

Daily Chronicle

Interactive map launched for National Tourism Week

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The DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau recently launched a new interactive map marketing tool to kick off National Tourism Week, which was May 2 through 10. The new iMap will benefit visitors and the communities that we promote in DeKalb County.

More than 500 attractions are featured on the map, which is an added convenience to visitors and benefits all our communities. The link is on the home page at www.dekalbcountycvb.com. There is an interactive guide that visitors can view as well.

The custom iMap allows visitors to access local attractions more easily online with an engaging and interactive experience. In addition, it provides expanded functionality that traditional maps cannot offer such as pop-up point of interest highlights complete with images, video details and links.

Interactive maps allow visitors to see locations and plan itineraries online or through their mobile devices. They just hit the “Share” button to invite friends or family to both view, edit and share itineraries for their visit. This saves everyone time and is a big convenience for leisure, business meeting and event planners.

Each point of interest can be added to a personal itinerary that can be saved, printed and shared. The iMap even shows the distances between stops so visitors know just how much time it takes to get from place to place. It even provides driving directions. This is a big advantage to our community partners as suburban visitors often think communities or attractions are much farther apart than they really are.

The iMap key features categories and sub-categories to make it easy to find what you’re looking for.

We’ve already had more than 1,900 visitors view the new iMap since it was launched.

Tourism revenues continue to grow

In 2013, visitor spending generated \$81.86 million for the state. We have seen the revenue generated from visitor spending for DeKalb County grow for the past five years in a row. The Illinois Office of Tourism will announce the revenue generated from visitor spending for 2014 in July.

Visitor spending generated \$5.4 million in state tax receipts and \$1.2 million in local tax receipts

in 2013.

Tourism also brings economic benefits to DeKalb County by providing jobs to individuals at all levels of education in both full- and part-time positions. Not only are jobs provided, but these are jobs that cannot be outsourced.

The rate of return is \$1 for each \$7 spent on Illinois tourism. The average amount of money spent by the everyday Illinois family is about \$110 per person per day, and average families save about \$1,300 in taxes each year because of Illinois tourism.

This year there has been a dramatic increase in the sales tax revenue generated by local hotels due in part to the addition of the Hampton Inn and an increase in the number of groups and events hosted in DeKalb County. Hotels are thriving and occupancy is up, which in turn means that overall the local economy is thriving.

It's important to remember that this money being generated goes back to local businesses to ensure economic vitality and quality of life.

Please remember that DeKalb County events should be submitted to our website so we can update our Calendar of Events, our partner sites and the EnjoyIllinois.com website. Go to www.dekalbcountycvb.com and click on "Submit Events."

Until next time, safe travels.

- Debbie Armstrong is executive director of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

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