

# DCCVB View: Activities are ramping up in DeKalb County

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Published: Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016 5:30 a.m. CST

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Has cabin fever got you looking for something to do? Check our calendar of events at [dekalbcountycvb.com](http://dekalbcountycvb.com). I'm confident it will be the last time you think there's nothing to do in DeKalb County.

This month included entertainment by Monster Trucks, a Groundhog Gala, a POLARpalooza, Christian and Celtic musicians, nationally acclaimed comedians and the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra. While you're online, check out the new 2016 interactive visitor guide, too. Make it a point to explore more right here at home this year. Local spending keeps your friends and neighbors in business. For every \$100 spent locally, \$68 goes back into the local economy.

March 11 and 12 will be a sold-out hotel weekend as the Illinois Elementary School Association state wrestling championships return to the Northern Illinois University Convocation Center. Approximately 5,000 visitors will be here. More than 450 hotel room nights will be booked for teams and fans. IESA Director Steve Endsley, his team of officials and more than 200 volunteers from the DeKalb High School Wrestling Club will host the event. Tickets can be purchased at the Convocation box office.

We've also been working with Melissa Foley, the MS: Tour de Farms bike ride event coordinator. More than 300 rooms are blocked for their event, which is June 24 to 25. This year marks the 35th anniversary of the ride. Our office will provide the more than 2,000 riders with 35 facts or stops in DeKalb County.

We are reaching out to running and biking clubs, helping to recruit volunteers and local vendors to take part in this event that raises money for those with multiple sclerosis. To get details on volunteering or riding, visit [www.nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/ILD](http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/ILD).

Combined, these two events will book 750 hotel room nights. They will bring more than 7,000 visitors to DeKalb County. It's not only hotels that benefit when we help bring these groups and events to our area. Restaurants, retail shops, grocery stores and gas stations are impacted, as well. Every visitor booking a hotel room will spend an average of \$75 a night over and above the cost of hotel lodging.

Tourism is an economic engine that our communities and hospitality partners need to fuel. Not all of our communities are investing as stakeholders with the DeKalb County CVB. There also is a big discrepancy in the amounts that are being invested. Our board is in the process of addressing these issues as we move forward with a new strategic plan.

Hotel sales tax is how CVB offices are funded so filling them has to be one of our main priorities. The DCCVB has a consistent track record of growing the dollars that are generated from visitor spending. We have increased that dollar amount for six consecutive years. To continue to be successful, we need every community to invest as stakeholders. Many of our communities that don't have hotels have great attractions and events that we promote on a daily basis.

For every \$1 invested the return is estimated to be \$7. The money that visitor spending and tourism generates saves the average Illinois household about \$1,300 in taxes each year.

What clubs or organizations do you belong to that host annual or quarterly conferences or events? Think about suggesting DeKalb County. There are 619 hotel rooms in DeKalb and Sycamore. The area is a perfect fit for small to mid-size meetings. The DCCVB can help with site selection, book hotel rooms, provide local resources, suggest after-hours fun and make sure your event is a success. Just give us a call at 815-756-1336.

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

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