansas City's most recognizable landmarks. These nineteen-foot tall structures made of aluminum and fiberglass-reinforced plastic sit in the Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park and are just one work of art amongst the museum's collection of more than thirty-five thousand pieces.

After being commissioned by the museum in 1992, Swedish artist Claes Oldenburg designed the four massive shuttlecocks that were completed and installed on the museum's property in 1994.

You can visit the shuttlecocks and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, where admission is always free, at 4525 Oak Street. Call 816-751-1278 or go to nelson-atkins.org for more information. —*Jonas Weir*



MIKE KELLNER AND ANNIE RICE

WORLD'S LARGEST PECAN

In 1982, the World's Largest Pecan came into existence at twelve thousand pounds, twelve feet long, and seven feet in diameter. Built by nearby farmers George and Elizabeth James' son, the pecan was modeled after the Starky Harding Giant—a variety of pecan that George James discovered in 1947 while searching for the best pecan to grow in central Missouri. The gigantic pecan spent thirty-one years on the James' farm, east of Brunswick, before it was moved to town in 2013.

Brunswick, which considers itself the pecan capital of Missouri, celebrates with the Annual Pecan Festival every October. The three-day festival includes pecan-themed contests and a parade.

To take your picture next to the monstrous pecan, visit 113 W. Broadway Street in Brunswick. —*Elissa Chudwin*

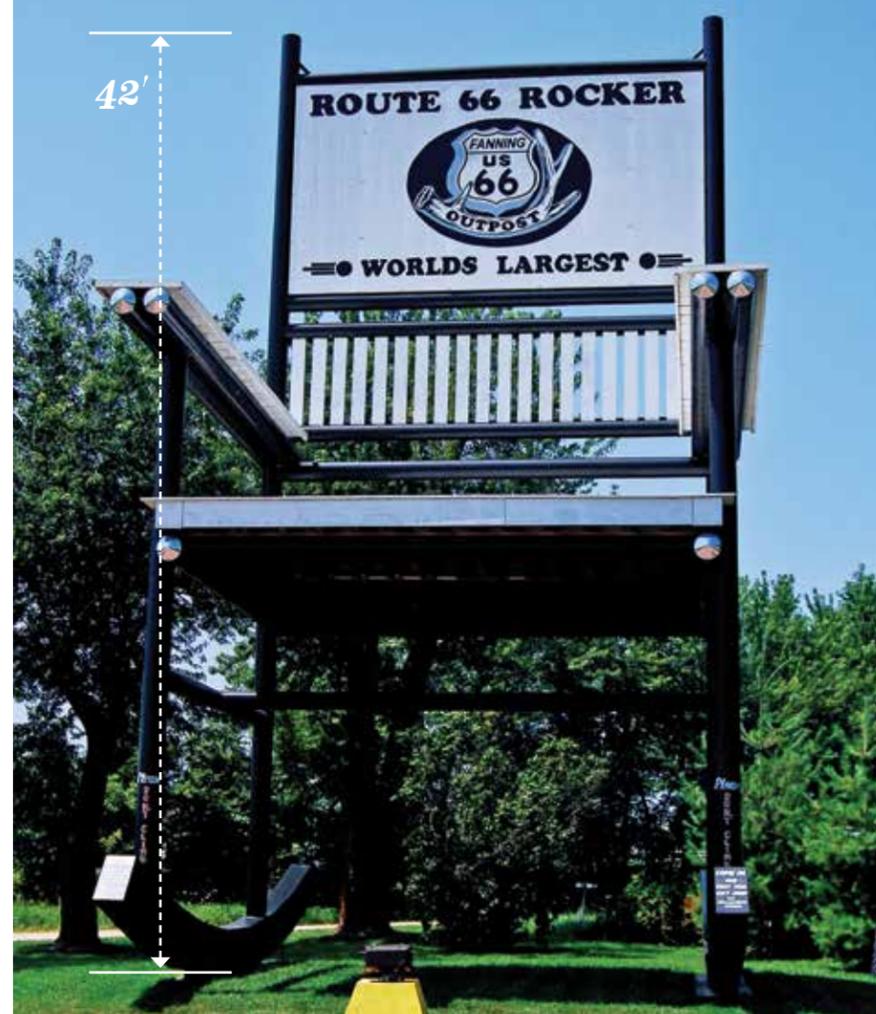
WORLD'S LARGEST ROLL OF TOILET PAPER

If the Jolly Green Giant had to use the bathroom, he'd make his way to Branson.

Ripley's Believe It or Not! at 3326 Route 76 is home to the Guinness World Record-certified largest roll of toilet paper. Manufactured by Charmin in 2011 as a promotional stunt, the giant roll of toilet paper is the equivalent of about 95,000 standard rolls. With a diameter of 9.73 feet, the toilet paper is more than a million square feet all rolled out, which could cover the Great Pyramid of Giza. But this toilet paper roll isn't the only reason to stop at Ripley's.

"We have a collection of the odd and unusual that Robert Ripley collected," says John Dixon, the general manager. "In conjunction with that, we have a lot of odd items from today."

Visit ripleys.com/branson or call 417-337-5300 for information on Ripley's Believe It or Not! and the 450 items in its collection. —Jonas Weir



WORLD'S LARGEST ROCKER

When Fanning 66 Outpost owner Danny Sanazaro wanted to attract business along Route 66, he built the world's largest rocking chair.

More than forty-two feet high, twenty feet wide, and 27,500 pounds, this tourist attraction has gained the attention that he had hoped.

"When we built the store, I knew we needed some kind of roadside attraction for people to stop and look at," he says.

Danny was impressed with a fourteen-foot-tall rocking chair he once saw as a child, so he decided to try and build one himself. With the help of John Bland, who designed the chair, Joe Medwick, who welded and built the roadside attraction, and a few others, they were able to assemble the world's largest rocking chair.

"We figured if we were going to build one, we'd build the biggest one," Danny says.

While construction took six weeks and two cranes to lift the chair into place, receiving certification from the Guinness World Records took six months. In addition to completing paperwork and having three people confirm the chair's dimensions, Danny had to prove the chair could actually rock.

"The world's largest chair is eighty feet tall, but to have it rock is a different story," he says.

Danny was able to record a video of the chair rocking, but he then welded it in place for safety reasons.

Although the chair holds the record right now, Danny expects there to be competition. He left the decorative piece off the top of rocker, so he can add it later if he needs to make the chair even bigger.

"If someone does beat it by a mere foot or so, we have a surprise," he says.

To take your picture near the World's Largest Rocker, travel down Route 66 four miles west of Cuba, Missouri, to 5957 Route ZZ. —Elissa Chudwin

COURTESY OF MISSOURI DIVISION OF TOURISM AND RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT

have a Ball!

Missouri has three giant balls of string, and none actually hold the world record for being the largest.

WESTON'S GIANT BALL OF STRING

Finley Stephens of Weston began making this giant ball in the 1950s, and before he died in 1980, it weighed in at three thousand pounds

and had a circumference of nineteen feet.

Claiming that his ball of string was the world's largest—although it wasn't—Finley displayed the ball of string in a museum that he ran out of his barn in Weston. Today, you can visit the giant ball of string at the Weston Brewing Company at 500 Welt Street. Go to westonirish.com or call 816-640-5235 for more information.—Jonas Weir



BRANSON'S GIANT STRING BALL

J.C. Payne of Plainview, Texas, spent four years making this giant string ball that's more than forty-two feet in circumference.

"I think he had too much time on his hands," says John Dixon, general manager of Ripley's Believe It or Not!, where the ball is now housed.

Legend has it that Payne was inspired by similar balls in Darwin, Minnesota, and Cawker City, Kansas, which Guinness World Records considers the largest. Just like the balls that inspired it, its creator claimed that this ball was the largest. See it for yourself at 3326 Route 76. Visit ripleys.com/branson or call 417-337-5300 for information.—Jonas Weir

ST. JOSEPH'S GIANT BALL OF TWINE

About forty years ago, the Patee House Museum acquired a giant ball of twine from a local entrepreneur who ran a junk store.

"Back then, we didn't have a hell of a lot of stuff," says Gary Chilcote at the Patee House Museum.

C.C. Kelder, who often went by the nickname "I Buy Anything," made the ball himself, and Gary says he had two or three similar balls of twine. However, since the museum acquired the piece, it has also acquired many more significant historical items that focus on the Patee House's origin as the birthplace of the Pony Express.

"When you have a museum that deals with the Pony Express, Jesse James, and the Civil War," Gary says, "a ball of string isn't your highest priority."

Visit the Patee House at 1202 Penn Street in St. Joseph. Go to ponyexpressjessejames.com or call 816-232-8206 for more information on the museum. —Jonas Weir



COURTESY OF RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT, ANNIE RICE AND KELLY LUDWIG