

Lake County Convention & Visitors Bureau

lakecountycvb.com

800-ALL-LAKE

Board of Directors	Appointed By
Victor DeMeyer <i>Chairman</i>	Mayor of Hobart
W.F. "Bill" Wellman <i>Vice Chairman</i>	Lt. Governor
Wardella Roby <i>Secretary</i>	Mayor of Gary
Mary Rakoczy <i>Treasurer</i>	Highland Town Council
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Chareice White	Gary Common Council
Patti Wolter	Lake County Commissioners
Andrew Kyres, <i>Parliamentarian</i>	
Daniel C. Kuzman, <i>Attorney</i>	

Professional Staff	Position
Speros A. Batistatos, <i>FCDME</i>	President/CEO
Katie R. Holderby	Executive Vice President
Janis Flutka, <i>CPA</i>	Chief Financial Officer
Heather Becerra	Director of Sales & Marketing
Luke Weinman IV	Director of Information & Technology
Judith Brown	Director of Administrative Services
Jason Sands	Director of Sports Development
Ronald Detterline	Director of Facilities
Erika Scheeringa	Public & Community Relations Manager
Michael Chaseley	Partnership Development Manager
Andrea Rivera	Marketing Designer
Robert Victor	Research & Technology Manager
Tammy Lambert	Accounting Manager
Adrienne L. Shroka	Special Events Manager
Kate Hurey	Sales Manager
Andrew Collins	Productions Coordinator
Krystle Simmons	Special Events & Communications Coordinator
Barb Mack	Group Housing Coordinator
Jennifer Rush	Executive Assistant
Sondra Hinken	Receptionist



The Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau is the sales and marketing organization leading the hospitality industry and supporting its partners in the development and promotion of tourist attractions throughout the region.

The Lake County CVB Executive Offices are housed in the

Indiana Welcome Center
7770 Corinne Drive
Hammond, IN 46323
Phone: (219) 989-7770

This newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Comments, suggestions, or materials for submission consideration should be directed to Erika Scheeringa at (219) 989-7770, Fax (219) 989-7777, Email erika@lakecountycvb.com, or by mail to 7770 Corinne Drive, Hammond, Indiana 46323. Additional copies of the Lake County CVB Newsletters are available at the Indiana Welcome Center, Hammond or by contacting Erika Scheeringa, Public & Community Relations Manager.

Lake County CVB

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of small to medium size companies



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2007 Year In Review video available online!
www.lakecountycvb.com/podcasts



Lake County Indiana Convention & Visitors Bureau
7770 Corinne Drive
Hammond, IN 46323

Lake County Indiana

Convention & Visitors Bureau

Quarterly Newsletter Winter 2008

President/CEO Selected as a 2008 Champion of Diversity

Speros A. Batistatos, President/CEO of the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau was recently selected as a 2008 Champion of Diversity by Indiana Minority Business Magazine.

The award was established to salute and honor distinguished individuals, companies, corporations and not-for-profits that have been supporters, leaders and trailblazers in business, lifestyle, diversity and economic empowerment.

Batistatos was honored in Indianapolis on January 17th, 2008 at the Champions of Diversity Awards and Dinner at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Kate Hurey Joins Sales Department

Kate Hurey, an Indiana University graduate, is the newest addition to the Lake County CVB staff. As a Sales Manager, Hurey, is responsible for seeking out and securing associations, conventions, corporate and niche markets to hold events in the South Shore.

"Ms. Hurey is a welcome addition to the sales staff, bringing 4 years of marketing and hotel experience to the table," commented Katie Holderby, Executive VP, LCCVB.

Hurey was most recently a Sales and Marketing Manager for the Hyatt Regency, Indianapolis and has also worked for properties such as Peak Resort Services in Vail, Colorado and Park Hyatt Resort and Spa in Beaver Creek, Colorado.

Hurey replaces Kathalina Hernandez as Lake County CVB's Sales Manager.



PROMOTING the SOUTH SHORE

25 years

[1983 - 2008]

On July 1st, 1983, the Indiana General Assembly created the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau due to a growing number of visitors, hotels and attractions in the area.

The Lake County CVB began as a small operation, with two staff members in rented offices at what is today known as the Star Plaza Theatre in Merrillville. The current CVB, housed in the nation's premier visitor's center in Hammond, is the second largest in the state and ranked as one of the "Best Places to Work in Indiana," for two years running, by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce.

The growth of tourism and major investments in the industry have stabilized the region's economy and provided thousands of new jobs. Lake County's hospitality industry has grown to an \$836 million industry that employs more than 25,000 employees.

The proximity to Chicago and Lake Michigan, hundreds of attractions and affordable accommodations has made Lake County a desirable location for business and leisure travelers for the past 25 years. While those factors remain constant, Lake County will remain competitive in the Midwest market because the CVB consistently listens to the customer and provides seamless service, world-class attractions and unique experiences.

Batistatos among the 'Top 25 Extraordinary Minds'

Lake County CVB President and Chief Executive Officer, Speros A. Batistatos, FCDME was named one of the "Top 25 Most Extraordinary Minds in Sales and Marketing" by Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMIAI) this past January. The annual ranking pays tribute to the best minds in hospitality, travel and tourism sales and marketing, saluting outstanding individuals who define innovation, vision and achievement, and whose work gets great results.

"With the 'Top 25', we get to honor the individuals behind those outstanding campaigns and smart strategies we see all year long. It is our opportunity to shine the spotlight on those who stand out in the industry for their creativity, intelligence, and passion for their work," states Robert A. Gilbert, CHME, CHA, President and CEO of HSMIAI. Recipients were nominated through a "call for entries" to the industry-at-large, and judged by a panel of senior industry executives.

Batistatos and the Lake County CVB team have received many awards and certifications in the past two decades. At age 35 Batistatos received the esteemed Sagamore of the Wabash presented to him by former Indiana Governor Frank O'Bannon. The Sagamore is Indiana's highest civilian honor. He has also been honored with a variety of other awards throughout his 27 year career in hospitality.

Chairman of the LCCVB Board of Directors, Victor DeMeyer stated, "On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to congratulate Speros on this prestigious award. To be recognized by your peers is one of the highest honors one can achieve. This award pays tribute not only to Speros but to a dedicated, committed and innovative staff at the Bureau. Awards of this nature reflect well on our community, our goals and mission and the importance that the tourism industry brings to the South Shore."

Bruce White, Chairman/CEO, White Lodging, also commented, "Those of us invested in and reliant on the tourism industry in Lake County recognize the difficult market challenges we compete in daily and that is why we are fortunate to have the leadership of Speros at the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Speros understands the issues and takes them 'head on' to create positive change and opportunities for all in our industry, and I appreciate the efforts of the LCCVB."

"Speros has been a stalwart advocate for tourism in Lake County. He continues to think 'outside the box', and is willing to propose initiatives that will separate us from our neighbors and provide a unique strategic advantage for our community. This national recognition is further evidence of the tremendous talent that exists in our region. We are thrilled to work with Speros and honored to call him our friend," said Rick Mazer, Senior VP and General Manager, Horseshoe Casino.



Speros A. Batistatos (left) pictured with HSMIAI President and CEO, Bob Gilbert at the Awards Ceremony.

Hotel Reservation System Surpasses 10,000+ Rooms

Bureau Sponsored Events

Now through March 7

Illiana Artists Exhibit
Indiana Welcome Center, Hammond

March 8 - 9

AAU Boy's Basketball Super Regional
Lincoln Center, Highland

March 17 - April 25

Model V-8 Ford Cars Exhibit
Indiana Welcome Center, Hammond

March 28 - 30

Lutheran Basketball National Championships
Valparaiso University

April 4 - 6

AAU Girl's Basketball Super Regional
Lincoln Center, Highland

March 14

National Tourism Week Luncheon
Indiana Welcome Center, Hammond

South Shore Receives 2nd STAR Award from ISAE

The Indiana Society of Association Executives (ISAE) honored the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau with a coveted STAR (Society's Top Association Recognition) Award for the second year in a row. The award for "Best Membership Program" was presented to the bureau at the ISAE Annual STAR Awards ceremony in December at The Mansion at Oak Hill in Indianapolis.

The Lake County CVB's award-winning partnership program offers value-added benefits such as web exposure, industry leads, cooperative advertising and annual seminars exclusively for partners.

Heather Becerra, LCCVB Director of Sales and Marketing, said, "It's an honor to receive another STAR award. We truly appreciate ISAE for recognizing our partnership program and the work we do for our partners."

The ISAE STAR Awards recognize association activities, programs or individuals who have had a positive impact throughout the year. Judging is conducted by an external panel of experts who consider each candidate's goals, efficiency, inspiration and quality to select worthy recipients.

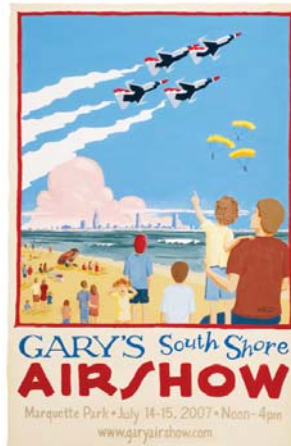
The Lake County CVB and South Shore Sports Promotions are gearing up for a busy spring while managing the hotel reservations and room blocks for numerous sporting events. Events such as the AAU Super Regional Basketball Tournaments, the Serbian National Federation Basketball Tournament, Lutheran Basketball National Championships and the Best of the Midwest Soccer Tournaments have been utilizing the Bureau's online housing/reservation system. Teams registering for these competitions have brought the total room nights reserved to 10,151, this translates to approximately \$1.2 million in hotel room revenue.

The housing system is set up through the Bureau's website and hotel room blocks are managed by the sales staff on a daily basis, providing immediate updates. "The customer welcomes the ease of booking entire teams at one location," said Jim Boersma, VP, Hallmark Convention and Sports Complex. "Another benefit of the housing system is the direct line of communication the CVB has with the teams. They have the opportunity to provide coupons, maps and an array of things for families to do during their stay," he added.

The LCCVB housing system, first used in March 2007, has an inventory of approximately 60 partner hotels and includes properties from as far west as Tinley Park, IL, as far east as Michigan City, IN and as far south as Lafayette, IN.

More than 6,500 athletes, coaches and their families are expected to visit the South Shore from March to May for upcoming competitions and tournaments.

Air Show to Fly in July



The 2007 air show poster, painted by Judith Mayer of Highland, won 1st place in the Marketing Competition at the ICAS convention.

The 2008 Gary's South Shore Air Show will be held on the beaches of Marquette Park and Beach in Gary on Saturday, July 19th and Sunday, July 20th. The Lake County CVB is working to secure new air show talent and expand the Friday night show.

During the ICAS (International Council of Air Shows) Annual Convention, air show representatives met with potential new air show performers and exchanged marketing ideas with air show organizers throughout the country. "The conference provided educational seminars and numerous networking opportunities to give us a 'leg up' for the 2008 Annual show," stated Adrienne Shroka, Special Events Manager for the Bureau.

Also at the ICAS Convention, the 2007 South Shore Air Show poster was announced as the 1st place winner of the Marketing Competition in the Poster Category. Competition entries were judged on overall attractiveness, printing quality, color and effectiveness as a marketing tool. The air show poster was designed by Judith Mayer of Highland using the 1920's vintage style of the South Shore Line poster series. The poster was sponsored by the Post-Tribune and Mayer was mentored by Mitchell A. Markovitz, South Shore Poster artist.

The air show will continue to offer free parking and free admission and will be presented by the Lake County CVB, the Gary Jet Center and the City of Gary. Check the website, www.garyairshow.com, for updates.

FESTIVAL & EVENT SUMMIT

PRESENTED BY THE LAKE COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

South Shore SEMINAR SERIES



More than 50 partners and festival and event planners joined guest speaker Toni Meyer in January at the 2nd Festival and Event Seminar, hosted by the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Festival planners represented organizations and events including the Wizard of Oz Festival, Lake County Fairgrounds, Northwest Indiana Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and numerous parks departments and theaters.

Meyer, 50th Anniversary Director and Parade Director of the 500 Festival in Indianapolis, provided insight on her experiences of organizing large events, creating revenue streams and securing sponsorships. The 500 Festival was created in 1957 to celebrate the Indianapolis 500 and has grown to become one of the largest festivals in the nation. More than 425,000 people participated last year throughout the month of May.

The Festival/Event Seminar was combined with the Lake County CVB's Winter Grant Seminar. "We have had positive feedback after combining the two seminars and will continue to merge seminars together in the future," stated Katie Holderby, Executive VP, LCCVB.

A copy of Meyer's presentation can be obtained by contacting Krystle Simmons at the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau, krystle@lakecountycvb.com or by calling (219) 989-7770.

W.F. "Bill" Wellman Honored with Sagamore

Vice Chairman of LCCVB Board of Directors receives Governor's recognition

W.F. "Bill" Wellman, a 25 year veteran by original appointment of the Lake County CVB Board of Directors and a 60 year veteran of the hospitality industry, was recently presented with the prestigious Sagamore of the Wabash at the LCCVB's annual Holiday Reception.

Wellman currently serves as the Senior Vice President of Communications for Whiteco Industries. His accomplishments range from theater producer; booking acts in the 70's such as Bill Cosby, Duke Ellington, Phyllis Diller and Count Basie, to restaurateur and barkeep of his family's restaurant. Wellman was instrumental in launching the Star Plaza Theatre after decades in the entertainment industry in Valparaiso. He also served his country as a Marine in WWII.

"Bill Wellman is a well rounded and accomplished individual; a rare gem of Northwest Indiana. He truly deserved this recognition" said State Representative Chester Dobis.

The Sagamore was presented on behalf of Indiana State Governor Mitch Daniels and is the highest honor bestowed by the Governor of Indiana. The term "Sagamore" was used by the American Indian Tribes of the northeastern United States to describe a lesser Chief or a great man among the tribe to whom the chief would look to for wisdom and advice. Astronauts, Presidents, ambassadors, artists, musicians, politicians and average citizens have been privileged to receive this award.



W.F. Wellman (left) accepts the Sagamore of the Wabash from Rep. Chester Dobis (right) and Speros A. Batistatos, CEO, LCCVB (center).

2007 Hospitality Award Winners

More than 250 hospitality employees, leaders and elected officials were gathered at the LCCVB's Annual Holiday Reception and Hospitality Awards Recognition Program. Each year, the Bureau honors select organizations, businesses and people who have made a positive impact on tourism in the South Shore; providing unique opportunities and experiences to visitors.

Winners of the 2007 Hospitality Awards were:

National Softball Association (NSA)
Sports Event of the Year

Festival of the Lakes, Hammond
Festival/Event of the Year

Bass Pro Shops, Portage
Attraction of the Year

Café Borgia, Munster
Restaurant of the Year

Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza, Merrillville
Hotel of the Year

Hallmark Convention and Sports Complex, Lowell
Facility of the Year

Chareice White, Corporate Director of Community Relations, Majestic Star Casinos & Hotel
Professional of the Year

For the first time, the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau honored Elected Officials of the Year who were instrumental in passing bills to aid in the development and viability of the hospitality industry. The two Elected Officials of the Year were **Mara Candelaria-Reardon**, Indiana House of Representatives, District 12 and **Ed Soliday**, Indiana House of Representatives, District 4.

INDUSTRY UPDATES

Skybus Airlines announced they will offer nonstop service between Gary, IN and Greensboro, NC beginning March 13th. Skybus, the next generation of low-fare airlines, is headquartered in Columbus, OH and offers at least 10 tickets on each flight for \$10. Tickets can be purchased at www.skybus.com.

Best Western NW Indiana Inn, in Hammond received the Best Western Director's Award for outstanding quality standards. The Director's Award recognizes Best Western International hotels with superior cleanliness and high customer service scores.

Beginning April 1, 2008, the **City of Crown Point** will go smoke-free. The smoke-free ordinance applies to all public buildings and restaurants; smoking will still be allowed in bars. According to the ordinance, the City is "protecting the public health and welfare by prohibiting smoking in public places."

View the **Marktown** photography exhibit by Dave Jordano at the City Gallery of Photography at the Historic Water Tower in Chicago. Dave Jordano is a world renowned photographer who discovered Marktown, a historic neighborhood in Whiting, several years ago. The exhibit will be on display until May 4, 2008.

Congratulations to this year's Winter Wonderland tree winners: 1st place – **Polish Women's Alliance of America, East Chicago**; 2nd place – **Brantwood Home & Garden Club, Highland**; and 3rd place – **National Autism Association (Northwest Indiana Chapter)**. Nearly 10,000 guests visited the Indiana Welcome Center during the annual holiday display.

Partnership News

- * Submit your events by March 21st to be eligible for the 2008-2009 South Shore Visitor's Guide. Submitting your event or festival is easier than ever. Log on to www.lakecountycvb.com/submitevent to read requirements and fill out the entry form. Enter as many events as you wish.
- * Nominate outstanding employees for the annual R.O.S.E. Awards by logging on to www.rose-awards.com. R.O.S.E. is an acronym for Recognition of Service Excellence, and is an annual appreciation program for front-line employees who consistently go above and beyond the call of duty. Managers are also encouraged to nominate non-managerial employees by providing specific examples of customer service excellence and/or customer comments.
- * Do you have monthly specials, hotel packages, or electronic coupons? Keep your rates, and specials up-to-date on your member page at www.lakecountycvb.com. Each month, the Bureau staff looks for monthly events and packages for the e-newsletter. The e-newsletter is sent to thousands of potential visitors each month who are interested in South Shore attractions, hotels, restaurants and events.
- * The Lake County CVB is seeking restaurateurs willing to host upcoming roundtable discussions. If you would like to host the next Restaurateur Roundtable, please contact Erika Scheeringa at erika@lakecountycvb.com. The roundtables are open to restaurant and business owners who are interested in learning more about the CVB, legislation that could be detrimental to the hospitality industry and information on the proposed multi-use facility in Lake County.