

# Lake County Indiana

Convention & Visitors Bureau

Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2008

CVB Placed in the  
Top 10 for Second  
Year in a Row



Chosen by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau was selected as one of the "Best Places to Work in Indiana" for the second year. The Bureau placed 9th in the Small/Medium sized companies and was the only government agency to win the prestigious award.

"I am very proud and humbled to be placed among the top 10 'Best Places to Work' for two years running. The Board of Directors and our President/CEO, Speros Batistatos, help create a positive working environment and culture that motivates the staff," said Katie Holderby, Executive Vice President, LCCVB.

The Indiana Chamber announced ranking for all 66 companies that made the "Best Places to Work in Indiana" list at an awards dinner in Indianapolis. The honorees were determined through employer reports and comprehensive employee surveys.

Participants of the "Best Place to Work in Indiana" program received an evaluation to help organizations identify the company's strengths and weaknesses. The basis for the "Best Places to Work" initiative is Fortune Magazine's noted "100 Best Places to Work for" list. For more information about the program, log onto [www.bestplacetoworkIN.com](http://www.bestplacetoworkIN.com).



**Did you know?**  
Gary's South Shore Air Show welcomes more than 500,000 spectators to Gary's beaches each year.

## 2008 Air Show to Feature the US Air Force Thunderbirds

*The 9th Annual show will now be held July 12th and 13th*

The US Air Force Thunderbirds will now headline the Gary's South Shore Air Show held at Marquette Park and Beach in Miller. Due to the addition of the performers, the date of the 2008 show has been moved up one week, and will now be held on Saturday, July 12th and Sunday, July 13th.

According to the US Air Force Thunderbirds, "The Demonstration Squadron is the premier demonstration squadron of the most elite air and space force the world has ever known. They present precision aerial maneuvers that exhibit the capabilities of modern, high performance aircraft and the high degree of professional skill required to operate those aircraft."

The 9th Annual Air Show will also feature a Parachute Team, Angel 7 (a L-39C), Joe Dooley the Flying Irishman, P-51 Mustang, F-15 (US Air Force) and the Lima Lima Demonstration Squadron. New to the 2008 show is the 100% Ethanol fueled aerobatic team, The Vanguard Squadron, and Bill Leff who will perform maneuvers in his classic T-6 WarBird. The F-18 and the B-2 Stealth Bomber have also been added to the performance schedule.

There will be a VIP Preview Party the evening of Friday, July 11th at the Gary Jet Center. Tickets for the VIP event are \$50 and include a front-row seat, free parking, food and beverage and a special meet and greet with the US Air Force Thunderbirds. Tickets for the Preview Party can only be purchased through the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau by calling Jennifer Rush at (219) 554-2229.

The public is invited to view the Friday evening show from the Gary/Chicago Airport parking lot. Parking at the Airport is \$5 per car.

Gary's South Shore Air Show features free admission, free parking and free shuttle service to Marquette Beach. There will also be children's entertainment, numerous food vendors and a beer garden, both days of the show.

Visit Gary's South Shore Air Show official website, [www.garyairshow.com](http://www.garyairshow.com) for more information.



*The US Air Force Thunderbirds fly over Lake Michigan at Marquette Park and Beach in Gary.*

## Secretary of Commerce Visits the Indiana Welcome Center



Speros Batistatos, President/CEO of the Lake County CVB (far left); Ed Soliday, Indiana House of Representatives, District 4 (left); Nathan Feltman, Indiana Secretary of Commerce (right); and Vince Galbiati, President/CEO of the Northwest Indiana Forum (far right) pictured at the Indiana Welcome Center. Feltman spoke to nearly 100 developers, brokers, economic development professionals and business leaders from the Chicagoland area about investment and attracting new companies to the area. The event, "Why Northwest Indiana Works," was sponsored by the Northwest Indiana Forum.

[lakecountycvb.com](http://lakecountycvb.com)

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## Six Organizations Receive Grant Monies

The Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau has announced the recipients of the 2008 Spring/Summer grants. The grant monies totaling more than \$14,000 have been allocated to help fund events in Lake County. Recipients include: Board of Munster Parks and Recreation Department, City of Crown Point, Lowell Downtown Merchants Association, Shrine of Christ's Passion (St. John), Taste of East Chicago and the Whiting/Robertsdale Chamber of Commerce.

Matching grant monies will help promotion of events such as Pierogi Fest, Munster's Blues, Jazz & Fine Arts Festival and the 4th Friday Night Arts in Crown Point. Organizations seeking grants from the CVB must provide a clear and comprehensive marketing plan for how the matching grant money will be used and how it will bring visitors to the region.

The Lake County CVB requires any not-for-profit organization seeking matching grant monies to attend one Grant Seminar each year. The next seminar will be held at the Indiana Welcome Center on June 23rd at 2pm. Please contact Katie Holderby, Executive VP, for more information, (219) 554-2222 or [katie@lakecountycvb.com](mailto:katie@lakecountycvb.com).

## Upcoming Events

**Now through July 25**  
Trash to Treasure VIII  
Indiana Welcome Center, Hammond

**June 6 - 8**  
AAU Basketball Super Regional  
Lincoln Center, Highland

**June 13 - 15**  
Midwest Regional League Soccer Playoffs  
Hallmark Convention & Sports Complex,  
Lowell

**June 23**  
Grant Seminar  
Indiana Welcome Center, Hammond

**July 12 and 13**  
Gary's South Shore Air Show  
Marquette Park, Gary

**July 12 and 13**  
Munster Blues, Jazz & Fine Arts Festival  
Town Hall, Munster

**July 15 - 20**  
Festival of the Lakes  
Wolf Lake, Hammond

**July 25 - 27**  
Pierogi Fest  
Downtown Whiting

**August 7 - September 21**  
South Shore Sports Legends Exhibit  
Indiana Welcome Center, Hammond

# LCCVB Continues Focus on Regional Business

The Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau sales staff has recently joined forces with the Valparaiso Department of Parks and Recreation and the Michigan City Parks Department to bring events to the South Shore.

The Michigan City Parks and South Shore Sports Promotions (a department of the Lake County CVB) recently announced Michigan City will be one of the six stops on the 2008 TriAmerica Series National Tour. The event, TriAmerica Indiana Dunes, is expected to have a significant impact on the local hospitality industry with more than 500 projected room nights for local hotels and an estimated economic impact of more than \$100,000 for area businesses.

"The Michigan City Parks Department enjoys our long-standing relationship with the LCCVB and South Shore Sports Promotions. We will continue to work with South Shore Sports to pursue events that help build tourism, create positive impressions of the region and spur economic growth," said Jeremy Kienitz, Recreation Director for Michigan City Parks Department.

The National Triathlon will bring more than 1,000 tri-athletes to Washington Park in Michigan City on September 7th of this year. Events include a 2K (1.25 mi) swim in Lake Michigan, 60K (37 mi) bike through Beverly Shores and 15K (9.3 mi) run on Lake Shore Drive in Long Beach.

Kate Hurey, the LCCVB's Convention Sales Manager has been working with the Valparaiso Department of Parks and Recreation to bring the 2008 Indiana Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) to the South Shore for their Leadership Retreat and Annual Educational Golf Outing. "This is a great opportunity to showcase the northern part of the state to this organization," stated Hurey. The IPRA will be staying in Valparaiso on September 9th and 10th.



More than 1,000 tri-athletes will compete in the 2008 TriAmerica Series National Tour this September.

## Tourism Week Highlights Sports Travel and 2016 Olympics



Jason Sands, South Shore Sports Promotions, is pictured with Jeanne Picariello (right), US Olympic Committee, at the Annual Tourism Day Luncheon.

Approximately 200 elected officials, business leaders and hospitality employees attended the Annual Tourism Day Luncheon hosted by the Lake County CVB in May. Jeanne M. Picariello, Chair of the Multi-Sport Organizations Council for the United States Olympic Committee, was the keynote speaker. Picariello highlighted the impact youth sporting events has on travel and the ripple effect the Olympics will have on Northwest Indiana if Chicago lands the event in 2016. According to Picariello the South Shore may be able to host Paralympic games, Senior games or Youth Olympic games. She also suggested the area begin to market itself now for such economic opportunities.

In celebration of National Tourism Week, the CVB also held its annual FAM (familiarization) Tour, to help acquaint residents and hospitality employees with the many attractions available in the region. The annual tour was filled with front-line hotel employees from Lake and Porter Counties as well as residents of Northwest Indiana. The stops included the new Shrine of Christ's Passion in St. John, South Shore Arts in Munster, Cabela's in Hammond and the Dillinger Museum also in Hammond with a lunch at Teibel's in Schererville.

Tourism Week is nationally sponsored by TIA (Travel Industry Association) and commemorated by hospitality organizations throughout the nation. The goal is to educate the public about the economic impact tourism makes on America.

## 2008 South Shore Sports Legends

Six new South Shore Sports Legends have been selected for the upcoming South Shore Sports Legends Exhibit from August 7th to September 21st. The exhibit honors remarkable sports legends, both male and female, coaches, teams and other participants who have achieved a "legendary status" along the South Shore.

The following five legends and one contributing legend will be added to the existing 50 legends from the 2007 exhibit: James Arthur "Jim" Bradley, Donald Elser, Milan "Milo" Komenich, Tom Stokes, 1937 Hammond High Wildcats Football Team and Ray Nichels, the contributing legend.

The South Shore Sports Legends Committee will also add a sixth "people's choice" legend during the grand opening of the exhibit in August. The public was invited to vote on their favorite legend throughout the month of May. The exhibit will be on display in the W.F. Wellman Exhibit Hall at the Indiana Welcome Center in Hammond. To learn more about the South Shore Sports Legends, visit [www.lakecountycvb.com/sportsllegends](http://www.lakecountycvb.com/sportsllegends).

# Indiana Welcome Center Billboard Wins Award

“Can’t Hold It?” billboard wins Silver Communicator Award

The International Academy of the Visual Arts (IAVA) recently announced winners for the 2008 Communicator Awards and among them was the Westbound I-80/94 billboard for the Indiana Welcome Center. The billboard titled “Can’t Hold It?” was created by the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

According to INDOT (Indiana Department of Transportation) spokesperson, Joshua Bingham, “...one million people travel the Borman Expressway [I-80/94] daily.” Approximately 85,000 travelers visit the Indiana Welcome Center each year.

“Restrooms are one of the major reasons travelers stop at welcome centers and rest areas, and we are proud that we have the best restrooms in the state,” Ron Detterline, Director of Facilities said. Andrea Rivera, Graphic Designer, also commented, “We were looking for a fresh new way to use the travel information symbol to catch drivers’ attention.”

The Communicator Awards is the leading international creative awards program honoring creative excellence for communication professionals. The judges received more than 8,500 entries from around the world for the 2008 competition. To learn more about the Communicator Awards and to see a complete list of the 2008 winners, please visit [www.communicatorawards.com](http://www.communicatorawards.com).



The “Can’t Hold It?” billboard is located at westbound I-80/94 mile 8.3.

## INDUSTRY UPDATES

The long awaited opening of **The Shrine of Christ’s Passion** in St. John, happens this June. The half-mile winding pathway features the Stations of the Cross and includes listening stations at each location. The Shrine is expected to draw travelers of all faiths from around the world.

**Horseshoe Casino** is now operating under private ownership. Two private investment firms, Apollo Management LP and TPG Capital bought Harrah’s Entertainment, Inc., for \$17.1 billion. Harrah’s Entertainment, Inc., is the parent company of Horseshoe Casino Hammond.

The Steeple Gallery has been chosen to be the first stop in Northern Indiana for the **84th Annual Hoosier Salon Exhibition**. The Exhibition, on loan from the Indiana State Museum, will be on display in St. John this September and features Hoosier artists.

The expanding **Blue Chip Casino Hotel** will include a 20,000 square foot convention center. The \$130 million expansion of the hotel is scheduled to open in late 2008; conventions can be booked for early 2009. The hotel features 302 rooms, a spa and nightclub.

**White Lodging Services** will create up to 100 new jobs in the next 4 years with its headquarters expansion in Merrillville. White Lodging Services owns and manages hotels throughout the country.

Congratulations to **Mallory Parsons**, the newly hired Food and Beverage Manager at the Indianapolis Marriott. Parsons, a Purdue University graduate, began her hospitality career as an intern at the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

**Building Indiana News**, a business-to-business publication, was recently awarded with a Silver Award for the best external publication from the Service Industry Advertising Awards. Building Indiana News provides updates on economic development projects throughout the region and covers seven Northwest Indiana counties.

## The JOHN DILLINGER MUSEUM



*Crime Doesn't Pay*

### Reopens to Visitors

Located inside the Indiana Welcome Center at I-80/94 & Kennedy Avenue, the John Dillinger Museum reopened its doors this past March. The John Dillinger Museum was voluntarily closed by the Lake County CVB nearly 2 years ago due to licensing issues.

LCCVB’s President/CEO Speros Batistatos and Dillinger’s great-nephew, Jeffery Scalf, were pleased that a mutual and beneficial business relationship could be forged. Both parties felt that an accurate portrayal of the Dillinger story at the museum was timely, in light of the recent interest in the Depression era gangster, which was fueled by the filming of *Public Enemies* in Crown Point.

The interactive museum illustrates the life and times of John Dillinger and other gangsters during the 1930’s depression era and shows advancements made in crime fighting technology during the first 30 years of the 20th century. The museum was renovated and developed into an educational and historic experience and uses John Dillinger and other era criminals as examples of what happens to people who engage in criminal activity.

When the museum opened in 1999, the CVB was sensitive to community members and law enforcement officials who were concerned that such an attraction would glorify crime. The CVB responded to concerns and involved local law enforcement officials that included Lake County’s Sheriff, local police chiefs, representatives from the Indiana State Police and the president of Indiana’s Fraternal Order of Police.

The John Dillinger Museum is open from 10am to 3pm daily. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for seniors, and \$2 for children ages 6-12. Admission is free for children 5 and under.

## New Visitor’s Guide Now Available

The 64-page, full-color guide to help visitors find attractions, restaurants and hotels in the South Shore is now available for distribution. There are more than 150 partners featured in the guide, a map and special sections including: Chicago, the Indiana Dunes and Unique Attractions along the South Shore.

The South Shore Visitor’s Guide is the most comprehensive magazine that includes hotels, attractions, restaurants, casinos and visitor information from Chicago to New Buffalo, Michigan.

The Lake County CVB is in the process of creating an online version of the 2008-2009 guide, which will be viewable in the coming months at [www.lakecountycvb.com](http://www.lakecountycvb.com).

Partners are encouraged to display the Visitor’s Guide in their establishment for travelers and residents. To request cases, contact Heather Becerra by email at [heather@lakecountycvb.com](mailto:heather@lakecountycvb.com).



# Lake County Convention & Visitors Bureau

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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.

PROMOTING  
the  
**SOUTH SHORE**  
**25**  
years  
[ 1983 - 2008 ]

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