

Lake County Board Presentation

Visit Lake County Economic & Marketing Highlights

June 10, 2025



Visit Lake County

- Champion and advocate for Lake County as a premier visitor destination
- Leading force in creating a positive image for Lake County. Elevate the profile of the county for residents, visitors and businesses
- Showcase and support our communities, attractions, outdoor recreation, small businesses
- Create marketing strategies to inspire visitors & residents to experience Lake County



Visit Lake County

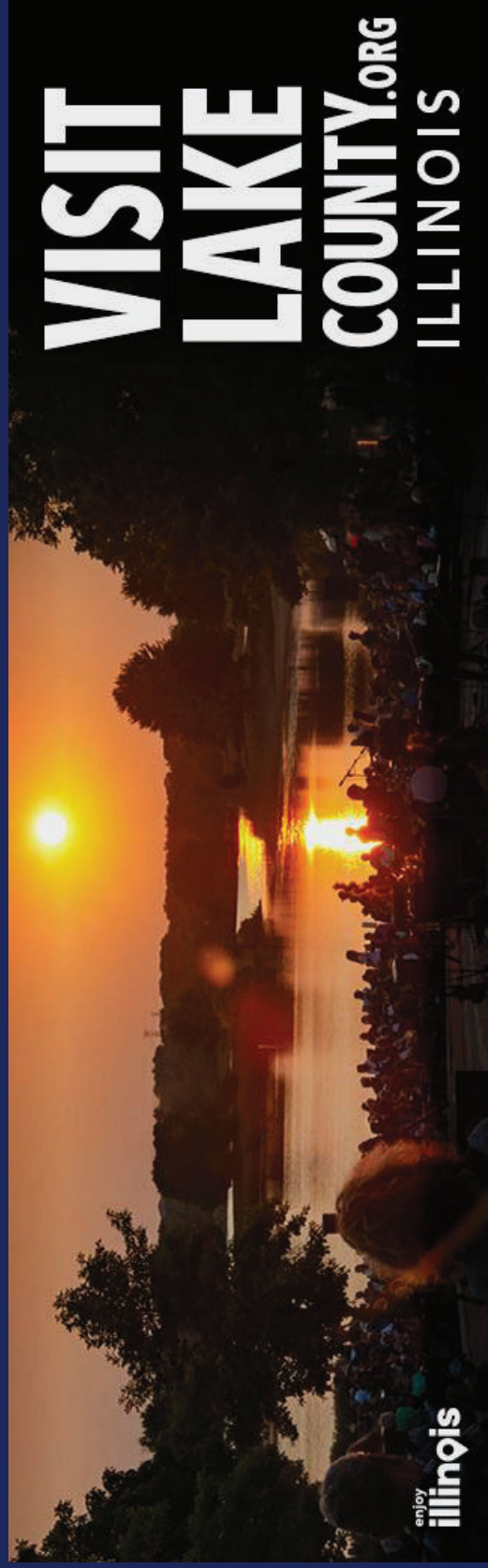
Board of Directors

David Motley, Chair, City of Waukegan
John Krajnak, Treasurer, Six Flags Great America
Sonolito Bronson, Secretary, City of Zion
Cheryl Ross, Past Chair, Village of Gurnee

Brad Burke, Village of Lincolnshire
Carissa Casbon, Lake County Board
Justin Keenan, Village of Deerfield
Ray Keller, Village of Lake Zurich
Greg Koeppen, Lake County Farm Bureau
Brad Lajoie, Lincolnshire Marriott Resort
Jonathan Petrillo, Village of Vernon Hills
Heather Rowe, Village of Libertyville
Brieanna Ruggia, Great Wolf Lodge Illinois
Jennifer Grieco, Village of Mundelein

Visit Lake County Organization

- Official DMO for Lake County (501c6)
- Certified by DCEO/IL Office of Tourism
- Public-Private Partnership – 200 partners
- Staff of 9
- DMAP Accreditation & CDME



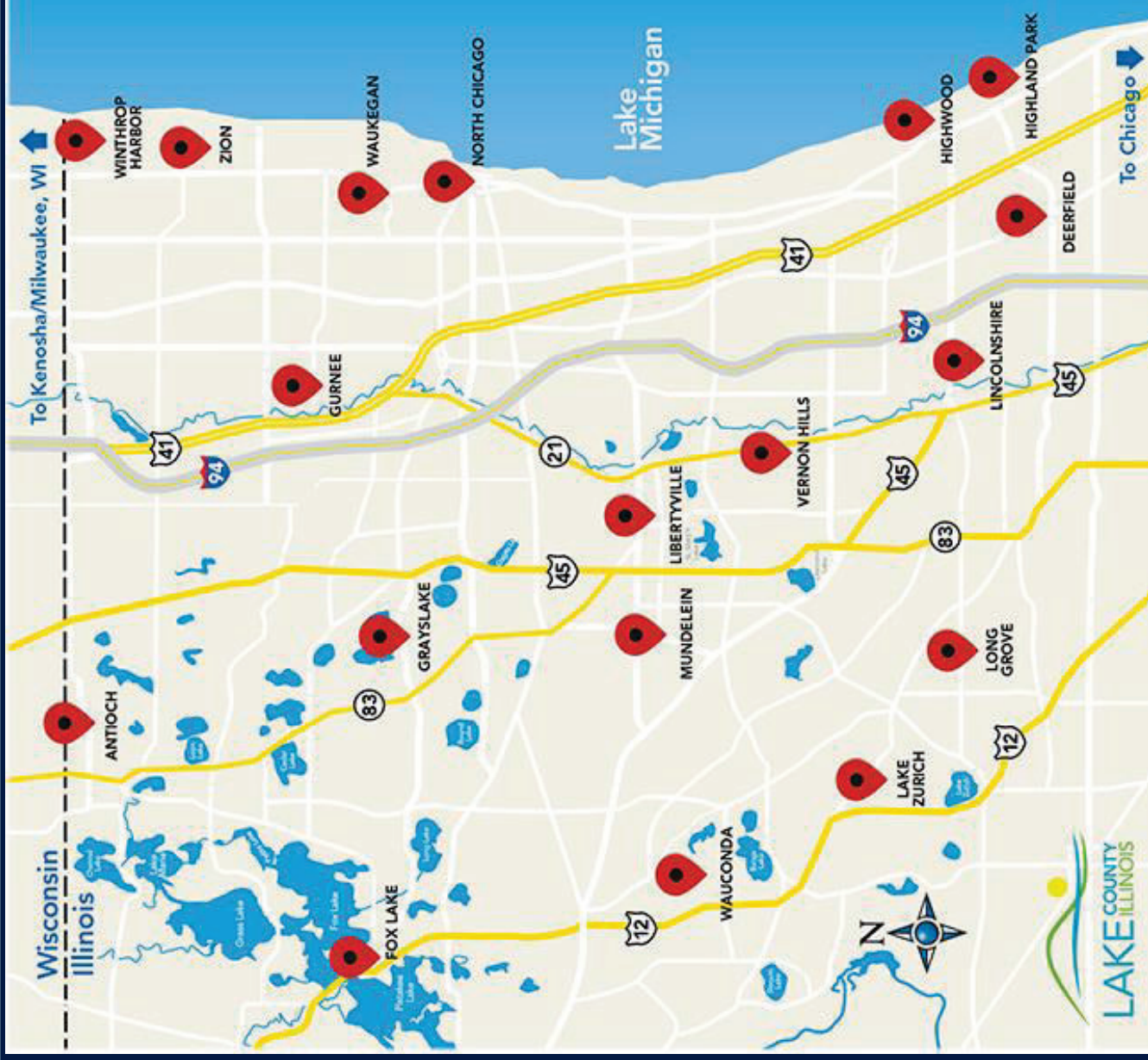
VLC Funding Sources

State Tourism Grant: \$1.5 million in FY '25

- Local Match Sources
 - Co-op Advertising Programs
 - Community & Business Partnerships
- Lake County's Investment - \$157,500 + Hotel Tax
 - Support New Arts & Cultural Initiative
 - Increase Our Community Engagement
 - Expand Flavor Festival



18 VLC Community Investors: Highwood & Winthrop Harbor– new partners!

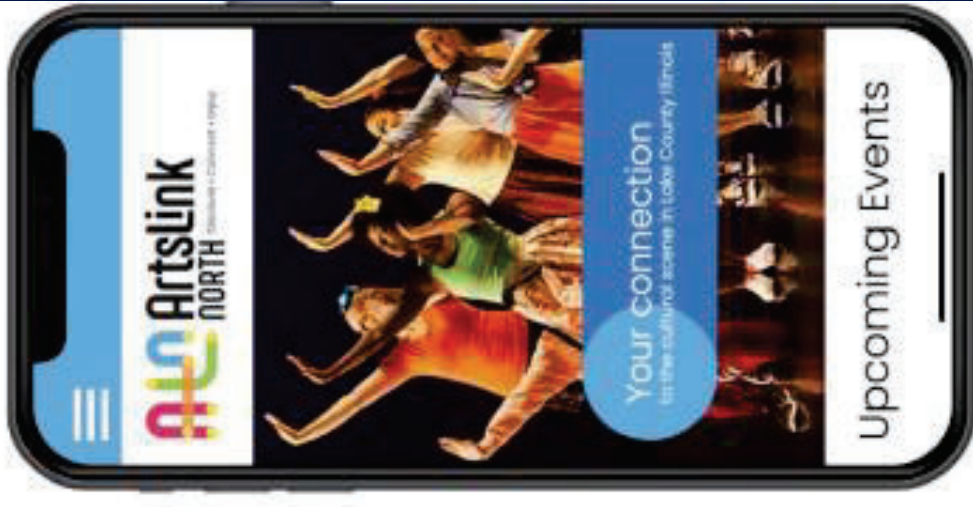
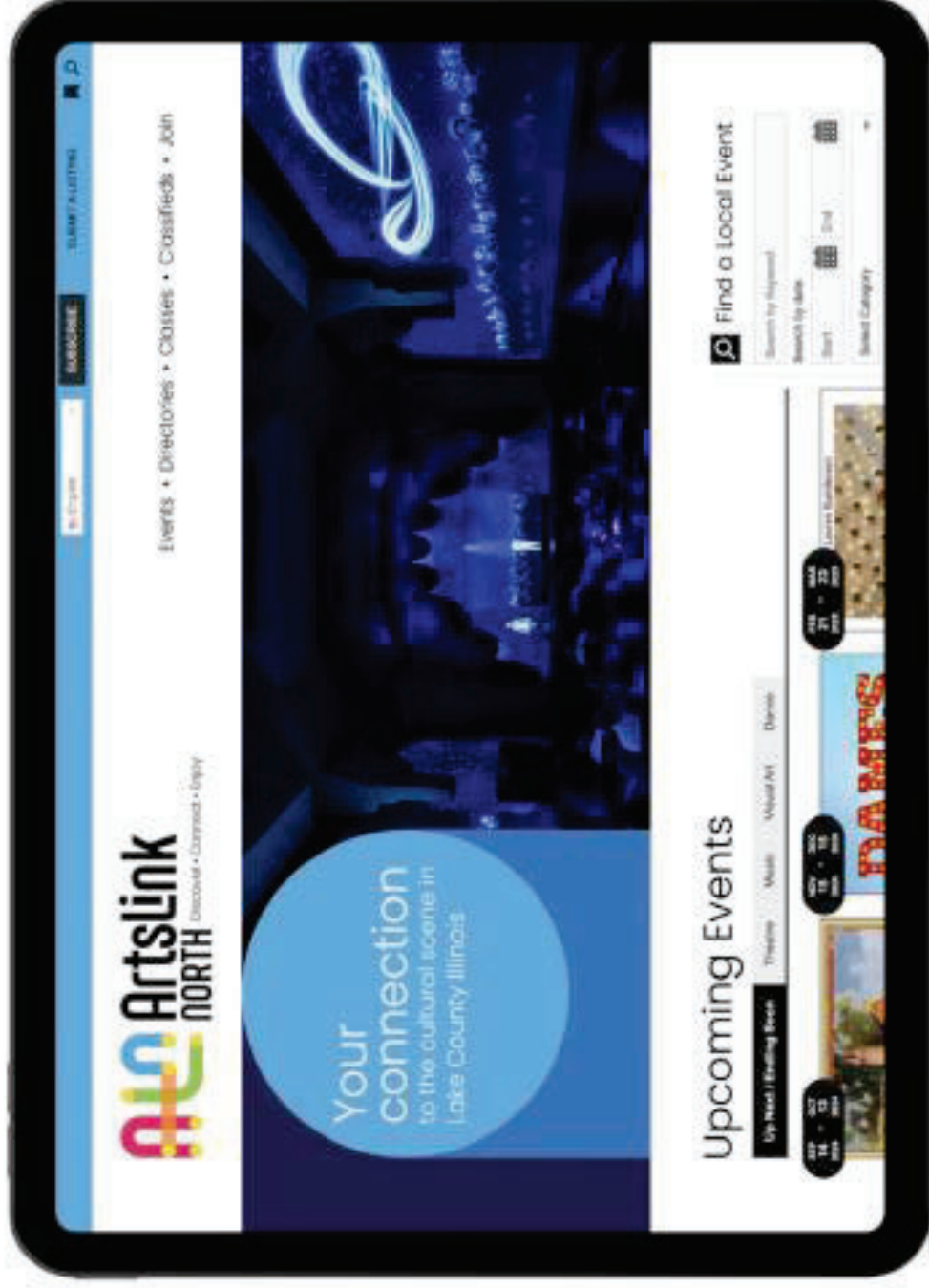


Community Outreach & Partnerships

- CLC - Hospitality Program & Scholarship
- Lake County Partners
- Naval Station Great Lakes
- LCFPD – Independence Grove Beer Garden



Lake County Arts & Cultural Alliance



Economic Impact of Tourism in Lake County

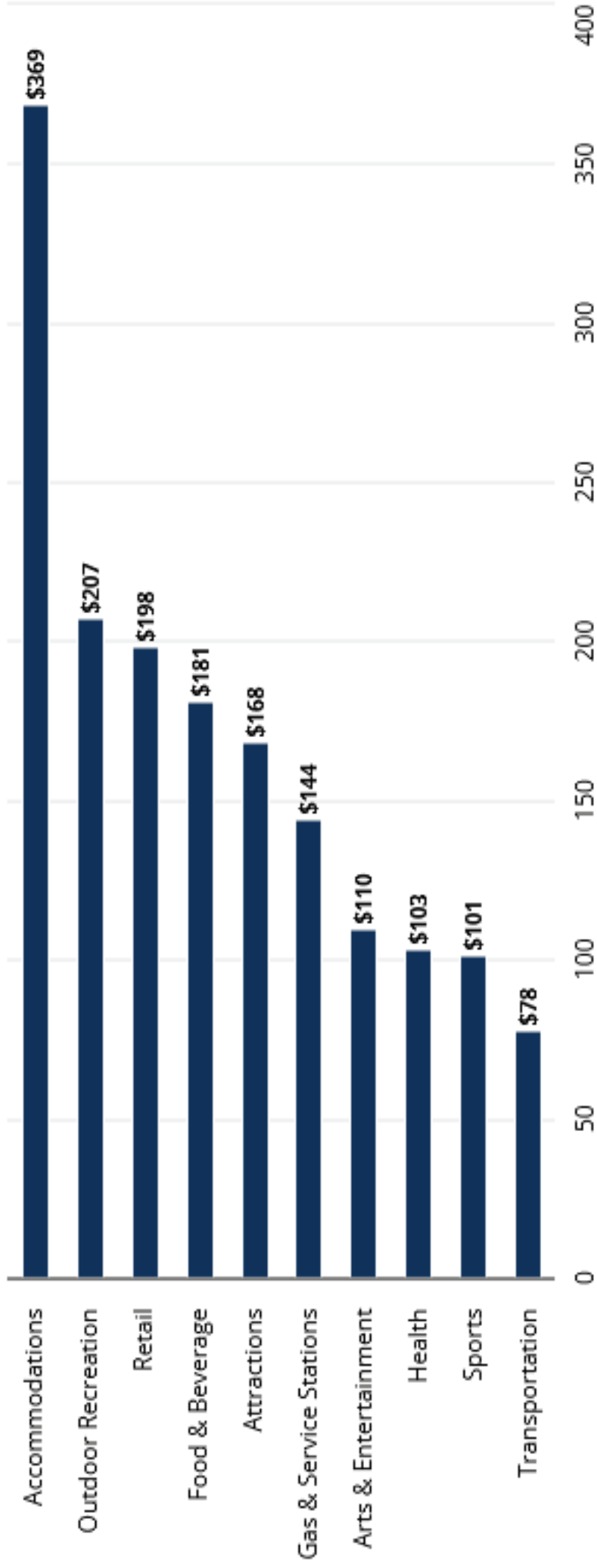
- \$1.9 Billion in Visitor Spending (+7.2%)
- 15,700 Tourism-Related Jobs
- \$68.6 Million in Local Taxes
- \$134 Million in State Taxes

*Source: 2023 US Travel Association
& Tourism Economics*



Visitor Spending in Lake County Past 12 Month

Avg. Visitor Spend by Category



Source: Zartico spend data based on cardholder count sample size of 77,518 visitors from outside of Lake County

VisitLakeCounty.org & Visitors Guide

LAKE COUNTY SUMMER OUTDOOR GUIDE

COME EXPLORE OUR SCENIC LAKES, RIVERS AND LAND...

There are numerous outdoor venues to explore nature in Lake County! With 170 lakes and rivers, enjoy Illinois Beach State Park in Zion off the shores of Lake Michigan and O'Steen State Park in Spring Grove. Plus, with nearly 24,000 acres of land to explore at the Lake County Forest Preserves, Lake County offers outdoor beauty and trails for those intent on boating, fishing, bird watching, golf and many other activities. Be sure to take advantage of Lake County's outdoor adventures in winter, too, including the new Solar Trails at a County Forest Preserve (click here).



Discover Hidden gems across the county.

Lake County is full of surprises for curious travelers willing to wander beyond the usual paths.

Tucked away in Lake Forest, Elva Farm blends natural beauty with historic charm, offering seasonal markets, live music, and a charming gentleman's farmstead. In nearby Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve, explore scenic bluff-top trails and Lake Michigan views, all within a former military post.

Interesting attractions

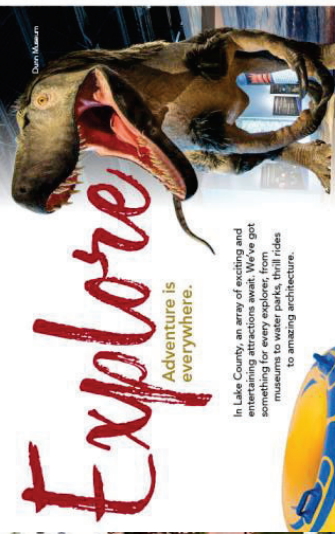
Further north, North Port Marina State Recreation Area in Winthrop Harbor is a scenic waterfront destination on the Great Lakes and offers boating, fishing, sandy beaches and lakefront trails. History and nostalgia meet at the Volo Museum, where vintage cars, including Hollywood icons like the Ford Mustang, are displayed. Discover the rich history of Lake County by taking a tour of Illinois' only remaining open-water quaking bog and National Natural Landmark, Volo Bog State Natural Area in Ingleside.



Quirky and captivating

Yuna's Speakeasy in Highland Park offers craft drinks in an intimate, hidden setting for those who enjoy a sophisticated evening out. If you can find it, it's the kind of place you'll talk about long after you've left. Meanwhile, in Grayslake, the Romney House offers a unique experience for visitors to experience small-batch, hand-poured luxury candles in a boutique environment that exudes cozy sophistication.

These local gems are complemented by other off-the-beaten-path favorites like the new Lakesport Park in Vernon Hills, and Sunnyside Farm in Lake Villa. Each offers interactive experiences tied to Lake County's culture, agriculture and history.



Explore Adventure is everywhere.

In Lake County, an array of exciting and entertaining attractions await. We've got something for every explorer, from museums to water parks, thrill rides to amazing architecture.

Six Flags Great America

For thrill-seekers, Six Flags Great America and Hurricane Harbor Chicago combine the excitement of a world-class water park and captivating shows for an adrenaline-fueled adventure for the whole family. Experience the Wrath of Rahabasa, the park's newest coaster or the splash-tastic fun of Hurricane Harbor's tsunami surge, the tallest water coaster across the globe.

Great Wolf Lodge Illinois

The Gurnee resort beckons families with its colossal indoor water park and family-friendly activities like bowling, miniature golf and more. With a warm, inviting atmosphere, a memorable experience right in Lake County.

Architectural gems

Architecture enthusiasts love to tour Lake County's timeless treasures — from the oldest restaurant in the Land of Lincoln, Village Tavern in Long Grove, to the historic Waukegan Depot. At the historic Waukegan Depot, the building's rich history is simply astounding. Exceptional design, Lake County's architectural wonders offer an enriching experience.



Volo Museum

Head to the Volo Museum for an all-day experience. As a family member, explore the auto museum, Jurassic Gardens, an antique mall and a nine-hole mini-golf course.

Digital Marketing



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Lake County

49w

Discover the vibrant and welcoming world of Lake County's Farmers Markets! 🌱 More than just a spot for the freshest, locally grown fruits and vegetables, these markets are where neighbors, friends, and families come together to explore unique handmade goods, sweet treats, and one-of-a-kind items. 🍯 @VisitGrayslake offers a year-round shopping experience with markets in all three seasons. 🌈 In @Mundelein_IL, enjoy live music and delectable eats from local vendors in a festive downtown setting. 🍂 Walk through historic downtown areas and find treasures waiting around every



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Lake County, Illinois

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Lake County is a foodie's paradise! 🍴 From Grandwood Park in @VillageofGurnee to @ShropshirePark, there's a food truck fiesta for everyone! 🌮 Don't miss out on the Food Truck Fests in @VillageofGurnee, or catch a concert and grab some grub at @FroggLake. 🎵 @CityofHighwood's Evening Gourmet Market is a must-try! And for a family-friendly affair, check out the Homemade Artistry Fair in @EnjoyLong Grove or the Patricia A. Jones Food Truck Festival in @ExploreWaukegan. There's plenty to



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21w

Santa Claus is coming to Lake County, Illinois, and it's time to get your classic family photo with Jolly Old Saint Nick! Bring your children to sit on Santa's lap and share their wishes with the magical man at these locations and more around Lake County. 📍Hawthorn Mall is hosting "A Christmas Story"-themed photos with Santa at various times through Dec. 24. 📍Reserve your spot to see Santa Claus at Gurnee Mills through Christmas Eve. 📍Bring the whole family to get classic Christmas photos with Santa at the



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26w

Lake County is home to some incredible museums that bring history to life! From the @SockMonkeyMuseum in @EnjoyLong Grove, where you can meet Monkeys, to the @NTLMuseumAmericanSailor, the Midwest's only official U.S. Navy museum, there's plenty to explore. Find your favorite Lake County museum! 📍: @SockMonkeyMuseum @GraylakeHCM @ChicagoBotanic @WaukeganParkDistrict @LCFPD



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13w

Apple lovers, it's that time again! Get ready for Long Grove Apple Fest happening September 20-22 in @EnjoyLongGrove! From apple pies and donuts to caramel-dipped and candied apples, there's a treat for every taste bud. 🍏 Savor the flavors, sip on apple wine and sangria and enjoy live music all weekend long! 🎵 It's three days of family fun you won't want to miss! 📍: @enjoylonggrove

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#VisitLakeCounty #LakeCountyIL

35 likes

September 17, 2024

Seasonal Marketing Campaigns



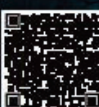
**ENJOY A MONTH OF
FRIGHTS AND
DELIGHTS
IN LAKE COUNTY ILLINOIS**

COME FOR THE SPOOKS. STAY FOR THE SPIRITS!
From pumpkin patches to pumpkin ales, there's fun for the whole family in Lake County this autumn. Discover frightening festivals, spooktacular fall activities, and carefully crafted elixirs of local spirits, wine, and beer along the Liberation Trail. Find travel packages, Halloween events and more at VisitLakeCounty.org.

SixFlags FRIGHT FEST
Don't miss Fright Fest Presented by SNICKERS® at Six Flags Great America Through November 3



**SPOOKS & SPIRITS
Check-In Challenge
October 1-31, 2024**






There's no-ho-ho-ho place like Lake County for the holidays!

When you're making your list and checking it twice for holiday fun, this year make sure to add a trip to Lake County, Illinois. Whether it's a festive stage show, family adventure with Santa, spectacular shopping or delicious cuisine, there is something for everyone. Bring the whole family and unwrap new traditions at VisitLakeCounty.org.

VISIT LAKE COUNTY ILLINOIS

Holiday your way



Waukegan

Libertyville

Gurnee

Verona Hills



enjoy
illinois

Lake County Libation Trail



BEER HERE!

LAKE COUNTY LIBATION TRAIL

More than 20 breweries, wineries and distilleries in one county! In Lake County, Illinois, just north of Chicago, there's always something to celebrate! Find the full list at VisitLakeCounty.org/Libation-Trail.



[VISIT LAKE COUNTY ILLINOIS](http://VisitLakeCounty.org)

[#LCLibationTrail](https://www.facebook.com/LCLibationTrail) • [Let's Go Lake County](https://www.facebook.com/LetGoLakeCounty) • VisitLakeCounty.org

enjoy **illinois**

Please sample responsibly.



Lake County Flavor Festival



**SIP SAVOR
CELEBRATE**

MEMORABLE MEALS | **CRAFT BEVERAGES** | **EXCITING EVENTS**

A MONTHLONG CELEBRATION OF FOOD, DRINK & FUN

LAKE COUNTY
FLAVOR
FESTIVAL

GET A TASTE AT VISITLAKECOUNTY.ORG/FLAVOR-FESTIVAL





OVER 100 PARTICIPANTS. HOW MANY CAN YOU HIT?

FEBRUARY 1-28

HIGHLIGHTS

112 PARTICIPATING
PARTNERS 

27 COMMUNITIES
REPRESENTED 

8.7 MILLION 
TOTAL CAMPAIGN IMPRESSIONS



Thank you for everything you
to do support and promote
Lake County communities!
—Visit Lake County partner



TESTIMONIALS

My wife and I LOVE the
check-in challenge and love
visiting new places. Lake County
is the best! So many great
restaurants and breweries!

This was a great idea and had us visiting places we wouldn't have otherwise.

The festival gave us an opportunity
to have some destination dates to try
some different venues.

I liked how restaurants and libations
were wrapped into one this year.
It made it more exciting!

FACEBOOK TAKEOVER

Generating over **1.696 million views** on Facebook, Lake County's own meteorologist Mike Caplan hosted 13 Facebook Live events highlighting the Flavor Festival and its partners including Primo Italian, Shanty's Wadsworth, Perry's Steakhouse, Bluegrass, Prairie at Brae Loch and many more. His segments garnered **1.1 million reactions** and nearly **22,000 interactions** on the social media platform.



Summer Road Trips to Lake County

Let the ride take you...
...to all the twists and turns
Lake County has to offer.

From treasured favorites like Six Flags Great Escape, Great Wolf Lodge and Ravinia Festival to the lesser-known gems that are hidden along the way, every road leads to fun this summer in Lake County – located between Milwaukee and Chicago. Bring the family or plan a getaway with friends. Play all day then stay all night – tomorrow always brings a new adventure in Lake County. For all of our hidden gems and treasured favorites, check out VisitLakeCounty.org!



Independence Grove



Ravinia Festival



Downtown Waukegan



Uneshire Marriott Resort



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Plan your road trip at
VisitLakeCounty.org

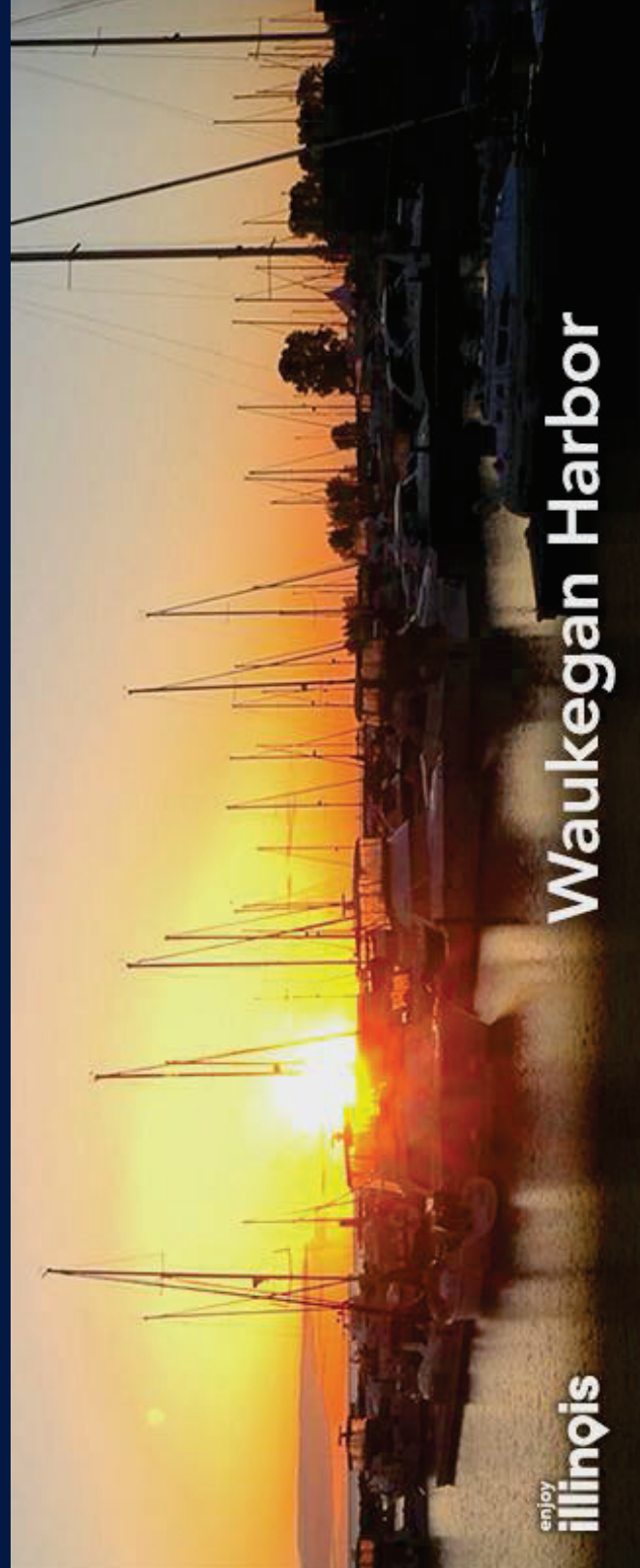


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Waukegan Harbor

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Group Business Development Opportunities

- Recruit sports tournaments, meetings, reunions, tour groups for Lake County
- YTD Results (thru May)
 - Secured 304 groups
 - 15,185 room nights
 - \$6.4 million visitor spending

"Remember when we all met in Lake County, Illinois?"



That's what people say after a successful family reunion. Just north of Chicago is beautiful Lake County. We offer so many places for the perfect family event; 75 lakes, forest preserves and picnic locations. You can also enjoy some of the area's best attractions including Six Flags Great Escape, Hurricane Harbor water park and the incredible Great Wolf Lodge. We also offer wonderful restaurants, hotels, entertainment and fun. For a truly unforgettable reunion, make it Lake County, Illinois.

Contact reunion expert, Kimberly Ghys, at kimberly@LakeCounty.org to start your planning!

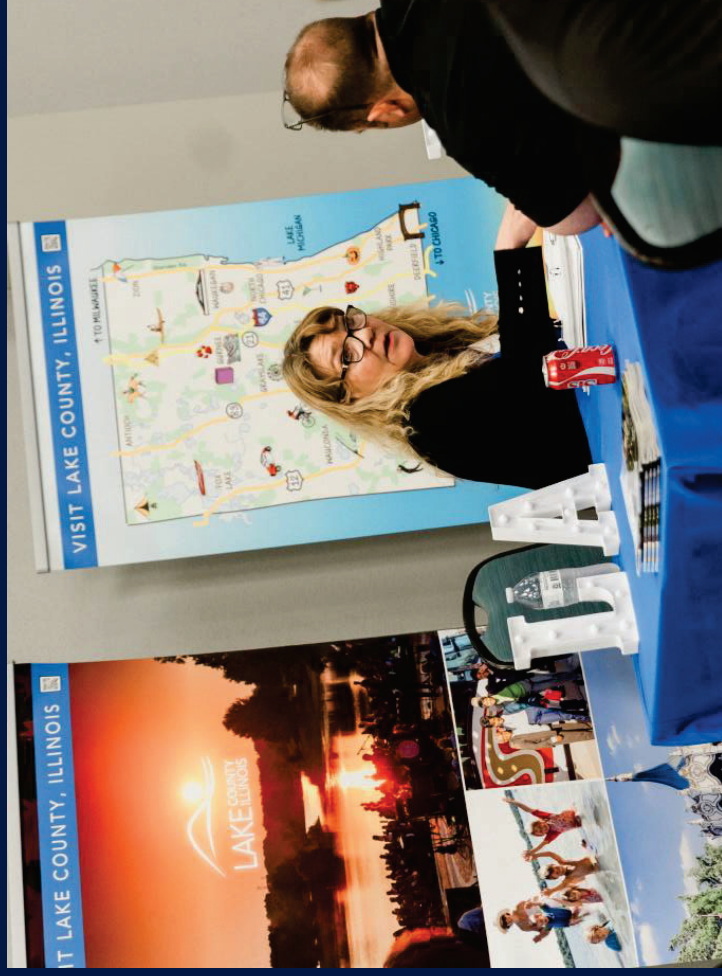


VisitLakeCounty.org
800-LAKE-NOW

enjoy **illinois**

Lake County ARPA Business Incentive Impact

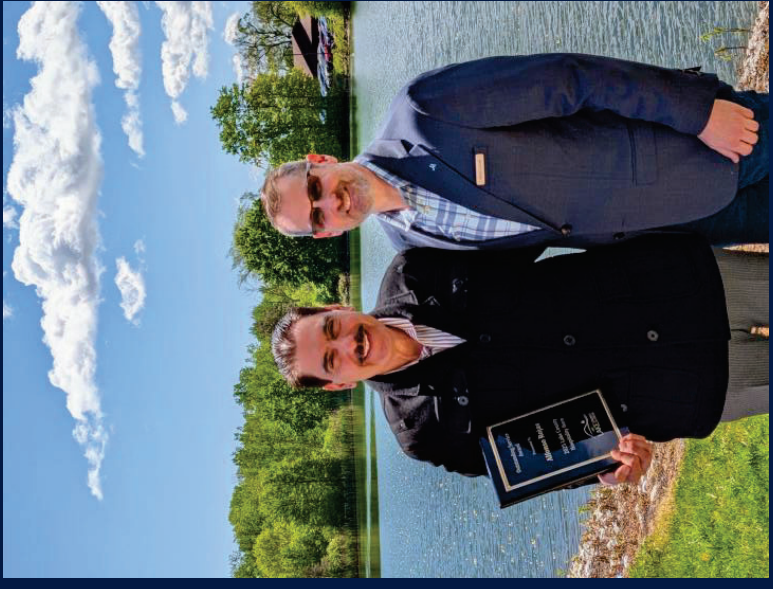
- VLC won 50 groups
- 14 communities, 45 hotels/venues
- 14,829 hotels rooms
- \$5.5 million in economic impact



Visit Lake County 2025 Hospitality Heroes

Long-time front line/back-of-the house employees

- Elaine Bock, Magnolia Cafe/Lambs Farm
- Matt Phillips, Lynfred Winery
- Alfonso Rojas, Lincolnshire Marriott Resort



Why Travel & Tourism is Essential



- Supports communities
- Creates jobs at every level
- Inspires new businesses & investments
- Bridges generations and cultures
- Lessens the tax burden of residents
- Elevates the quality of life in Lake County

Thank you for your Investment in Tourism!

Greetings from

