



Tourism Bureau Outlines Key Takeaways from Summit, New Projects Coming to Riverbend

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
February 8 2024 2:08 PM



RIVERBEND - The Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau hosted its annual Tourism Summit on Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024.

Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau President Corey Jobe spoke about new projects that will be completed throughout the year. These initiatives aim to increase tourism in the Riverbend region and bring more people to Alton, Grafton and surrounding areas.

“We must continue to invest in destination marketing, sales and promotion,” Jobe said during the Tourism Summit. “We need more public sector investment to be competitive in the tourism landscape...We need to address and raise our own situational awareness of how important our public lands, natural assets and outdoor recreation facilities are

and the expanded economic contribution they could drive. We need to ensure we effectively steward these assets to their full potential.”

Among other projects, there will be ten self-service “Kayak Kiosks” located along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. These kiosks will be spread throughout Madison and Jersey Counties in eight locations, and they will be usable by fall 2024. There are plans for a new Byway Discovery Center at Piasa Park, and the Lewis and Clark Confluence Tower will be expanding in coming months.

Aerie’s Resort plans to open a 1,300-foot-long zipline in Grafton, and the Clark Bridge in Alton will receive new LED lights. More information about both projects will be coming soon.

There are several projects planned along the Last 100 Miles of Route 66, including a neon sign park in Granite City and a mural at the historic Sky View Drive-In Theater in Litchfield. Livingston’s Pink Elephant Antique Mall will install an RV park, campground and electric vehicle charging station, and Litchfield’s Ariston Café will get a “makeover” to mark its 100th anniversary.

“Overall, 65% of leisure visitors to the region came from outside the State of Illinois, according to data from the Bureau’s data partner Zartico,” the bureau said in a press release. “Even with the strength of those numbers, Mr. Jobe pointed out investment in the region must continue.”