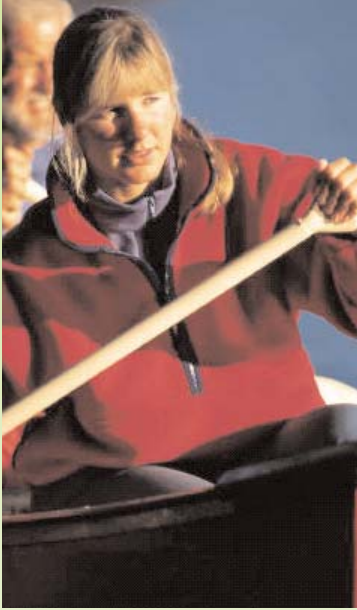


Tourism Strategy Group



The greater Peoria region has been developing a visitor-based economy over the years. Our visitors bring new dollars to the local economy; provide jobs for our residents; enhance the quality of life through culture, arts, recreational and leisure activities; and enhance the regional and national reputation of the area.

For the region, tourism has five components: meetings/conventions, nature-based tourism, sports tourism, cultural and retail tourism. The Peoria Civic Center hosts regional and national meetings and conventions. While in the area, these visitors stay in our hotels, eat at our restaurants and visit our zoo and museums. Nature-based tourism includes hunting, fishing, boating, canoeing, kayaking and watching wildlife. Sports tourism includes national and regional tournaments for soccer and softball; distance-running events; IHSA basketball and NCAA Division II Championships. The region has the potential to become a Youth Sports Capital. Finally, cultural and heritage tourism attracts people to our festivals and fairs, historic homes, numerous antique centers, concerts and performances. The region's expanded retail venues, particularly the Shoppes at Grand Prairie, are attracting retail visitors. In recent surveys, people have identified shopping as their number one activity.



The Region has an opportunity to expand to become a major regional tourist destination and a targeted tourist destination for specific national markets. In recent years, tourism has been gaining momentum with the completion of O'Brien Field, Shea Stadium for soccer, and the sponsorship and hosting of major softball tournaments at Eastside Center. On the horizon are the revitalization of the Peoria Civic Center, creation of the Peoria Riverfront Regional Museum, and development of the Emiquon Wetland Restoration Park - part of the National Scenic Byway.



Purpose:

The Tourism Strategy Group is charged with helping the region capitalize on visitor-based opportunities and assets currently situated within our region, ultimately diversifying and growing the local economy. This Strategy Group determines best practices for tourism activities in several different contexts and works to brand the region as a tourism destination.

Duties:

Some of the duties for the Tourism Strategy Group include:

- Attracting guests from the Chicago, St. Louis, and Indianapolis markets
- Improving and expanding area accommodations
- Increasing and improving tourism venues and supporting businesses for visitors
- Attracting sport/athletic events
- Expanding nature-based tourist activities and Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway experiences
- Improving customer service
- Improving funding for regional tourism marketing
- Assisting strategic partners to attract more national and regional conventions

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