

DeKalb to fund \$25,000 sponsorship of IHSA state title football games at Huskie Stadium

Published: Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2015 12:12 a.m. CST

DeKALB – The city will contribute \$25,000 to the DeKalb County Community Foundation for the Illinois High School Association’s state football championships, which will take place Nov. 27 and 28 at Northern Illinois University’s Huskie Stadium.

The IHSA title games are being held in DeKalb during odd-numbered years through 2021. This is the second time the city has hosted the games. In 2013, the city also contributed \$25,000. The city’s sponsorship was built into the fiscal 2015 and fiscal 2016 budget, Jennifer Diedrich, DeKalb’s economic development coordinator said.

“We have allocated \$12,500 each year since Destination DeKalb won its bid,” she said.

During IHSA weekend, 16 prep teams will compete in 8 football games in Huskie Stadium. The games are projected to draw a big crowd – in 2013, about 30,000 people attended them.

The boost in visitors generated about \$1 million for the county’s economy from people booking hotels, buying gas and eating at local restaurants, Debbie Armstrong, executive director of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau said.

The event also is a good opportunity to generate publicity for DeKalb.

“We got approximately \$200,000 worth of positive publicity because we hosted this event,” Armstrong said. “It’s one of the premiere IHSA events in the state. ... You can’t buy publicity like that.”

Last month, DeKalb County board members gave verbal support of the tournament, but declined to donate funding, [citing budget concerns](#).

Bob Snow, 4th Ward Alderman, said he thought the payout was worth the investment.

“I have to believe the return-on-investment greatly exceeds \$25,000,” Snow said.

The event is a good for a burst of activity, but also has potential for long-term benefit, Mayor John Rey said.

“It showcases NIU’s athletic facilities for potential future students,” Rey sad. “It’s delightful to see [visiting teams] eyes light up when they see the Chessick practice facilities. ... It’s a

significant recruiting tool for the university.”

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