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Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau closing office in permanent shift to remote work

The Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) celebrated the four-year anniversary of their Manteno location in the middle of a world-wide pandemic. Today, Executive Director Staci Wilken is hard at work preparing for a permanent shift to a virtual office that officially starts October 1, 2020.

Like most Illinoisans, March 16, 2020, triggered the start of remote working for the CVB. At that time, two full-time and two part-time employees locked the doors on their 4,000-sq.ft. office to shelter in place as mandated by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker. With the multiple extensions of the stay-at-home order and the very public impact to the CVB's revenue over the past year, the organization has proactively shifted into preservation mode.

"Our board has supported Staci every step of the way, but unfortunately with the uncertainty ahead we have been tasked with making some tough decisions for the organization," Mayor Chasity Wells-Armstrong, City of Kankakee representative and CVB Board President stated. Since March, Wilken has taken steps to permanently lay off three of its four team members and worked in partnership with landlord and Municipal Bank President Cathy Boicken to take drastic next steps for the organization.

"The loss of employees, and now the visitor center, breaks my heart. Like so many in the travel and tourism industry, my team devoted 40+ hours a week to promoting Kankakee County as a destination," Wilken stated. "We are also grateful for Cathy's partnership and her class throughout this unpredicted transition."

It's no secret that the past 18 months have been an uphill climb for the CVB with ongoing funding concerns, the relocation of the Chicago Bears Training Camp to their corporate headquarters and most recently, the dissolution of Zagster and loss of the Bike 609 bike share, but that isn't slowing Wilken down. "I know the community is rooting for us and despite a few hurdles, the reasons to safely visit Kankakee County have not changed. My job is to continue telling our story and like so many, I can reinvent where I do that."

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The Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. (KCCVB) was founded in 1983 as a 501 (c) 6 not-for-profit organization whose mission is to market and develop branded Kankakee County destination experiences to enhance community economic growth and quality of life. For more information, please contact them by phone at 815-935-7390, by email at info@kccvb.com or by mail at PO Box 488, Manteno, IL 60950.