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

**Meetings Attended**:

- Apr 1st – Lee County Tourism Annual meeting
- Apr 3rd – Blackhawk Hills RC&D annual meeting
- Apr 7th – Whiteside Co. CEDS meeting
- Apr 8th – Tri-State Tourism meeting
- Apr 8th – Savanna hotel/motel meeting
- Apr 14th – Carroll Co. hotel/motel meeting
- Apr 16th – Whiteside Co. Barn Tour meeting
- Apr 20th – Dixon Cemetery Tour planning meeting
- Apr 20th – Dixon Tourism meeting
- Apr 27th – Rochelle Tourism & Visitor's Assoc. meeting
- Apr 28th – BWCVB board meeting
- Apr 28th - Blackhawk statue centennial planning meeting
- Apr 29th – Sauk Valley Chamber tourism meeting

**bwcvb.com Web Site Update:**

- Visits to the site are up 23% in the last month and we've had 2,475 absolute unique visitors who viewed an average of 4.30 pages per visit. Of these unique visitors 81.68% were new visitors to the site.
- Our spring Google Adwords campaign has generated 596 unique visitors to the site of which 93.62% were new visitors. These visitors viewed 4.37 pages per visit and spend an average of 3.27 minutes on the site.
- In response to all the requests for information on canoeing, kayaking and boating in our region, we have added a new map to the website showing river conditions in the 4 counties. This is found under the 'Resources' icon on the home page and is also referenced in the article on the home page entitled *Paddling the Blackhawk Waterways.*

**Bulk Mailing Update**:

- During April we sent out 557 packets of information as a result of requests received from the website, phone calls and advertising.

**Public Relations**:

- We sent out an e-newsletter the first week in April to those who have signed up on our website.
- I did the WIXN Talk Line show April 10th.
- I wrote a letter of support for Hailey's Winery (Byron) request for tourism attraction signage on I-39.
- We had 20 tourism partners stop by during our Brochure Exchange Week held April 20-24.
- In honor of National Tourism Week May 10-16, I submitted a "Travel Matters" op-ed to the area newspapers.

**Updates and Information:**

- Our region was featured on the WGN TV News at Nine segment, ***Cruisin' Illinois,*** on both April 23 & 30. It's great being featured on a major TV show because it has created a very positive buzz about our region in the Chicagoland area. Unique visitors to our website spiked on the days following the airing of the segments and since that time we've had 20 calls from people who saw the segment and want more information. In addition we've had 72 unique visitors to our site directly from the wgn.com website where the segments are being shown for the rest of the summer. The ***Cruisin' Illinois*** feature is sponsored by the Illinois Bureau of Tourism & we appreciate this prime opportunity to get broad exposure for the Blackhawk Waterways region. If you missed the show here's the link to the website: www.wgntv.com/cruisin_illinois.

**Advertising Update:**

- During April we received 211 targeted requests for information from our ad on **travelguidesfree.com**
- As of the end of April we have received 60 requests for information from the 2009 **Illinois Travel Guide** which came out in early January.
- Our ad in the 2009 edition of Midwest Living's **Best of the Midwest** came out in early March and we have already received 316 requests for information.

**Mark Your Calendar and Hold the Date**:

- May 10-16 is National Tourism Week which was started by President Ronald Reagan in 1983 where he encouraged people to "Go travel like a local".
- **June 5-7 – Cabela's King Kat Fishing Tournament** in Dixon
- **June 15-16 - Grand Illinois Trail & Parks Bike Ride** will bring a group of 160 bicyclists to the White Pines.

- **June 20th – MVPA Transcontinental Convoy** overnights in Rochelle and then travels along Lincoln Highway through Ogle, Lee & Whiteside counties the morning of June 21st.
- **July 11-12 – Whiteside County Barn Tour**

***Facts to know and share:***

Travel and tourism remains one of the largest industries in the United States, generating approximately $110 billion in tax revenue and saving each U.S. household almost $1,000 in taxes. Tourism is also one of our country's largest employers, generating 7.5 million jobs and $178 billion in direct travel payroll.

***(Statistics based on most recent numbers from the U.S. Travel Association)***

We appreciate the support we receive from you and 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.*