

## Summer Activities Abound in Fort Collins

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Column

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Time after time our community is recognized as a great place to live, and part of what makes it so great is our unique downtown and local amenities. The truth is, there is so much to do in Fort Collins, and sometimes I think we take those activities for granted.

This summer, when many of us are feeling the pinch of record gas prices, why not be a tourist in your own town and explore the many activities right here at home?

If you're looking for live music, downtown is the place to be. Nearly every day the Downtown Business Association or the city offers a different outdoor concert featuring local and regional bands. Whether it's the family-friendly Thursday Night Music & More at Civic Center Park, Noontime Notes on Tuesdays at Oak Street Plaza, or Friday Live and Out to Lunch at the Lincoln Center, you're sure to find something you will enjoy. Details for all of these concerts and more can be found at [downtownfortcollins.com](http://downtownfortcollins.com).

If you've never been inside the museum, take an afternoon to learn about our local history and how Fort Collins came to be. The museum is also home to our local history archives, and features changing exhibits throughout the year.

While downtown you can also enjoy our local arts during a gallery walk. Offered on the first Friday of each month, local art galleries open for the evening, creating a self-guided gallery tour.

When was the last time you took a good look at the unique downtown architecture? Stop by the downtown visitors center and pick up a self-guided historic walking tour, which showcases our most famous buildings, and then finish up by riding the historic trolley down Mountain Avenue.

If you're looking for a great family outing, head to City Park where you can swim at the pool, try out the big waterslides, take a spin around the lake in paddleboats and go for a ride on the miniature train.

City Park is also home to the Fort Collins Foxes – our own collegiate summer baseball team. My family and I are big Foxes fans and enjoy going to their games throughout the summer. It's a great way to enjoy America's favorite pastime, without the drive to Denver! Better yet, tickets to games are just \$5.

Of course, Fort Collins' biggest party, New-West-Fest, will return August 15-17. The largest festival in Northern Colorado offers three days of food, crafts, a carnival and seven stages for live entertainment. Bohemian Nights at New-West-Fest will once again bring more than 60 bands to the stages, including national headliners Taj Mahal Trio and Little Feat.

The very next weekend, returned Peace Corp volunteers from across the globe will meet in Fort Collins for a reunion. This unique community event, coordinated by Beet Street and other local organizations, features several international keynote speakers, an international photography exhibit, a concert for peace, and much more. Check out the schedule at [beetstreet.org/Peace-Corps-Reunion](http://beetstreet.org/Peace-Corps-Reunion).

These special events are just a sampling of the things you can enjoy in Fort Collins. There are also farmer's markets to shop at, Lincoln Center performances to enjoy, 28 miles of bike trails to ride, natural areas to explore and restaurants to enjoy.

I'd challenge you to experience something new this summer. Check out a bike from the Fort Collins Bike Library and give our trail system a try, eat at one of the new restaurants around town, or go to a play given by local performers.

In short, I hope you'll take some time to rediscover all that Fort Collins has to offer. Enjoy the rest of your summer!