Blackhawk Waterways Convention & Visitor's Bureau
Promoting Tourism in Carroll, Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties
Diane Bausman, Executive Director
Report for Month of January 2009

Meetings Attended:

- Jan 7th – Whiteside County Barn Tour meeting
- Jan 12th – ICCVB executive board conference call.
- Jan 12th – Dixon Tourism meeting
- Jan 13th – Carroll County Hotel/Motel meeting
- Jan 15th – ICCVB executive board conference call
- Jan 20th – Tri-State Tourism conference planning mtg.
- Jan 22nd – Rock Falls Tourism meeting
- Jan 27th – BWCVB Board meeting
- Jan. 28th – Rochelle TVA meeting
- Jan. 28th – MVPA planning meeting
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Web Site Update:

- Our redesigned website (bwcvb.com) is now up and running and we are very pleased with the many new features such as the Google maps component and the edition of a meetings and convention category to name a few. Please check it out.
- We've seen an increase in visits of 52% since November and feel this is due to the new website and our Adword campaign. Visits increased 130% compared to last year and Adwords accounted for a large majority of those visits. During December the top Adwords that garnered the most clicks were: Illinois Christmas tree farms, Illinois Bed & Breakfast, Illinois getaways, and Illinois antiques. The average time spent on our site from these Adwords was 2.45 minutes. We added 'Valentine's Day 2009' on Dec. 29th and since then we have received 1,128 visits from that phrase with an average of 2.63 pages per visit. To look at it another way...we had more visits from mid-December to mid-January than in the month of June (a traditionally high traffic time) last year with the old site.
- Our Jan. e-newsletter went out the first week of the month to the 997 people who have subscribed via our website and it included a winter getaway/Valentines package promotion along with the Jan-Feb calendar of events for the region.
- The 2009 Visitor Guide is now available as a downloadable pdf on our website.

Bulk Mailing Update:

- We sent out 142 packets of information during December and have sent out 166 so far in January.
- We sent out 55 Group Tour packets to tour operators & booking agents during December & January.

Public Relations:

- Dec. 29th – WIXN radio show.
- We had an information booth at the Quad Cities Vacation Show Jan 16-18 and distributed approx. 500 packets of information.

Advertising Updates:

- During December we received 80 targeted requests for information from our ad on **travelguidesfree.com** and we have received 265 so far in January.
- The 2009 edition of the Illinois Travel Guide has been delivered and we have an ad as part of the Northern Illinois page. We receive targeted requests for information throughout the year from this ad.

Updates and Information:

The 09 Visitor Guides were delivered Jan. 23rd. We had 75,000 printed and they are distributed via visitor information outlets in the 4 counties and throughout the Midwest and Chicago area through tradeshows, the CTM hotel distribution system that covers I-80, I-88, I-90 & I-94 and through the 14 state tourism information centers located at entry points into the state. We also have our Visitor Guides in information kiosks located in the Belvidere, O'Hare and DeKalb Oases. They go out nationwide through website and direct mail requests we receive as a result of the advertising we do and it is also available as a downloadable PDF on our website. We fund the Visitor Guide using a partial state marketing grant and through the sale of ads in the Guide.

If you would like me to give a brief presentation at your county board meeting on how Blackhawk Waterways CVB promotes tourism in Carroll, Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties, call me at 800-678-2108 or contact me via e-mail at dbausman@bwcvb.com

Blackhawk Waterways CVB Mission Statement

To increase the economic impact to the four counties represented through promotions, advertising and providing information to potential visitors.