

Local Tourism Numbers “Record-Breaking,” Says Great Rivers & Routes

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
July 11 2023 10:18 AM



ALTON - The Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau is boasting “record-breaking” tourism growth and statistics for the region, including increases in both the number of visitors and the amount of money visitors are spending during their time here.

Cory Jobe, President & CEO of the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau, responded to a recent announcement from Governor J.B. Pritzker that there has been strong tourism growth state-wide - Jobe said the same is especially true for the Riverbend region.

“In our Great Rivers & Routes region of Southwest Illinois, we have seen amazing tourism growth over the last 18 months,” Jobe said, adding that 2022 was a “stellar year” for the six-county region. “We saw a 6.5% increase in hotel revenues coupled with a 26% increase in visitors to Southwest Illinois.”

The theme of the organization’s marketing campaign for the area has been ‘The Great Outdoors Inside the Midwest.’ Jobe said the messaging has resonated and caught the attention of visitors from nearby major cities.

“Our message highlighting unparalleled outdoor recreation and stunning scenic views is hitting home with our drive market audiences,” Jobe said. “We saw an increase of 35% in Chicago visitors, a 25% increase in visitors from Indianapolis, a 25% increase in St. Louis visitors, and an 8% increase in visitors from Paducah, Ky. Those are all cities we are targeting in our marketing with the theme, ‘The Great Outdoors Inside the Midwest.’”

Not only is the number of visitors increasing, the amount of money they’re spending in the region is increasing and contributing to the local economy. In 2022, Jobe said visitor spending increased 11% in the region, and local attractions have reported a 25% increase in visitor spending. Outdoor recreation accounted for a 4% percent increase in spending.

Jobe said he expects continued growth for the area’s tourism efforts.

“This is a trend we anticipate will continue throughout 2023, and we are confident that the Great Rivers & Routes region of southwest Illinois will excel in providing amazing experiences for visitors as they explore the Middle of Everything in Illinois,” he said.

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.

To learn more about Great Rivers & Routes, visit riversandroutes.com.