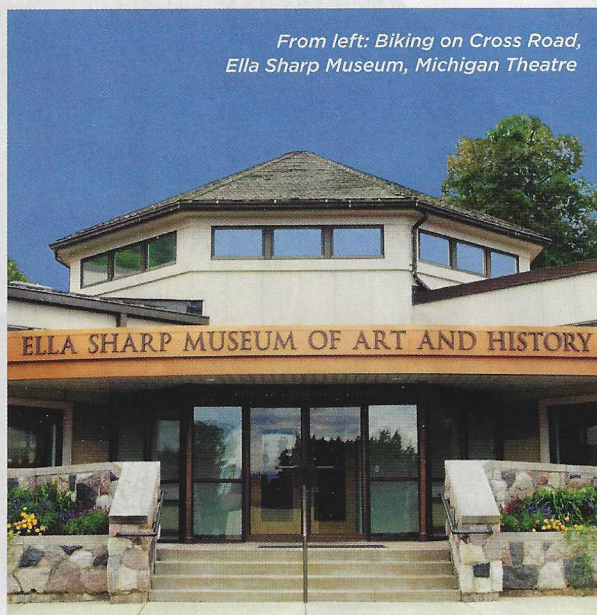
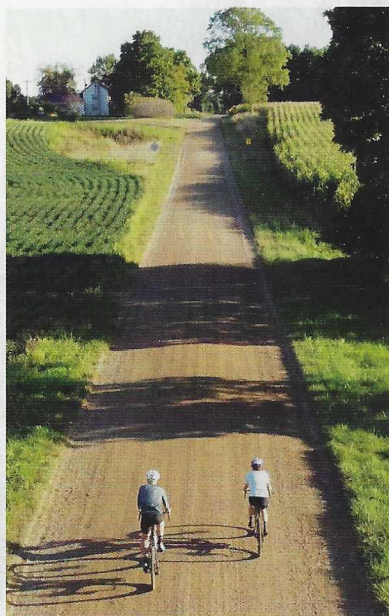




From left: Biking on Cross Road, Ella Sharp Museum, Michigan Theatre



Meeting at the Crossroads

Set a course toward Jackson, where history, recreation, and culture intersect

BY DIANNA STAMPFLER

Sitting at the intersection of Interstate 94 and U.S. Route 127, Jackson has been an important stop between Chicago, Illinois, and Detroit since before expressways existed. Jackson's rich heritage and cultural assets complement its vast outdoor recreational resources. There are 188 lakes in Jackson County, along with the headwaters for four major Michigan rivers, earning the area its moniker, "Land of Falling Waters."

VIBE: Jackson is a friendly Midwestern locale that blends history with community pride and entrepreneurialism. Here, attendees might discover a collection of world-class murals; admire historic architecture; and enjoy parks, trails, and numerous lakes. Experience Jackson Vice President of Marketing and Communications Rachel Buchanan says people residing in the area care deeply about their community and work together to make it a vibrant spot to live and visit.

TRANSPORTATION: Capital Region International Airport in Lansing and Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport in Romulus are 43 and 62 miles away, respectively, from downtown Jackson. Jackson County Airport in Jackson offers service for private planes, and the city's historic Amtrak train station connects passengers to Chicago and Detroit, among other hubs.

HOTELS: The Holiday Inn Jackson NW-Airport Road is just off I-94 and offers a 1,400-square-foot meeting room for up to 120 attendees and prefunction space. A dozen other chain properties operate throughout Jackson County, with some offering event space for smaller groups.

VENUES: The American 1 Credit Union Event Center at the Jackson County Fairgrounds is a 30,000-square-foot facility

that hosts large conventions, trade shows, meetings, and banquets—its Radabaugh Hall and Sisk Hall can be rented separately or combined with seating for up to 800. Designed by architect Albert Kahn and built in 1929, the County Tower Building downtown contains a 4,800-square-foot ballroom that accommodates up to 200 seated. Other venues include Art 634, Jackson District Library's Carnegie branch, The Cascades, Ella Sharp Museum, Jackson College, Michigan Theatre, and Sandhill Crane Vineyards. Nearby, the Lost Railway Museum in Grass Lake and Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn provide memorable settings for gatherings.

RESTAURANTS: One North Kitchen & Bar is known for its made-from-scratch menu, craft cocktails, and casual setting. Private event space is available for up to 300 guests. Grand River Brewery transformed a 1920s bus garage into its flagship taproom in the heart of downtown. Its rustic Barrel Room seats 80 attendees, the War Room accommodates up to 20, and outdoor spaces also are available.

MUST-SEES & -DOS: History buffs can take a trip back in time by touring Armory Arts Village, an artist community building that once housed Michigan's first state prison, constructed in 1839. During the Civil War, Jackson was an integral stop along the Underground Railroad, providing refuge and resources to enslaved people seeking freedom; attendees might explore five Jackson-area sites tied to this history. They also can make a stop at Ye Ole Carriage Shop in nearby Spring Arbor, a car museum highlighting the area's automobile-manufacturing past. The museum is one of 1,200 Michigan spots in the collective MotorCities National Heritage Area and is available by appointment only for group tours. experiencejackson.com **m+e**