

2024

Bi-Monthly Report January-February 2024



Prepared by
Nicole Gavin
Executive Director

MISSION

**To market and develop branded
Kankakee County destination
experiences to enhance community
economic growth and quality of life.**



GROUP OUTINGS

In Kankakee County

Crafted in KaCo

Craft Beverage Trail



In February 2024, together with thirteen local establishments, we launched a brand-new Craft Beverage Trail. Visitors and residents are invited to embark on an epic beverage journey where all will discover a treasure trove of local gems offering everything from mind-blowing cocktails to innovative coffee concoctions, irresistible smoothies, and ice-cold locally brewed draft beers.

We've teamed up with our pals at e-Atlas to make the adventure a piece of cake. Trail-goers can simply whip out their phone, scan the QR code, and voilà! They'll be prompted to download their awesome, free app and set up a user profile. In a snap, they'll have the treasure map right at their fingertips.

Whether they decide to take a weekend or an entire year to complete this tasty trail, it's totally up to them! And here's the cherry on top - once they conquer the trail and have all those delightful sips, we will reward them with an absolutely awesome prize!

Stay tuned for new additions to the trail and different trails in the future!



Hospitality Training



Our team hosted a Hospitality Training at Connect Roasters on February 15, 2024. The purpose of the training was to equip Kankakee County hospitality staff with information they can pass on to visitors about upcoming events, new attractions and also provide a refresher on activities that may not be top of mind. Additionally, we introduced the Kankakee County Craft Beverage Trail.

Hotel team members, Craft Beverage Trail businesses, community partners, Kankakee County Chamber of Commerce and Manteno Chamber of Commerce members were invited.

Along with our team, speakers included Nick Mansell from Connect Roasters, Jakob Knox from the Manteno Chamber of Commerce, Kelsey Post from the Kankakee County Chamber of Commerce and a brief update from Cherie Smolkovich with the Bourbonnais Township Park District.

Following the training, we walked to Strickler Planetarium on the campus of Olivet Nazarene University where we were treated to a private showing of "The Sun Revealed," which was "out of this world!" Again, introducing hospitality staff to the hidden gems within our county.



LOCAVORE. FARM TO FARM TABLE.

4-SEASON VIDEO SERIES + MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The first video was released early November, along with a multi-faceted marketing campaign urging visitors to “Come for Locavore, Stay for Everything Else!”



November 1, 2023 - January 19, 2024

Targeted Display:

177,480 Impressions

783 Clicks

.45% CTR (industry avg .09%)

Top performing creative: Farm Table

Programmatic Audio:

24,960 impressions

92.16% audio completion rate

YouTube:

8,580 impressions

6,040 video views

70.8% VCR (average is >51%)

Geo-Fencing w/ Foot Traffic

61,260 Impressions

76 Clicks

.12% CTR (slightly above average)

Top Locations: Goosefoot & Farmhouse on North

[**Click Here for the videos**](#)

COME FOR LOCAVORE. STAY FOR EVERYTHING ELSE.



SAMPLE CREATIVE ADS

LAUNCHING MARCH 2024

HOT OFF THE PRESS



discover adventure
and great tastes
all in
Kankakee County

VisitKankakeeCounty.com

TRAVEL, TASTE & TOUR
SPRING 2024

discover your
outside voice

discover
Kankakee County.

VITKANKAKEECOUNTY.COM

ENJOY ILLINOIS
SPRING/SUMMER 2024

—Visit—
KANKAKEE COUNTY

Explore all the wonders of Kankakee County!

VisitKankakeeCounty.com

UPDATED MAP
FEB 2024

Telling Our Story.....

OTHER MARKETING INITIATIVES

- Submitted nominations for the best Visitor Publication and best Tourism Marketing Campaign for the Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism awards.
- Executed weekly social media strategy including Tour Tuesdays, List of 6, Pop Culture, Upcoming Events, Boots on the Ground & relevant posts.
- Implemented monthly newsletter and blog reaching approximately 8,000 subscribers each month.
- Procured print and digital media placements in Sports Destination Marketing, Travel, Taste and Tour Spring 2024 and Enjoy Illinois Spring/Summer 2024.
- Purchased print advertisement in Kankakee School District's Black History Expo program.
- Published a "Made in Kankakee County" group tour itinerary.
- Nearly 16,000 2023 Visitor Guides are in circulation via individual requests, event distribution, hotel distribution, community partner distribution and Illinois Travel Centers.
- Created a user-friendly "Partner With Us" link on our website to support and assist our community partners, businesses, attractions and experiences in marketing.



FLY-FISH

WILL WINANS

A passionate angler who grew up along the Kankakee River teaches the finer points of fishing.

QUESTION
What's the advantage of using a drift boat?

ANSWER
A big part of the experience is that we're not buzzing the river in a motorized boat, so we can sneak up on the fish and wildlife.

QUESTION
Do anglers need experience?

ANSWER
Not at all. Sometimes a blank slate is the best thing a guide can ask for.

←
"The Kankakee is my home river, and I have a strong attachment to it."

The Kankakee River carves a bucolic path through northeastern Illinois, where acres of cornfields anchor the riverbanks as drift boats pass by.

Clean and clear with a healthy population of smallmouth bass, the Kankakee is ideal for anglers and guides like Will Winans, owner and founder of Big River Fly Fishing in Kankakee. "I still feel like a kid out there," Winans says.

Winans is on the water nearly every day, marking the change of season by the leaves and the patterns of the river. "Our success rate is determined by the mood of the fish and myriad variables that you have to surrender to," he says of the way fly-fishing tends to calm his guests. "The river keeps us humble."

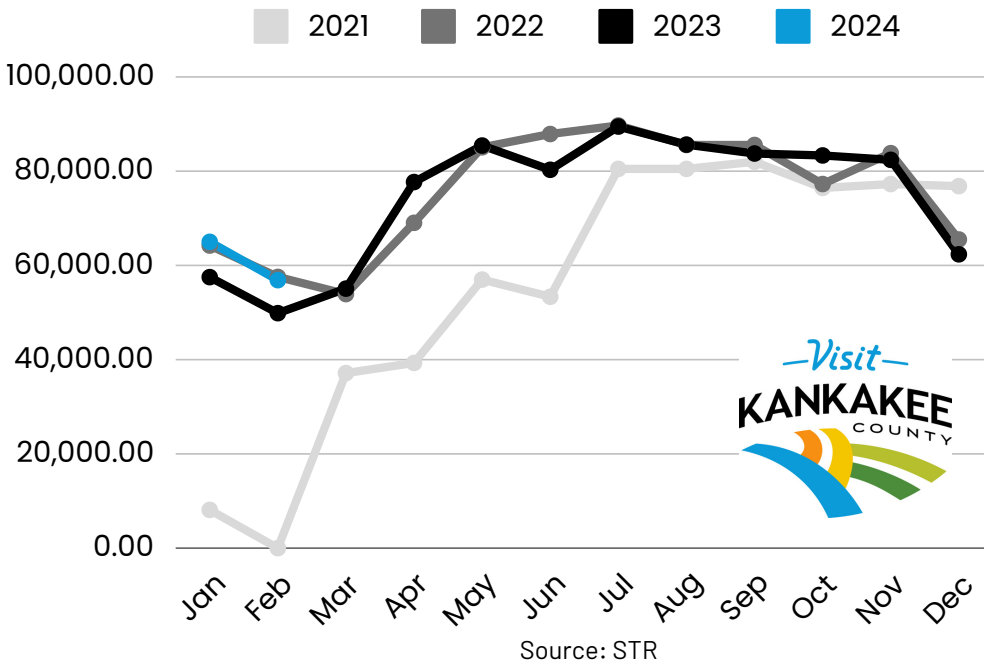
More fishing holes The brush-lined shore of Rend Lake near Benton is filled with crappie. Rainbow trout are abundant in Devils Kitchen Lake near Marion, where cozy cabins make it easy to cast a line at morning's first light. Springtime means the Apple River is stocked with keeper-size trout in Apple River Canyon State Park.

ENJOYILLINOIS.COM

KANKAKEE RIVER FLY FISHING FEATURE IN THE ENJOY ILLINOIS SPRING/SUMMER 2024 ISSUE



HOTEL OCCUPANY TAX



Per Tourism Economics, US hotel demand for 2023 was supported by growth in “Upscale” and “Luxury” hotels. Economy and Mid-Scale hotel demand fell, in step with declining leisure travel plans for lower-income earners. (Source: MMGY). Rising inflation, as well as stabilization in the “allure” of business travel following the pandemic also contributed to the slight decline in nationwide occupancy.

Kankakee County is witnessing a rebound in early 2024.

2024 TRAVEL TRENDS

Source: Destinations International

IMMERSE IN CULTURE

- Personal Experiences
- Themed Itineraries
- Immersive Excursions

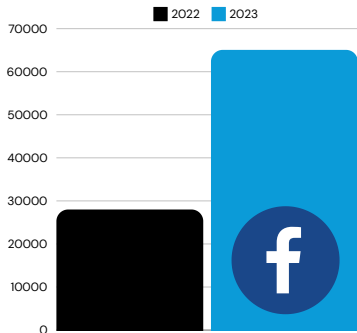
EVENT DRIVEN TRAVEL

- Taylor Swift Eras Tour
- The Solar Eclipse
- “Runcations”
- Business Trip Extensions

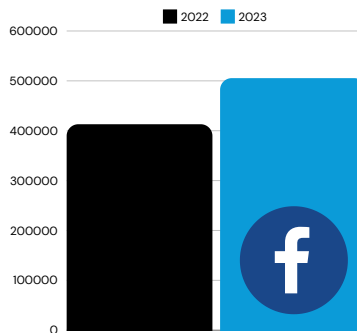
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

DMOS not solely promoting but building better places to visit and live

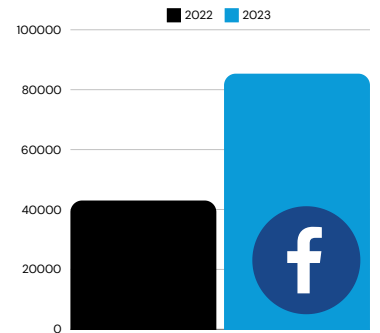
FACEBOOK 2022 VS. 2023



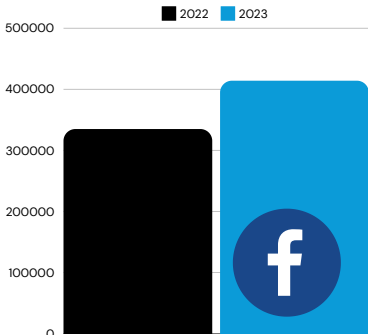
Engaged Users



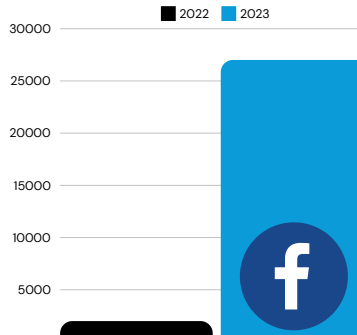
Total Impressions



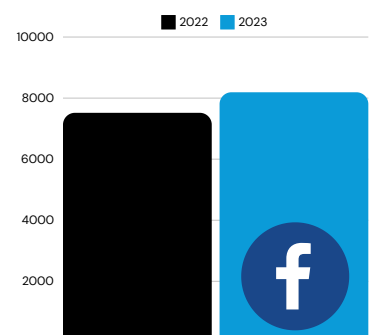
Post Engagements



Post Reach



Link Clicks



Total Followers



FACEBOOK

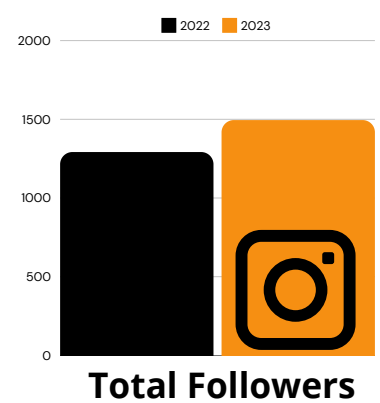
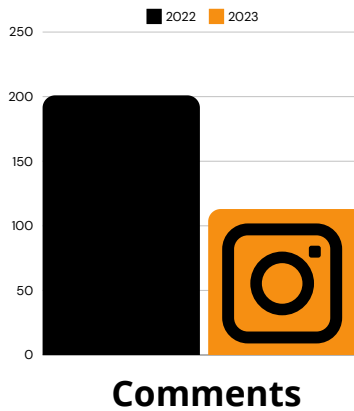
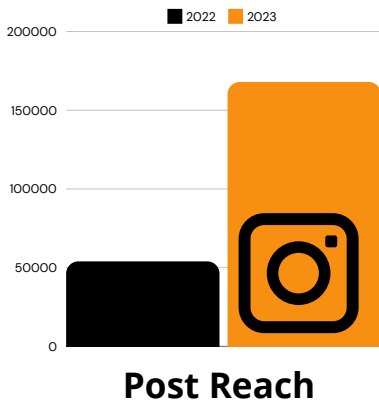
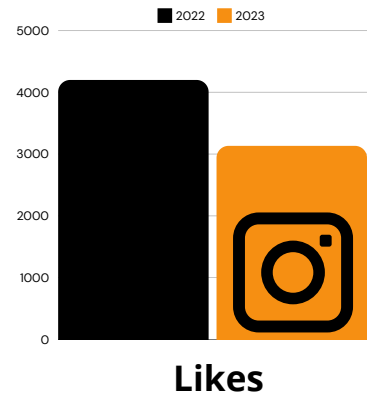
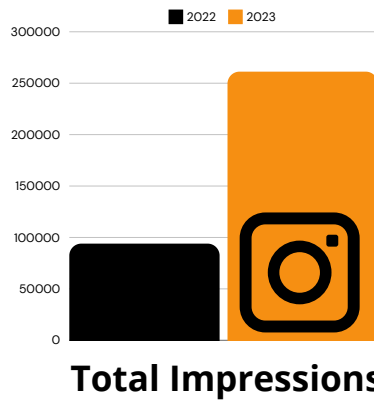
We have witnessed an increase in every metric year over year, with a strong surge in engagements during our summer 2023 campaign. Our multi-faceted social media strategy evolves with trends and we work to drive traffic to our website and ultimately to our county.



INSTAGRAM 2022 VS. 2023

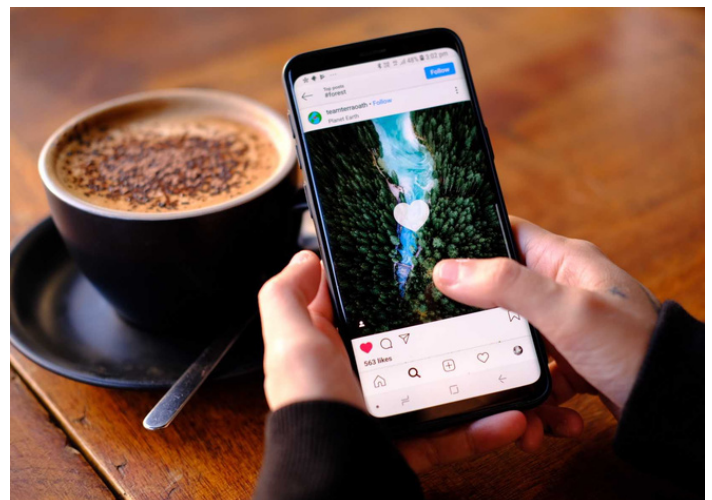


Instagram



INSTAGRAM

While we've seen a rise in impressions, reach and followers, and therefore getting more eyes on our content, our engagement has dropped. We are pivoting our approach & working to see an increase in all metrics as we progress through 2024.



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY



Presented at **Converge U Cohort Meeting**

Provided In-Kind sponsorships for **Women United Breakfast, Meijer and Mt. Vernon Tourist Information Center**

Supported the following events: **Servepro Manager Retreat, Bishop MacNamara 8th Grade Boys Basketball State Tournament, Majestically Yours Wedding Expo, Kankakee School District Black History Expo**



Out & About:

Kankakee Development Corporation marketing meetings & Board meeting
Kankakee River Valley Regatta Planning Committee meetings
Wintersong volunteer
KCC/Gotion job fair
Riverside Heart Ball planning committee meetings
Merchant Street Art Gallery site visit and meetings
United Way finance, executive committee and board meetings
Connect Roasters ribbon cutting
Haymaker Farms site visit
Momence Park District meeting
Village of Bradley meeting
City of Momence meeting
Bourbonnais Township Park District meeting
Kankakee Valley Park District meeting
IDOT Walk Roll Illinois stakeholder meeting
Economic Alliance board meeting
City of Kankakee economic and community development meeting
Majestic Wedding Expo vendor
Village of Bradley board meeting
Destination's International Marketing & Communications Summit conference
Non-Profit Coffee Talk event
Village of Bourbonnais economic & community development meeting
Site Visits social media content and Craft Beverage Trail meetings

IN THE HOPPER



- The Solar Eclipse viewing campaign. Save the date: April 8, 2024!
- Kankakee County Taco Trail!
- NIGHT LIFE...a new section coming to our website.
- New Intergovernmental Agreement and organizational restructure.
- The Spring Locavore Video launches in March, along with coordinating digital and social campaign.
- The Spring/Summer Kankakee County campaign launches in April, along with coordinating digital and social campaign.
- Video shoot at Locavore Farm for Illinois Office of Tourism's "Illinois Makers" summer campaign.
- Stakeholder and community partner Familiarity Tour, May 2024.
- National Travel and Tourism Week campaign.
- Milwaukee's Morning Blend Show interview & promotional plug...June 2024
- More itineraries!
- Continued outreach to corporate contacts.



Meet Our Team



NICOLE GAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



MEEGAN MASSEY
MARKETING COORDINATOR



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SALES & OFFICE ASSISTANT



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FINANCE MANAGER



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