

DCCVB VIEW: Measuring the economic impact of IHSA Destination DeKalb

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One of the biggest events the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau was involved with last year was the IHSA state football championships, held Thanksgiving weekend at Huskie Stadium.

While we can only estimate the impact it had on the local economy, we can share some of the hard numbers that go into this total.

A huge thank-you goes out to the IHSA Destination DeKalb committee, sponsors and volunteers who stepped up to support the event. Everyone got on board and worked together to ensure we could showcase DeKalb County as a great visitor destination that can handle big tourism events with style.

Here's what we know for sure:

- At least 465 hotel room nights were booked in DeKalb and Sycamore
- 50 hotel room nights were booked at Rochelle hotels
- 22,319 tickets sold
- 262 million media impressions with an ad value equivalence of \$2.5 million
- SI.com (Sports Illustrated coverage) and Chicago area network television
- Local restaurants reported a 35 to 50 percent increase in sales
- Booked 14 private caterings
- Several local restaurants booked private fan parties
- Two teams ordered Thanksgiving dinners to be delivered to local hotels
- Gas stations reported an increase in sales
- The DeKalb Oasis estimated business for food and gas sales up 40 to 50 percent
- More than 200 community volunteers worked as hospitality/tourism ambassadors
- Some retail stores and businesses in downtown DeKalb reported record sales

We feel confident that the economic impact from the weekend was at least \$800,000 based on the data we gathered and estimates that the Illinois Office of Tourism has provided to help gauge the economic impact of sporting events. That includes indirect and direct spending on hotels, food, gas, facility rental, tent suppliers, catering and other services provided by people taking part in or attending the event.

The Illinois Office of Tourism's research provides us an average \$109 of additional spending for each guest that books a hotel room night.

For those who don't spend the night, the average spending impact is \$75 per person per day.

The weekend proved to be a powerful economic engine that fueled local and regional businesses and provided invaluable publicity and visibility for DeKalb County and Northern Illinois University. It also provided exposure to more than 22,000 visitors who might come back to DeKalb County now that they've seen what we have to offer. It helps NIU with student recruitment and the impact of the event has other residual benefits for hosting other events and meetings. The media coverage we got for hosting the event is priceless.

2016 Visitor Guides here

We have already shipped out more than 7,500 guides. Approximately 3,000 went to CTM distribution, a tourism marketing company contracted to help attract visitors to DeKalb County. They display our guides, rack cards and brochures in their visitor kiosks throughout the Chicago area, Wisconsin and the Quad Cities.

The bureau has a paid partnership with several high traffic oasis sites as well. Guides are available at the following oasis kiosks: Belvidere, DeKalb, Des Plaines and Hinsdale. Seven Tourist Information Centers affiliated with the Illinois Office of Tourism are stocked with our new guides.

DeKalb County municipality partners, hotels, NIU and the Convocation Center have all been given guides for distribution to promote the area.

We are asking all local attractions and other hospitality/tourism partners to call 815-756-1336 to make arrangements to stop by the DCCVB office to pick up 2016 guides for distribution. Visit dekalbcountycvb.com to view the online version or download a PDF of the guide.

We don't have the ability to list all the events that could attract visitors in the guide as we have a limited amount of space. We do, however, try to list as many DeKalb County events as possible online at www.dekalbcountycvb.com. Dates for events are always subject to change. We encourage everyone to check the website calendar of events when planning a visit.

Until next time, safe travels.

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

