



# **Sports And Tourism Development Top List Of Tourism 2022 Goals**

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ALTON - Two new employees have joined the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau team emphasizing the bureau’s commitment to developing a strong sports tourism program and growing outdoor recreation and Route 66 products in southwest Illinois.

Jason Troop is the bureau's first-ever Sports Tourism Marketing Manager. Joey Naples is the bureau's Tourism Engagement and Outdoor Recreation Coordinator.

"We are looking ahead to ways we can grow the region and sports tourism as well as outdoor recreation are key components to that growth," Cory Jobe, President/CEO of the tourism bureau said. "We were able to find top-notch people to fill both of those positions and we look forward to bringing new sports tournaments, traditional and non-traditional sporting events and outdoor recreational opportunities to our rapidly growing region."

Troop has an extensive background in sports marketing and management. He joined the bureau from Wheeling, WV, where he was Director of Business Development of the Highlands Sports Complex. He also worked for the City of Brentwood, MO as a facility and sports manager, special events and marketing manager and program manager. Troop spent three years as National Communications Director for Sports Monster Corporation and has worked with the St. Charles Chill hockey team, the River City Rascals baseball team and with Evansville (IN) Baseball.

"Sports tourism is the driving force for millions of dollars of economic impact for a fast-growing number of regions around the country and I am excited for the opportunity to lead Great Rivers & Routes' renewed focus on the sports industry," Troop said. "We have some outstanding facilities with more on the way that will attract thousands of visitors to regional and national tournaments and events right here in southwest Illinois."

Naples, a resident of Carlinville, joined the bureau in November 2021 as Tourism Engagement Coordinator. His focus is community engagement among the more than 39 cities and towns that make up the Great Rivers & Routes region. He will be enhancing existing tourism products and developing new products – specifically those related to the upcoming Route 66 Centennial in Illinois. He is the owner of The Uptown Tavern in Carlinville and has worked in the agriculture field in the region.

"I have always wanted to become involved with our region's history and its growth as a destination," Naples said. "Highlighting what makes our region, as a whole, shine gives me a sense of pride because this is home and there is so much to love! I am thrilled to be part of the hard-working team at Great Rivers & Routes."

*The Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau is a certified Destination Marketing Organization serving Madison, Jersey, Calhoun, Macoupin, Montgomery and Greene counties. The bureau is dedicated to educating visitors about the region by providing information regarding the area's history, unique landmarks, recreational opportunities, leisure attractions, special events and scenic marvels.*