



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

Tourism Development News

A Publication of the University of Illinois Extension-Fulton County

Visitor Guide Offers Advertising Opportunities

Kevin McGuire

If you own or operate a business and want tourists to be your customers, this opportunity is for you!

The new *Fulton County Visitor Guide* will highlight things to see and do in Fulton County, and offers local businesses a chance to advertise to our visitors. Ad sales have begun and space is limited. If your business has something to offer the traveler, be sure to get into this guide!

Why a visitor guide?

First, it will promote

Fulton County to potential visitors.

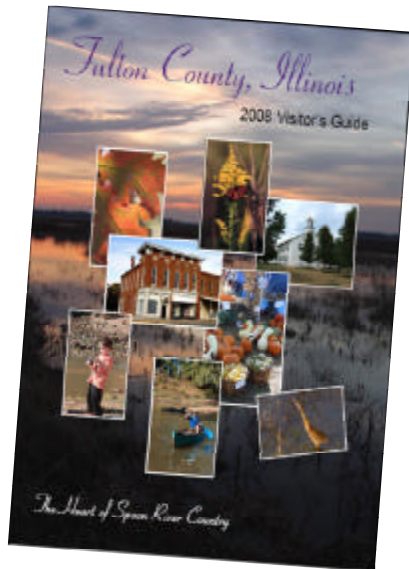
This attractive guide puts our best foot

forward, sharing our great things to see and do with people who haven't discovered us yet. It will be available

to potential visitors at the Illinois Travel Information Centers where major travel routes enter the state, as well as at other distant locations where it can catch travelers' attention.

A companion website will allow potential visitors to find us on the internet as they plan their travels. This

website, like the guide, will highlight the wealth of outdoor recreation,



To Advertise Contact:

Kelly Russell—309-219-2739

Dave Smith—309-363-8179

or

E-mail: democratads@att.net

historic attractions, festivals, and family fun available here in the heart of Spoon River Country.

Once visitors are here, the guide will help them find their way from one engaging attraction to the next and, importantly, to the lodging, dining, and shopping (your business, perhaps?) that will round out their travel experience. The guide presents our special combination of attractions and visitor services—good food, comfortable rooms, delightful products, and wonderful customer service—and puts it all at the traveler's finger tips.

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Ukraine Trip Highlights Common Challenges

Kevin McGuire

An independent nation since 1991, Ukraine enjoys a growing free market economy and an expanding middle-class. Tourism may offer some rural development potential, even for Ukraine's less charismatic landscapes far from mountains and scenic coasts. On an Extension trip to eastern Ukraine in April 2007, our hosts, informed of my work in tourism, took me to several sites that they wanted me to see.

We visited a set of guest cottages at a

wide bend in the River Psel. Similar in size to our own Spoon River, the Psel's dark, flat water moves through a fairly level, mostly agricultural countryside. The cottages appeared to offer little more than a roof and four walls and little in the way of amenities beyond access to the river for swimming and a rowboat. They resembled some of the most basic cabins along the Spoon River, rustic places with local appeal, places to "rough it" for a few days of fishing and family fun. I don't know

enough about Ukrainian travel tastes to know whether these cabins along the Psel could have any broader appeal.

What does it take to transform a rustic "local getaway" to something with

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News & Updates

Fulton County Tourism Alliance:

The Tourism Alliance's Coordinating Group continues to meet every other month, usually in a joint session with the Tourism & Economic Development Committee of the Fulton County Board. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 1 (no foolin'), at 4PM. New members and visitors welcome!

Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (PACVB):

The *2008 Peoria Area Visitor Guide* has been published and features a full-page ad promoting visits to Fulton County! The ad was paid for by Fulton County and assembled by Tourism Alliance

members working with PACVB's communications staff.

Our friend Ashley Chitwood, PACVB's Tourism & Special Projects Manager, has traveled on behalf of our region to a Group Tour Tradeshow in Virginia. She's generously agreed to share what she learned in our next issue!

Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism:

The 2008 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism takes place February 13-15 in Springfield. Workshop and speaker topics include travel trends, heritage

tourism, online marketing, as well as "green" and sustainable tourism. Find more conference information online at www.iltourismconference.com.

Fulton County Tourism Council:

At their recent Annual Meeting and Banquet, the Tourism Council installed officers—Glen Hamm, President; Kim Dunnigan, Vice President; Donita Ridle, Treasurer; and Ann Green, Secretary. The Tourism Council meets at 7PM on the first Thursday of every other month at the Fulton County Health Department. Find them on the online at www.fultoncountytourism.org.

Ukraine

(Continued from page 1)

enough appeal to become a viable tourism enterprise? On the Spoon River you can see the difference between the basic cabins and a place like *The Lost Pelican* (a rental cabin at Bernadotte). *The Lost Pelican* has found a market through the right combination of enticing features—hot-tub, air conditioning, fireplace, canoes and kayaks, a screened-in porch, modern appliances, etc.—and the appeal of its restful setting on the river. The features and setting combine to transform what might otherwise be just another cabin on the Spoon River into a visitor experience for which guests from Chicago will pay \$150 per night.

After the cottages along the Psel we visited a children's summer camp, a larger, more complex tourism development opportunity. Could it be transformed from an underutilized asset to a profitable tourism facility? A year-round resort? At first, I struggled even to see it as a summer camp. Several austere gray-beige brick buildings stood around a central square. This arrangement of dormitory, dining hall, and other buildings gave it more the look of a tiny, very stern college campus. Through translators my hosts explained that, for even three-season use, the camp's central heating system

would have to be repaired at considerable cost, a significant hurdle given painfully high interest rates and the skittishness of many investors.

The institutional look of the place must have triggered my memory. I thought of an example for the kind of transformation that might fit this site and for understanding the kind of investment it might require. Putting translators to the test, I described an enterprise called McMenamins whose business model seems built around the transformation of older, often institutional, and perhaps abandoned properties into unique lodging and entertainment destinations. Their Edgefield Manor inhabits the old Multnomah County Poor Farm and grounds outside Portland, OR. The site features comfortable guest rooms, a movie theater, eclectic décor, a top-notch restaurant, winery, distillery, brewpub, gardens, golf course, gift shop, artisan studios, and more. It's a fantastic example of a once-idle public asset (shuttered for 8 years) transformed to productive commercial use, employing perhaps 50 people, moving back onto the tax rolls, and wonderfully exemplifying the tourism adage about "selling an experience."

Could a McMenamins-like approach transform the children's summer camp



An image of Lenin still looks out from the dormitory wall at a children's summer camp in eastern Ukraine.

in Ukraine or similar sites in our region into destination resorts? Serious investors would want to know a great deal more about such sites and their potential. What opportunities and amenities exist nearby? How far are they from population centers and concentrations of people with disposable income?

In Ukraine, as here, a key element of important tourism development will lie in transforming existing assets to meet new opportunities.



Ask “Dr. Tourism”—*Packages & Itineraries*

Dear Dr. Tourism,

I know you’ve said before what a “package” is, but what’s the difference between that and an “itinerary?”

Puzzled in Pleasant Township

Dear Puzzled,

You’ve asked a good question. In general, there’s probably not much difference between a *package* and an *itinerary*. These two tidbits of tourism lingo both describe marketing approaches that bundle together attractions and opportunities in order to appeal to potential visitors.

Think of *itineraries* as proposed routes and stops for visitors to enjoy. They’re often organized around themes to appeal to certain traveler interests, such as “Natural Wonders” or “Civil War Sites.” The sites on an itinerary may or may not include a cost for the traveler.

Packages, as you may recall from a previous Dr. Tourism column, generally feature sites, activities, and/or accommodations that do have fees. The marketing power of a package lies in bundling an attractive set of goods or services and then offering them together for one convenient “package price,” one that suggests a bargain to

the traveler.

In practice, the two terms may get used interchangeably and begin to blur. Any number of tourism websites have “Itinerary Builders” that allow potential visitors to put together multi-stop, multi-day *itineraries* with a package price.

Locally it’s probably useful to continue to think of *itineraries* and *packages* separately. Both are tools for drawing local economic benefit from the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway. The Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (PACVB) already offers suggested Byway *itineraries* on its website (www.peoria.org/goto/IRRIitineraries). For example, for Day One of the listed Canton-Havana Tour, visitors are encouraged to visit Lakeland Park, the Emiquon Preserve, Dickson Mounds Museum, and Banner Marsh.

To turn Byway visitors into customers, savvy local businesses might develop a *package* to compliment this Scenic Byway *itinerary*. For instance, ideally positioned right on the Byway and close to Banner Marsh, the new *Cracklin’ Jakes* restaurant and neighboring *Log Cabin Inn* in Banner, could offer a dinner and lodging

package designed specifically to appeal to visitors enjoying Day One of that Canton-Havana Tour.

Likewise *Willett’s Winery*, *Lost Creek Pottery*, and *Liz Marie’s Bakery* in Manito might team up to offer a tasty and enjoyable *package* to Byway travelers whose Day Two *itinerary* takes them to nearby Sand Ridge Forest and Jake Wolf Fish Hatchery.

The PACVB will promote such packages, developed by member businesses, by posting them on their website. Additionally, the new website for the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway (coming soon!) will offer Byway itineraries and accompanying links to Byway communities’ websites, where unique local packages can be offered to entice those planning Byway visits.

By combining *itineraries* that beckon visitors with our best attractions and appealing *packages* that serve up our finest in dining, lodging, and other visitor services, we’re able to offer would-be visitors the kind of complete and unique travel experiences that will win them over and keep them coming back.

*Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
Till it's gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot
—Joni Mitchell*



Guide (Continued from page 1)

By sharing the breadth of what Fulton County has to offer, the guide will introduce visitors to reasons to stay longer and to come back. A guest thumbing through the guide at Farmington’s Italian Fest might discover for the first time that we are also home to Dickson Mounds Museum, one of the premiere onsite archaeological museums in the country—reason enough to plan a return visit!

In the hands of the “front line” folks who greet and serve visitors in local

convenience stores, restaurants, and other places of business, the *Fulton County Visitor Guide* will be a handy reference. With a copy of the guide in hand, we can all be knowledgeable ambassadors for our area. The answer to a visitor’s “What is there to do around here?” will be an easy one. The “front line” ambassador can flip open the guide, point to a photo and say, “Well, you could visit the Statue of Liberty in London Mills,” flip a few pages, “Or check out one of the largest wetland restorations in the whole country at the Emiquon Preserve!” When the visitor asks, “What about

places to eat or someplace to stay?” the guide’s dining and lodging sections will make that an easy question to answer. To top it off, with a stack of guides handy, our “front line” ambassador can say to our guest, “Here, please take this copy with you. Enjoy your visit!”

If you’re interested in purchasing an ad in the visitor guide, please contact Kelly Russell (309-219-2739) or Dave Smith (309-363-8179).

Tourism Development News and U of I Extension

The Tourism Development News is a bi-monthly newsletter from the Community & Economic Development (CED) Education program of the University of Illinois Extension-Fulton County.

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Events and Meetings

Due to limited space, this section highlights only some of the upcoming events & meetings in our area.

February

Feb. 13-15	2008 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism , Springfield Hilton (www.iltourismconference.com)
Feb. 16	Hickory Ridge Coffee House , Tom Irwin, 7:30 pm (Doors open 6:30 pm), Illinois State Museum—Dickson Mounds (309-547-3721)
Feb. 21	Business After Hours—Canton Area Chamber of Commerce , 5 pm, Humane Society of Fulton County (309-647-5077)
Feb. 24	Annual Artifact Identification Day , Illinois State Museum—Dickson Mounds (309-547-3721)
Feb. 27	Interpretive Plan Presentation—Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway , 12 pm ("Brown Bag" Lunch) Illinois State Museum—Dickson Mounds
Feb. 29	14th Annual Fee Hunting Workshop , Illinois State Museum—Dickson Mounds (Registration 309-833-4747)

March

March 7-9	Town & Country Arts Show—Canton Park District , Donaldson Community Center (309-647-1345)
March 15	Hickory Ridge Coffee House , Small Potatoes, 7:30 pm (Doors open 6:30 pm), Illinois State Museum—Dickson Mounds (309-547-3721)
March 29	Humane Society Auction—Music by "Lowe Profile," Canton Country Club (309-647-5077 for tickets)

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