



2023-2024 Mid-Year Review

Prepared By :

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Executive Director

MISSION:

TO MARKET AND
DEVELOP BRANDED
KANKAKEE COUNTY
DESTINATION
EXPERIENCES TO
ENHANCE COMMUNITY
ECONOMIC GROWTH
AND QUALITY OF LIFE.



#VISITKANKAKEECOUNTY

Economic Impact

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

**VISITOR EXPENDITURES ALLOWED EACH HOUSEHOLD TO
SAVE \$1263 IN TAXES THIS YEAR!**

\$171.6 MILLION

IN TOTAL VISITOR SPENDING, UP FROM \$146.1 MILLION IN 21/22

\$6.6 MILLION

IN DIRECT LOCAL TAX REVENUE, UP FROM \$5.6 MILLION IN 21/22

1,229 JOBS

DIRECTLY SUPPORTED BY TOURISM/HOSPITALITY, UP FROM 1,107 IN 21/22

Source: Tourism Economics



Marketing Campaigns



“There’s a Seat for You in Kankakee County”

Rideshare + Digital Campaign May - July, 2023

5 rideshare vehicles, custom wrapped with photos highlighting KaCo activities, shared that there is a "seat for you in Kankakee County." These vehicles traveled over 30,000 miles, with over 4.2 million impressions, throughout the greater Chicago area during the 3-month campaign.

These 5 vehicles also “swarmed” 3 high-profile events for 6 hours:

- June 3, 2023: Taylor Swift Concert at Soldier Field
- July 8, 2023: Chicago White Sox/St. Louis Cardinals game at Guaranteed Rate Field
- July 22, 2023: Chicago Cubs/St. Louis Cardinals game at Wrigley Field

Facebook, Instagram and Google Display Ads:

- Generated over 32,000 clicks to our website
- Generated over 3 Million impressions



Summer & Fall 2023 Digital Campaign

Designed to drive visitors to view and request the spring-launched Visitor Guide

May 16 - September 30, 2023



- Generated over 9,900 clicks
- Generated 7,252 views on "Request Our Guide" website page
 - 151 print requests submitted
 - This page is running #5 in the top 10 pages

Find new adventures in **Kankakee County.**

From haybale mazes to farm-to-table meals under the stars, memories are waiting for you in Kankakee County.

VisitKankakeeCounty.com

AAA Living fall

A weekend of winter fun awaits in **Kankakee County.**

Winter Wander Downtown Kankakee
Miracle on 8th Kankakee County Museum
Holiday Light Stroll Riverview Historic District
Kankakee Christmas Parade Downtown Kankakee
Sounds of the Season Olivet Nazarene University

All happening the weekend of **December 8-10**

Visit KANKAKEE COUNTY
with illinois

VisitKankakeeCounty.com

AAA Living winter

Adventures await you every season in **Kankakee County.**

Visit KANKAKEE COUNTY
with illinois

VisitKankakeeCounty.com

Midwest Living & Enjoy Illinois fall

discover fun.

discover **Kankakee County**

Visit KANKAKEE COUNTY
with illinois
VisitKankakeeCounty.com

Sports Destination Marketing

Media Placements

#VISITKANKAKEECOUNTY

WGN 15-WEEK RADIO CAMPAIGN + WGN SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Nielsen's October 2023 Survey, the 15-week campaign on WGN Radio reached 550,900 Adults (18+) an average of 8.3 times each! This campaign generated **4,596,000 gross impressions** at a low \$6.92 cost-per-thousand.

Sweepstakes Recap:

Overnight Stay + Merchant Street MusicFest + Kayaking + Kankakee County fun adventure

- 585 entries
- 183 "Get the Scoop" opt-ins for monthly e-newsletter

Overnight stay + Friendsgiving On the Farm + Kankakee County Fun

- 661 entries
- 204 "Get the Scoop" opt-ins for monthly e-newsletter



LOCAVORE. FARM TO FARM TABLE. 4-SEASON VIDEO SERIES + MARKETING CAMPAIGN



The first video was released early November, along with a social and digital marketing campaign urging visitors to “Come for Locavore, Stay for Everything Else!”

Email Blast: 52,083 recipients, 8,646 opens, 875 clicks

Targeted Display Ads: 81,450 impressions, .60% CTR (industry avg is .09%)

YouTube video completion rate: 74.43% (industry avg is 50%)

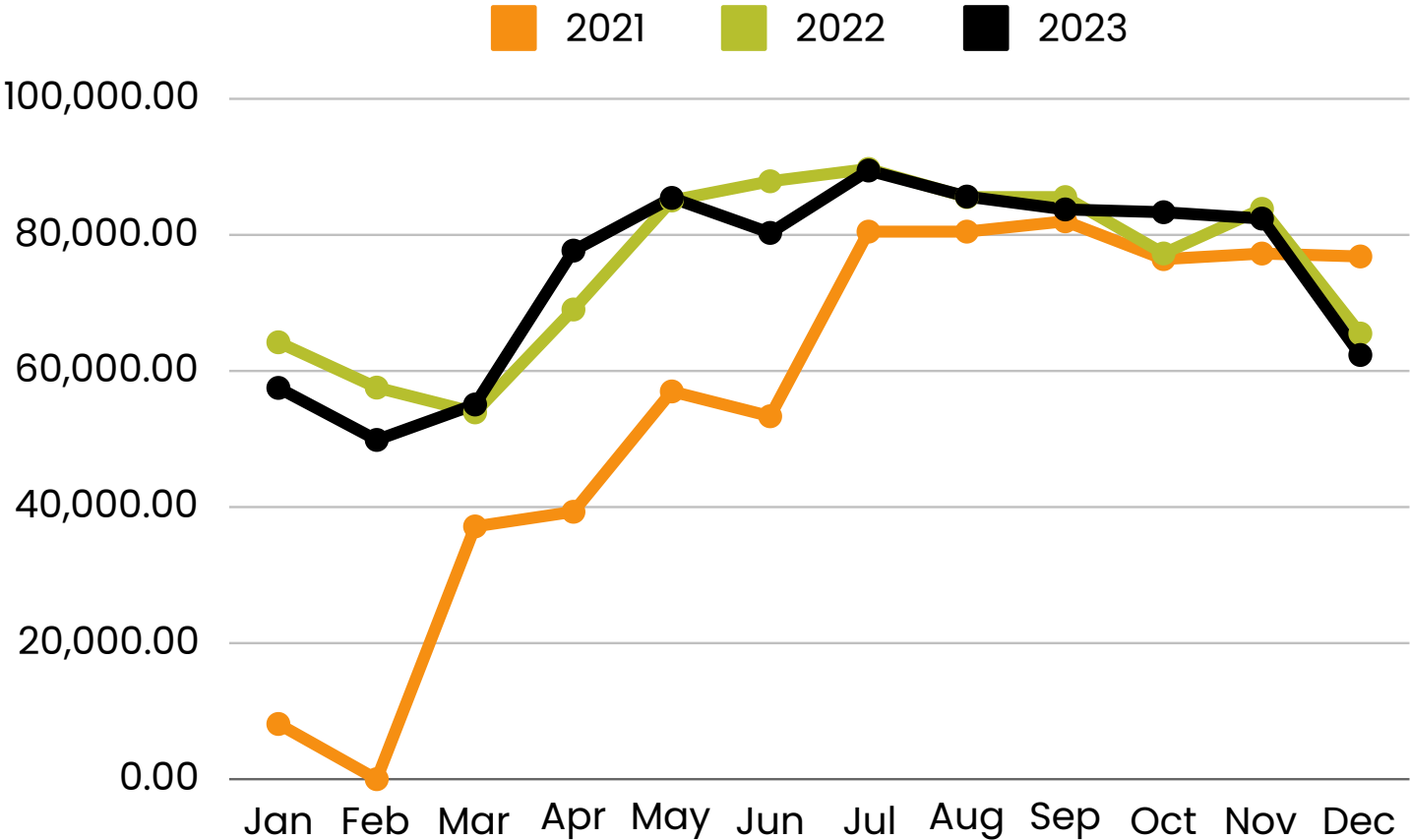
Geo-fencing: 25,730 impressions, .13% click-through rate (HIGH for geo-fencing!)

MARKETING: all the good stuff

- Media placements including Milner Media reaching 38,000 listeners over 13 weeks.
- Coordinated two-day Merchant Street MusicFest and Camping itinerary highlighting outdoor music and activities throughout Kankakee County.
- Coordinated three-day/two-night Locavore Farm, Manteno & Bourbonnais itinerary highlighting agritourism, outdoor music, golf, dining, craft beer and more.
- Coordinated three-day/two-night winter holiday weekend itinerary highlighting Miracle on 8th, Winter Wander, Historic Riverview's holiday light walk, Olivet Nazarene University's Sounds of the Season and other seasonal activities.
- Supported nominations for the Illinois Made Makers program for Connect Roasters, Cranky Mike's, Electric Lady Lounge and Sweet Darren's, and **welcomed Cranky Mike's Popcorn to the Illinois Made Class of 2023!**
- Produced CTAP Grant Project videos highlighting the nine projects awarded funding in the first grant cycle including: Kankakee Riverfront Society, Village of Bourbonnais, Locavore Farm, Adventure Commons, Deer Ridge Barn, Kankakee County Museum & the Community Arts Council of Kankakee County, Connect Roasters, Knack Brewing & Fermentations and CIRKA.
- Executed weekly social media strategy including Tour Tuesdays, List of 6, Upcoming Events, Boots on the Ground & relevant posts.
- Implemented monthly newsletter and blog reaching 7,907 subscribers each month.
- Procured print and digital media placements in Sports Destination Marketing, THRIVE magazine, KVSO annual program, AAA (September/October), Midwest Living (Fall 2023), AAA (November/December), Kankakee Holiday Tournament, Enjoy Illinois (Fall/Winter).
- Nearly 13,000 Visitor Guides are in circulation via individual requests, event distribution, hotel distribution, community partner distribution and Illinois Travel Centers.
- Over 2,600 Visitor Guides were distributed at Tourist Information Centers throughout MI, IN and WI.



Hotel Revenue





#VISITKANKAKEECOUNTY

More Great Things!



- Created **Tourism Improvement District steering committee** and worked with Civitas Advisors to implement feasibility study.
- Executed second round of the **CTAP Grant** awarding another ten organizations funding for tourism related projects, bringing the total to over \$900,000 in grant awards.
- Hosted **2-Day Illinois Destinations Association Fall meeting** for 80+ tourism professionals.
- Hosted Deputy Direct Daniel Thomas and over thirty community stakeholders, elected officials, small business owners and Illinois Made Makers at the B. Harley Bradley House for a **Listening Tour Roundtable Discussion**.
- **Public speaking** including TRIAD meeting, ConvergeU, Kiwanis, State of the County, Deputy Director Daniel Thomas' Listening Tour.
- **Participated as a vendor at community events** including Kankakee Farmers' Market, Cobb Park Criterium, Kankakee Friday Night Concert Series, Manteno's Intrinsic Fire Show & Car Show, Manteno's Rockin' on the Square, Acting Out Theatre Association's Cinderella, National Night Out, Concerts in the Park, Momence Glad Fest, Manteno's Ladies Night Out, Winter Wander.
- **Provided In-Kind sponsorships** for Mainstreet Momence's Bordertown Hauntings, River Valley Special Recreation Mouse Race Sponsorship, Economic Alliance of Kankakee County's basket for Gotion Press Event, Ladies Night out in Manteno, National Night Out, Acting Out Theatre Association, Bourbonnais Chocolate Tour. Arthritis Foundation Jingle Bell Run.



THE WORK OF A DESTINATION ORGANIZATION

Destination promotion is a catalyst for community vitality, driving what is needed for a community to become that destination where people want to visit, live, work and play. And it is how a destination organization achieves its purpose to help the community achieve its goals by leveraging the power of destination promotion. And it is why that visit doesn't happen without us.

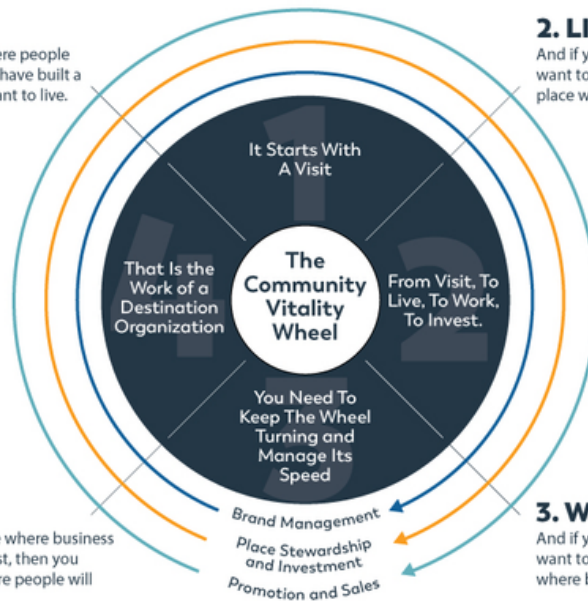
- Jack Johnson, Chief Advocacy Officer, Destinations International

1. VISIT

If you built a place where people want to visit, then you have built a place where people want to live.

2. LIVE

And if you built a place where people want to live, then you have built a place where people want to work.



4. INVEST

And if you built a place where business and residents will invest, then you have built a place where people will want to visit.

3. WORK

And if you built a place where people want to work, then you have built a place where business and residents will invest.

Out & About



Attended community events including:

- Acting Out Theatre's Cinderella
- Merchant Street MusicFest
- Bourbonnais Food Truck Festival
- Wright In Kankakee Community Leaders meeting
- MainStay Suites Ribbon Cutting
- Downtown Kankakee Sunset Stroll
- Voices of the Past Cemetery Walk
- United Way Leadership Society reception
- Deer Ridge Barn ribbon cutting
- WIN luncheons
- United Way Annual Celebration
- Under the Moon retreat
- Kankakee Estival Festival
- Majestic Ribbon Cutting
- State of the County luncheon
- French Historical Society's Fleur-Di-Les Celebration Dinner
- Economic Alliance of Kankakee County's board meetings
- Uplifted Bistro ribbon cutting
- Kankakee Chamber of Commerce Gala
- Kankakee County Museum's Gallery of Trees Preview Party
- Manteno Chamber of Commerce's Holiday Party
- Vintage Purse Museum site visit
- Kankakee Valley Park District Tree Lighting
- Downtown Kankakee Winter Wander



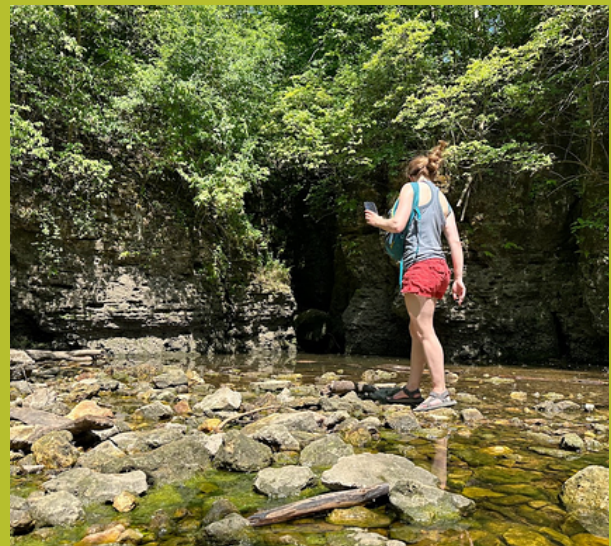
#VISITKANKAKEECOUNTY

Our Organization

- Executed FY 2023-2024 LTCB Grant.
- Advocacy for LTCB funding at state level and with local legislators.
- Executing conservative budget.
- Completed external audit.
- Attended conferences including Upper Midwest Convention & Visitors Bureau (UMCVB), Illinois Destinations Association fall conference; Converge Conference, Experience Lab.
- Committee participation including Illinois Destinations Association legislative, marketing and sports committees, Riverside Heart Ball planning committee, Kankakee River Regatta Committee, Hotel Lodging Association, United Way of Kankakee County Board of Directors, Kankakee Development Corporation Board of Directors, Kankakee Development Corporation marketing committee.
- Continuing education through Destinations International webinars, Converge U cohort, Kankakee Chamber of Commerce's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion trainings.
- Hosted annual community lunch at the Majestic to provide overview of summer marketing campaigns, introduce new 4-season Locavore series and annual recap.
- Hosted the Manteno Oktoberfest Business After Hours for the Manteno Chamber of Commerce business community.
- Hosted the media, board members, county and municipal partners during a presentation and re-brand announcement during the fall Illinois Destinations Association meeting.
- Invited board members and municipal partners to attend an evening social event at Locavore Farm during the Illinois Destinations Association meeting.
- Amended and approved team member handbook revision to reflect Paid Leave for All ACT in November 2023.
- Applied for Illinois DCEO Marketing Partnership Grant for expanded Spring/Summer campaign.
- Hosted holiday event & 40th anniversary for board members, county and municipal partners, hoteliers and KaCo | The Local Exchange makers.

Financial Sponsorships

- NAACP Dinner
- Bourbonnais Food Truck Fest
- Bourbonnais Township Park District's A Night in Sleepy Hollow
- Harbor House Laugh for a Cause
- Manteno Historical Society membership & dinner
- Still I Rise School Supply Giveaway
- Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra concert program support
- Kankakee Estival Festival
- E-5 Productions
- Mexican Independence Day event
- Manteno Oktoberfest Business After Hours
- Kankakee Holiday Tournament
- Bradley Christmas Parade
- Christmas in Manteno



Teamwork Makes the Dreamwork

We are proud of what we've accomplished these past 6 months. But fasten your seatbelts, there is a LOT more rolling out in the coming months! Be on the lookout for:

- The next chapters in the 4-season Agritourism + Locavore Farm Video Series and accompanying marketing campaign.
- A Craft Beverage Trail (HOW COOL!)
- Spring & Summer adventure marketing campaign.
- More itineraries.
- A Partner Portal on our website to better serve YOU!
- Bi-monthly stakeholder report.
- Summer internship program.
- Continued website SEO and content enhancement.



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