



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **KISS50 Cadillac Reunion Kicks Off to Commemorate 50th Anniversary of KISS Concert at Cadillac High School**

***KISS-Themed Events Include KISStory Self-Guided Tour, KISS50 Museum Exhibit, KISS  
Experiences and More Leading to Oct. 9-12 Anniversary Weekend***

CADILLAC, Mich. – July 29, 2025 – On Oct. 9, 1975, students at Cadillac High School received the thrill of their lives – a private homecoming concert in their high school gym by the iconic rock band KISS.

Fifty years later, Cadillac celebrates that legendary visit with the [KISS50 Cadillac Reunion](#) – a tribute season of KISS-related events and activities\* starting in August and culminating with a celebratory 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend Oct. 9-12.

“Cadillac has had this magical connection to KISS ever since the band surprised the community with a homecoming concert 50 years ago, and we are celebrating in a big way in 2025 to commemorate that anniversary,” said Cadillac Area Visitors Bureau Executive Director Kathy Morin, whose organization is marketing the region’s KISS-related anniversary events. “We have events and activities for everyone to enjoy now through October – whether you were here 50 years ago and want to reminisce, you are a member of the KISS Army of fans, or you’re just curious about the KISS phenomenon and want to be part of the energy. Our businesses are on board as well creating a variety of KISS-themed experiences.”

#### **Cadillac “KISStory”**

Cadillac’s KISS connection dates to fall 1974 when the Cadillac High School Vikings football team had a rough start to its season after finishing the 1973 season undefeated. When they lost the first two games, the coaches decided to play rock and roll music before practices and games to lighten the mood. Assistant Coach Jim Neff picked the music, choosing a new American rock band formed in 1973 called KISS. The team won the next seven games and captured the conference co-championship. Neff contacted the band to thank them for rallying the team to a winning season. Intrigued by the story, KISS surprised the town by visiting Cadillac High School during homecoming, Oct. 9, 1975. The band joined the football team in the homecoming parade, performed a concert in the high school gym, received a key to the city of Cadillac, and departed via helicopter from Veterans Memorial Stadium.

“Not only were they wild, bold, and loud, their name invoked an old football credo — Keep It Simple Stupid. It was a match that was meant to be,” said former Assistant Football Coach Jim Neff, also a retired teacher and journalist who has worked to keep the legendary KISS visit to Cadillac alive.

For the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October 2015, Cadillac hosted a KISS homecoming event featuring a concert in the high school gym by KISS tribute band Mr. Speed, unveiled an eight-foot, 5,000-pound granite KISS Monument on the school grounds (the only KISS monument in the world), and played a video message from KISS while they were on tour in Australia.

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## **KISS50 Cadillac Reunion Events and Activities**

While the official KISS50 anniversary will be celebrated Oct. 9-12, related events and activities start in August and run through October. Additionally, decorations adorn the area, with KISS-themed banners on light poles and KISS-decorated storefronts downtown along Mitchell Street, and a giant banner welcoming visitors to Cadillac West.

### ***Pre-Anniversary Events and Activities***

Highlights include (with updates and additions added at [kisscadillac.com](http://kisscadillac.com)):

- **KISSStory Self-Guided History Tour** – Ongoing throughout Cadillac. The Cadillac Area Visitors Bureau produced an [updated brochure](#) of a four-stop, self-guided tour retracing steps the band took in 1975 (Veterans Memorial Stadium, Cadillac High School Gym, Old City Hall/ Firehouse and Mitchell Street/homecoming parade route) – each with a commemorative marker featuring photos and an explanation of why the spot is significant. The brochure also explains Cadillac's history with the band and anecdotes of their visit.
- **KISS50 Exhibit** – July 30 through October at the Wexford Historical Society Museum, 127 Beech St. A new exhibit showcases memorabilia related to KISS' visit 50 years ago, including original newspaper and magazine clippings plus firsthand accounts, photos and artifacts from local KISS fans and alumni. Open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. [wexfordcountyhistory.org](http://wexfordcountyhistory.org)
- **KISS Experiences** – August through October, throughout Cadillac. More than 10 businesses will give fans ways to enjoy KISS-related products, such as "Clam Lake Party Every Day Hazy IPA" and "Rock and Roll All Night Session Light" at Clam Lake Beer Co., "Dark & Roll" custom-blend coffee at Owl Eye Coffee Roasters, "Cadillac Rock City" (Rocky Road) Moomers ice cream flavor at The Sweet Shop, and KISS cut-out sugar cookies at Wildflour Bakery, among other KISS-themed products. A map can be picked up locally at many of the featured stops (also look for Caddy Bear's "KISS50 Cadillac Reunion Tour Stop" sign in windows of participating businesses) and also [available online](#) and updated with new participating businesses. Fans can even stay in a [KISS-themed cabin](#) and add a KISS-themed experience at [Mackinaw Timbers Cabins](#) starting in August. [kisscadillac.com/kisstory](http://kisscadillac.com/kisstory)
- **KISS Photo Opps** – August through October, throughout Cadillac. Businesses are "KISS-ifying" their properties with everything from KISS band cut-outs, to banners, to decorated storefronts. Check back to [kisscadillac.com/kisstory](http://kisscadillac.com/kisstory) for updated listings.

### ***KISS50 Cadillac Reunion Anniversary Weekend (Oct. 9-12)***

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary culminates with a four-day weekend featuring marquee events organized by the Cadillac Area Visitors Bureau and Cadillac Area Public Schools. More details will be released closer to the anniversary weekend. Events confirmed to date include:

- **Cadillac Vikings Football Game and Tailgate followed by KISS-themed Drone Show** – Oct. 10, Veterans Memorial Stadium overlooking Lake Cadillac. KISS fans can cheer on the Vikings, the reason behind Cadillac's KISS connection, at the stadium where the band departed via helicopter Oct. 9, 1975. KISS experiences are being planned in conjunction with the football game.
- **KISS50 5K** – Oct. 11. Starts at the Cadillac Commons along the Lake Cadillac shoreline.
- **Cadillac KISS50 Rockumentary** – Oct. 11 with viewings at Cadillac High School (times TBD). Produced by the Cadillac Area Visitors Bureau, this film reflects on the 50-year legacy, featuring interviews with Jim Neff and others who experienced the KISS visit firsthand.

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- **Mr. Speed KISS tribute concert** – Oct. 11 at The Venue, 902 W 13th St. This highly acclaimed KISS tribute band has been performing for more than 30 years and will play all the favorite hits – and in full costume. Tickets are on sale at \$20 apiece.  
[thevenueeccadillac.com/event-details/mr-speed-kiss-50-cadillac-reunion](http://thevenueeccadillac.com/event-details/mr-speed-kiss-50-cadillac-reunion)
- **Other experiences** – Additional anniversary weekend events and activities include exclusive exhibits and presentations in the Wexford County Museum, alumni reunions, a KISS golf outing, KISS Glow Skate at The Wex Ice Arena, and KISS Bingo at MI Mezcal.

Anniversary-related events and information can be found at [kisscadillac.com](http://kisscadillac.com), with more experiences added as confirmed.

Sponsorship opportunities also are available related to KISS50 Cadillac anniversary events, ranging from \$250 to \$5,000-plus levels, as well as in-kind donations. Contact [Marci@CadillacMichigan.com](mailto:Marci@CadillacMichigan.com) for more information.

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#### **About the Cadillac Area Visitors Bureau (CAVB)**

*The Cadillac Area Visitors Bureau partners with lodging properties to promote the Cadillac area as a visitor destination. Its mission is to develop and maintain the community in sustainable ways for both tourists and residents to enjoy – ultimately to encourage overnight stays and create a positive visitor experience. The CAVB operates as a 501C6 under Michigan Public Act 59, under the jurisdiction of MEDC/Travel Michigan. Through PA59, the CAVB collects an assessment from visitors of 5 percent through hotel fees from 16 lodging properties within the district. Visit [CadillacMichigan.com](http://CadillacMichigan.com) and on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).*

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