

Rockford IL bureau promises inclusion

The Rockford (Illinois) Area Convention and Visitors Bureau has issued nine commitment statements hoping to help the region be more welcoming and inclusive.

As part of these efforts, RACVB has launched a new microsite on GoRockford.com that serves as a resource for residents and visitors to learn more about Rockford and inclusion. It includes minority owned businesses as well as community events and programs that reflect the people of Rockford.

Martasha Brown, the Director of Advancement for the RACVB says, "With all of the injustice and the things that were going on last year, it created an additional awareness for a need for the RACVB to take action steps. Not just making a statement but action steps to ensure we are welcoming diversity and providing equity in the areas that we can."

The statements

The RACVB is committed to:

1. Continuing engagement and relationship building with our diverse communities and residents.
2. Leading efforts that foster a community where minority and LGBTQ visitors feel welcome.

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Research shows sentiment is improving

Strategic Marketing & Research Insights has been conducting research into the impact of the pandemic on consumer sentiment for a year now.

Here are a few of the findings from recent research conducted for two Midwest DMOs:

- A majority of consumers plan to get the vaccine and feel that it will be effective and safe.
 - Half of travelers surveyed intend to take a leisure trip in the next year, after they have the vaccine. Nearly as many intend to travel in the next 6 months.
 - Intent to travel increases over time throughout the year.
 - Regional travelers who had not visited the destination were asked what they anticipated doing in the city when they returned, and almost 3 out of 4 indicated they would stay in a hotel.
 - Travelers also reported higher future engagement with stores, restaurants, and attractions.
- Vaccine approval/distribution and declining COVID-19 cases have resulted in marked progress in terms of travel readiness since December, with significant growth in the percentage of Midwest consumers ready to travel or already planning to travel.
 - Consumer attitudes toward travel are shifting, highlighted by more who are feeling the need to "get away" and fewer feeling that it is irresponsible to travel right now.



Inclusion statements

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- Utilizing minority owned businesses and providing opportunities for exposure to event planner and partners.
- Recruiting events, tournaments and meetings that are created for and/or have a proven attendance of minority and/or LGBTQ attendees.
- Increasing awareness of our biases and becoming better allies through ongoing diversity and inclusion training.
- Ensuring our board, staff and volunteers are a reflection of our diverse community.
- Ensuring our marketing and advertising reflects the diversity of our community.
- Utilizing marketing channels owned by and/or proven to be successful in reaching diverse audiences.
- Celebrating the contributions and history of residents from our diverse community.

– wifr.com

Catch Des Moines curates itineraries

Des Moines' regional CVB, Catch Des Moines, is preparing for what it expects will be the return of tourism in the metro area.

To assist locals and visitors with planning their getaways, Catch Des Moines has released a series of downloadable itineraries called The Catch List. The 14 itineraries collect a variety of local experiences and organize them based on outing type. Lists include Hidden Gems, Best of the Burbs & As Seen on TV.

– desmoinesregister.com



Missouri Tourism introduces helpful 'guide'

The Missouri Division of Tourism is introducing a new "tour guide" it believes will help travelers answer questions as they make vacation plans for the coming year in the Show-Me State.

This spring, the division will introduce Mo, a character and tour guide of sorts, to assist visitors with discovering their "travel M-O," the kinds of activities and attractions they are seeking.

Mo will be featured in magazines, on TV and online, providing information about outdoor adventure, family fun, food and drink, history, art, music and more. She'll also appear on VisitMO.com and social media.

"Mo embodies Missouri and everything we have to offer visitors in our state," said Stephen Foutes, director of the Division of Tourism. "When you're looking for destinations that fit your travel M-O, Mo will be there to help."

Foutes said the feedback they were getting from people as they were putting the campaign together was

that they wanted a campaign that was "down to earth."

Mo will recommend locations based on travelers' interests, including places to enjoy Missouri's rivers and lakes; explore the past at museums and historic sites; visit theme parks, aquariums, and zoos; and sample award-winning wine and world-famous barbecue.

"Our primary audience will be the eight states that surround the state," Foutes added. "We have been getting more interest from people in Texas as well, and we hope that continues."

Visitors are invited to share their experiences in Missouri with the hashtag #ThatsMyMO or by tagging @VisitMO on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

Tourism is one of Missouri's largest industries. In fiscal year 2019, tourism officials said, Missouri had 42.9 million visitors. (The state defines visitors as people who travel from out of state or at least 50 miles in-state).

– newstribune.com