

Lake County Indiana

Convention & Visitors Bureau

Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2008

Flood Waters Close the Indiana Welcome Center for 9 Days

Heavy rains from Hurricane Ike hit the Midwest, particularly the Chicagoland area, with more than 14 inches of rain in 2 days. The rainfall left hundreds without homes and thousands without power. The rainfall also flooded major roadways and neighborhoods throughout the region.

The Indiana Welcome Center, which also houses the Lake County CVB offices, received 42 inches of water in the basement. The basement floors serve as storage for brochures, promotional items and signs for special events as well as the maintenance equipment and work space for Maintenance employees.

"We are happy that no one was seriously injured by the flooding, and our hearts go out to the many families who have sustained damage or lost their homes and personal items," stated Speros A. Batistatos, President/CEO of the Lake County CVB.

The Welcome Center reopened and the Lake County CVB staff returned to work on September 24th. The John Dillinger Museum and the gift shop, also located in the building remain closed until the heating and air conditioning systems are replaced.

The Lake County CVB also hosted the Indiana Governor's Office, members of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security for a press conference on September 24th. The Governor's Office announced, at the press conference, the creation of one-stop disaster assistance centers in Lake County after President George W. Bush declared that a major disaster existed for Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. Businesses that were affected by the flooding are encouraged to provide estimates of damage to the county's emergency management agency.

A Christmas Story Coming to Indiana Welcome Center

Annual Winter Wonderland event takes on new theme



TM & Turner Entertainment Co. (s08)

The 1983 holiday classic, *A Christmas Story*, is celebrating its 25th year anniversary this year, along with the Lake County CVB. The film is based on former Hammond, Indiana resident, Jean Shepherd's book, *In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash* and other short stories. Shepherd grew up on Cleveland Street in Hammond, and wrote about many of his experiences growing up in the Midwest. The fictional town of Hohman, where the Parker's lived in the movie, is said to have been named after one of Hammond's downtown streets, Hohman Avenue.

This holiday season, Hammond will be filled with *A Christmas Story* celebrations, contests and exhibits. The Indiana Welcome Center in Hammond will feature six animatronic window displays from November 28th through January 11th. The window displays were first showcased in 2003 at Macy's Herald Square in New York City. The scenes include; Higbee's Department Store Window, Flick's Tongue and the Triple Dog Dare, It's a Major Award, Santa's Mountain at Higbee's, The Bumpus Hounds, and the Parker Living Room.

The Lake County CVB will also be organizing contests such as the "Write a Theme Contest: What I Want for Christmas," a "Mommy's Little Piggy" eating contest, an "Oh, Fudge!" father/son relay and a "Triple Dog Dare" scavenger hunt. Another feature at the visitor's center will be a replica of Santa's Mountain complete with Santa and a slide. In *A Christmas Story*, Ralphie Parker visits Santa at the top of the mountain where he asks for an Official Red Rider BB Gun and Santa responds with the famous, "You'll shoot your eye out kid." The movie, *A Christmas Story*, will also be shown in the IN Vision Theater during the holiday season and there will be a special "enter to win" meet and greet with Scott Schwartz who played Flick in the movie.

South Shore Arts will present their 15th Annual Holiday Reading with "Red Ryder Nails the Hammond Kid" on November 15th at 11am. John Cain, South Shore Arts Executive Director will be reading the original version of the story published in 1965. Downtown Hammond's holiday kickoff celebration on November 22nd from 2pm to 7pm will feature a tree lighting ceremony, a Ralphie and Randy lookalike contest, caroling, food vendors and more. Visit www.lakecountycvb.com or www.downtownhammond.org for more information.

Hammond's *A Christmas Story* celebrations are made possible through the partnerships of the Downtown Hammond Council, Hammond Historic Preservation Commission, Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City of Hammond, Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce and South Shore Arts.

South Shore Sports Promotions Hosts Successful Regional Event



More than 350 athletes competed in the TriAmerica Indiana Dunes Triathlon in September 2008. The triathlon was held in Michigan City and included a 2K (1.25 mi) swim, 60K (37mi) bike through Beverly Shores and a 15K (9.3 mi) run. The Michigan City Parks and South Shore Sports Promotions worked together to bring this national event to northern Indiana. Michigan City was one of six stops on the TriAmerica National Tour.

Batistatos Judges International Hospitality Awards

The travel industry's largest advertising, public relations and web marketing competition, the Adrian Awards, will be judged this fall. The Adrian Awards Advisory Board has chosen Speros A. Batistatos, President/CEO for the Lake County CVB to help judge portions of the Adrian Awards, sponsored by HSMIAI (Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International).

Adrian Award entries are weighted equally on marketing objectives, creativity, quality, content and results. Entries are not judged against other entries.

In 2007, Batistatos was named one of the Top 25 Extraordinary Minds in Hospitality, an international award given by HSMIAI.

Director Selected to Sit on Sports Indiana BOD

Representatives from 17 communities throughout the state of Indiana will make up the Board of Directors of the newly created not-for-profit sports commission, Sports Indiana.

The Commission is made up of several Indiana CVBs and regional sports commissions. The newly formed group will promote the state of Indiana as a premiere sporting event destination by collaborating on national marketing campaigns and industry trade shows.

The Sports Indiana Board of Directors include; President Dan O'Connell, Fort Wayne CVB; Vice President William Knox, Hamilton County CVB; First Vice President Jason Sands, Lake County CVB; Treasurer Susan Williams, Indiana Sports Corporation and Secretary Lynn Lucas, Columbus CVB.

CFO Receives CDME Designation

The Lake County CVB's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Janis Flutka, was recently designated a Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME) by Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI).

The CDME program is an advanced education program which emphasizes vision, leadership and implementation of business strategies.

Flutka was also selected by the Indiana Certified Public Accountant Society as the recipient of the Outstanding CPA in Government Award.

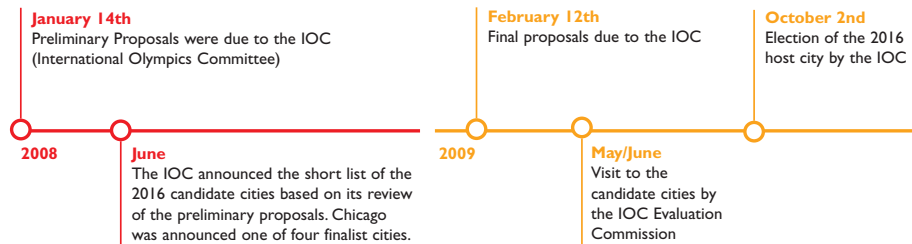
South Shore Hotels Prepare for 2016 Olympics

A representative for Chicago 2016 visited the Indiana Welcome Center this summer to speak with local hoteliers about the need for 60,000 rooms in and around Chicago. Chicago 2016 needs approximately 18,000 more rooms for the Olympic Family.

Hotels interested in Olympic housing must block 85 percent of their rooms for the Olympic Family, which is comprised of workers, security, media and sponsors. Hotels must also block at controlled and competitive rates with no minimum stay requirements. Many of the "family" members will occupy rooms for as long as six months before and after the games. Hotels in Lake County have already submitted their room blocks to Chicago 2016, but representatives are still looking for additional rooms in northern Indiana.

Should Chicago receive the Olympics in 2016, hotels would be informed a year in advance if their 85 percent room block was needed. The hotels can then open those rooms to the public if they go unused.

The hotel room commitments are one of the major competitive portions of the bidding process. Chicago is one of four finalist cities bidding on the 2016 Olympic Games. The other finalists are Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro and Madrid. The host city will be announced October 2nd, 2009 by the International Olympics Committee. To learn more about Chicago's Olympic bid visit www.chicago2016.org.



August Proves to be Successful for LCCVB Sales Department

Kate Hurey, Lake County CVB's Convention Sales Manager, has successfully booked five future conventions in Lake County. The five conferences will bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars to the local economy and will fill more than 500 hotel rooms.

The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Youth Conference was booked and held at the Radisson this past August and The Calumet Conference Center in Hammond will host the ASM (American Society for Metals) International in October 2008.

The Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza was chosen as the site of the 2009 National United Merchant Beverage Association Convention and the 2010 Indiana State Bar Association's Solo and Small Firms Conferences. The Indiana State Bar Association chose Lake County as their convention destination of choice over Indianapolis and South Bend and is expected to bring more than 240 room nights. The last time a Bar Association was in Lake County was in 2005.

The LCCVB currently has bids out on other meetings and conventions that total 6,700 room nights and more than \$1,000,000 in economic impact. For more information on how to host your meeting in Lake County, contact Kate Hurey, Convention Sales Manager at (219) 554-2227.

Lake County Hosts State Meeting Planners

Between tours of downtown Crown Point, Albanese Confectionery and taking in a round of golf, members of the ISAE (Indiana Society of Association Executives) participated in several educational sessions at the Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza for their Annual Conference.

The members who attended the conference included hoteliers, CVB executives, audio visual services and approximately 50 meeting planners and association executives from Indiana. These meeting planners and executives are the "decision makers" when deciding where their annual conferences will be held. This past July, ISAE members were able to experience everything first hand; from the guest rooms, food and the multimillion dollar renovations at the Radisson Hotel to the extracurricular activities available in the South Shore. Some LCCVB partners were asked to take part in the "Taste of Lake County" where meeting planners sampled local favorites and products made in Lake County.

The Lake County CVB worked closely with the ISAE members and the Radisson Hotel for several months prior to their arrival. ISAE Executive Director, Leslie Murphy and Marketing and Membership Coordinator, Laura Frank commented in a letter to the LCCVB, "We haven't seen this kind of participation from a CVB in a long time!"

“Paint the Parks 100” National Exhibit Now Open

The Indiana Welcome Center was selected as one of five locations in the nation to receive the “Paint the Parks100” exhibition. The exhibit is on display in the W.F. Wellman Exhibit Hall until November 13th. “Paint the Parks100” is an annual painting exhibition sponsored by PaintAmerica, a national, not-for-profit organization that supports the visual arts. The 2008 - 2009 exhibit will also be displayed in St. Louis, Missouri; Shreveport, Louisiana; Topeka, Kansas and Estes Park, Colorado.

“We are delighted to bring this national exhibit to the Indiana Welcome Center,” stated Rod Seel, Executive Director of PaintAmerica. “We couldn’t ask for a better exhibit site than the W.F. Wellman Exhibit Hall. Visitors to the Indiana Dunes Lakeshore and the Chicago metro area will have a wonderful opportunity to view and purchase this award-winning art of our national parks.”

The “Paint the Parks100” Exhibition is formed from the nation’s leading art competition for National Parks, operated by PaintAmerica Association. The competition attracts top artists with a \$10,000 Grand Prize. Original art sales proceeds go towards the PaintAmerica Scholarship Fund for young artists and the National Parks Foundation.

“The National Park Service is pleased to partner with the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau to bring “Paint the Parks100” to the Welcome Center.

This exhibit showcases the special qualities that make up national parks like Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and the Grand Canyon,” said Bruce Rowe, Public Information Officer for the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

“Best Beach,” a painting by competition winner, Dan McWilliams will be featured in the exhibit; the painting depicts the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The National Lakeshore stretches along southern Lake Michigan, 50 miles southeast of Chicago, and continues to Southern Michigan. Almost 25 miles of beaches, sand dunes, wetlands, bogs, and forests are preserved to make the Indiana Dunes one of the state’s most visited attractions.

Admission to the W.F. Wellman Exhibit Hall is free and exhibits change regularly. The Indiana Welcome Center, open from 8am – 5pm, is located at 7770 Corinne Drive, Hammond, IN (I-80/94 and Kennedy Avenue South).

An online exhibit and additional information are available at www.PaintAmerica.org.



“Best Beach” Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore by Dan McWilliams

GARY'S SOUTH SHORE AIR★SHOW

July 11-12, 2009

Celebrate the South Shore Air Show’s 10 year anniversary on July 11th and 12th, 2009 at the beaches of Marquette Park in Gary. Returning to the skies above Lake Michigan and beaches along the shore will be many aerial favorites as well as new performers and entertainers.

The beer garden, interactive displays and numerous food vendors will also be located in Marquette Park and the show and parking will remain free in 2009.

The 2008 Air Show welcomed nearly 750,000 spectators from around the nation, approximately 46% of which came from areas outside of Lake County.

The South Shore Air Show is made possible by the partnership of the Lake County CVB, the Gary Jet Center, the City of Gary and the Gary/Chicago Airport as well as the many sponsors. For information on how your organization can sponsor the upcoming show, please request a sponsorship packet from Adrienne Binder by email, adrienne@lakecountycvb.com, or by phone, (219) 554-2175.

R.O.S.E. Awards Date Change



The 2008 R.O.S.E. (Recognition of Service Excellence) selection committee has received more than 100 nominations for the annual R.O.S.E.

Awards. Many of the nominations came directly from guests who filled out the online form at www.rose-awards.com.

The Awards Ceremony will take place at The Venue at the Horseshoe Casino on Wednesday, October 15th at 6:30pm. One dozen exceptional employees will be announced as winners and honored at the ceremony.

Nominations were open to front-line service employees throughout the South Shore who showed dedication, excellent customer service and a positive attitude throughout the year. Speros Batistatos, President/CEO of the Lake County CVB spoke about the importance of front-line employees, “... many times when a guest visits a destination, the front-line staff are the only employees the guest encounters. The R.O.S.E. Awards are one way we can honor these outstanding individuals.”

The annual R.O.S.E. Awards are open to visitors, supervisors, managers and owners who want to recognize any front-line service employees that “go the extra mile” and who have demonstrated exceptional work ethic. Front-line employees are those that interact directly with guests on a daily basis at hotels, attractions, casinos, retail outlets, restaurants and other service industries. To learn more about the R.O.S.E. Awards visit www.rose-awards.com.

2008 R.O.S.E. Finalists

Finalists chosen from more than one hundred nominations

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Amanda Alvarez, Majestic Star Casino Gary | Kelly Killinbeck, Country Inn & Suites Michigan City | Cliff Rapp, Residence Inn Merrillville |
| Om Bhetuwal, Horseshoe Casino Hammond | Joan Kolozenski, Post-Tribune Merrillville | Angelique Robinson, Horseshoe Casino Hammond |
| Jerry Brown II, Horseshoe Casino Hammond | Edwin Lopez, Horseshoe Casino Hammond | Christina Sanford, Comfort Inn Hobart |
| Rose Coleman, Majestic Star Casino Gary | Tammy Lozer, AmeriHost Inn Hammond | Joseph Schaefer, Majestic Star Casino Gary |
| Judy Ehlin, Ramada Inn Hammond | Rob Mahoney, Lucrezia Crown Point | Sondra Hall Smith, Indiana University Northwest Gary |
| Sheri Emmart, Lucrezia Casino Hammond | Eileen Markanich, Johnel's Restaurant Hammond | Andy Solis, Lees Inn Merrillville |
| Kym Etzler, Country Inn & Suites Valparaiso | Robert Miller, Lucrezia Crown Point | Stacy Venable, Ramada Inn Hammond |
| Sarah Groom, Fairfield Inn & Suites Valparaiso | Maria Pabey, Hilton Garden Inn Chesterton | Shelli Walczak, Courtyard Marriott Valparaiso |
| Anita Gutierrez, Horseshoe Casino Hammond | Steve Pawlowski, Horseshoe Casino Hammond | Lynette Yepsin, Gulden Insurance Agency St. John |
| Daniel Hernandez, Lucrezia Crown Point | Pamela Pilon, Hilton Garden Inn Chesterton | Prido Yok, Horseshoe Casino Hammond |
| Dave Hunt, Hilton Garden Inn Chesterton | Deborah Pinkins, Residence Inn Merrillville | Cecelia Zick, Theatre at the Center Munster |
| Rosie Jackson, Radisson Hotel Merrillville | Betty Rachowicz, People's Bank Munster | Debi Zoumis, Holiday Inn Express Valparaiso |

Lake County Convention & Visitors Bureau

lakecountycvb.com

800-ALL-LAKE

| Board of Directors | Appointed By | Professional Staff | Position |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Victor DeMeyer <i>Chairman</i> | Mayor of Hobart | Speros A. Batistatos, <i>FCDME</i> | President/CEO |
| W.F. "Bill" Wellman <i>Vice Chairman</i> | Lt. Governor | Katie R. Holderby | Executive Vice President |
| Chareice White <i>Secretary</i> | Gary Common Council | Janis Flutka, <i>CPA, CDME</i> | Chief Financial Officer |
| Mary Rakoczy <i>Treasurer</i> | Highland Town Council | Heather Becerra | Director of Sales & Marketing |
| Steve Teibel <i>Marketing Com. Chair</i> | Town of Schererville | Luke Weinman IV | Director of Information & Technology |
| Matthew Reardon <i>Admin. Com. Chair</i> | Town of Munster | Judith Brown | Director of Administrative Services |
| Megan Cecil | Lake County Council | Jason Sands | Director of Sports Development |
| Robert Forster | Merrillville Town Council | Ronald Dettlerline | Director of Facilities |
| Violet Mika | Lake County Commissioners | Erika Scheeringa | Public & Community Relations Manager |
| Charles Prewitt | Mayor of Gary | Michael Chaseley | Partnership Development Manager |
| Raymond Rucoba | Mayor of East Chicago | Andrea Rivera | Marketing Designer |
| Manuel Salazar | Hammond City Council | Robert Victor | Research & Technology Manager |
| Joi Struebig | Lake County Commissioners | Tammy Lambert | Accounting Manager |
| Gus Trakas | Lake County Council | Adrienne Binder | Special Events Manager |
| Marty Wielgos | Mayor of Hammond | Kate Hurey | Convention Sales Manager |
| Andrew Kyres, <i>Parliamentarian</i> | | Andrew Collins | Productions Coordinator |
| Daniel C. Kuzman, <i>Attorney</i> | | Krystle Simmons | Special Events & Minority Affairs Coordinator |
| | | Barb Mack | Group Housing Coordinator |
| | | Megan Langel | Assistant 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.

To view an online version of this newsletter, please go to www.lakecountycvb.com



Permit No 134
Paid
U.S. Postage
First Class