

VISIT LAKE COUNTY FY '21 ANNUAL REPORT



Embracing. Emerging. Looking to the Horizon.

Antioch · Deerfield · Fox Lake · Grayslake · Gurnee · Lake County · Lake Zurich · Libertyville
Lincolnshire · Historic Downtown Long Grove · Mundelein · Vernon Hills · Waukegan · Zion



September 2021

Dear Partners,

We are ready to emerge from the pandemic's aftermath and look to the horizon with optimism. With thoughts and hopes of health and wellness ahead, for family, friends and our economy, we are embracing the future. We have learned that travel is considered a sacred rite for many, and the pent-up demand and sentiment were clearly evident this summer. Travel is critical to the economic recovery and enriches our lives and contributes to our overall well-being.

Thanks to the support from the DCEO/Illinois Office of Tourism, Lake County and our community and business partners, we were able to continue to market Lake County as local businesses and attractions reopened in the spring. We maintained our strong social media presence with reassuring and relevant messaging, and were thrilled to be able to host **Lake County Restaurant Rally** followed by our annual **Lake County Restaurant Week** to showcase our diverse restaurants. In June, we launched our **Lake County Road Trip** campaign to inspire travel to the county as people began planning summer excursions.

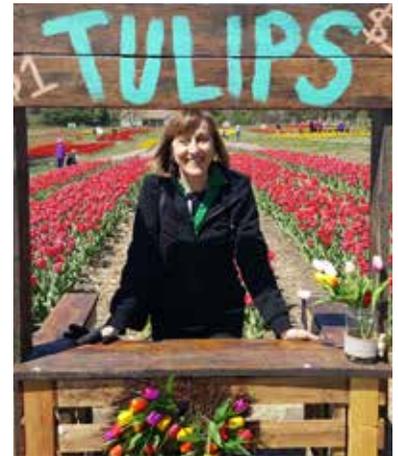
I am grateful to our Visit Lake County Board of Directors for their steadfast commitment and leadership throughout the uncertainty we experienced over the past year. I want to extend my deepest appreciation to Cheryl Ross for her eight years of service as our Board Chair. Her unwavering support has been a blessing during these challenging times. We welcome David Motley as our new Chair for FY '22. He has served on our Executive Committee for ten years and will bring an innovative spirit to his new role.

Many thanks to the **Visit Lake County** staff who continued to stay engaged with our partners, stakeholders, community members, residents and visitors, throughout the pandemic. We are poised to embrace the future with a collective commitment to our mission. As the destination and marketing organization for the county, we have the passion, expertise and resources to help reinvigorate the hospitality industry and support the economies of our local communities, and ultimately, contribute to the quality of life in Lake County.

Embracing, looking ahead, delivering for you.



Maureen Riedy
President



Great experiences are in bloom in Lake County like **Richardson Adventure Farm's** new Tulip Festival.



FY '22 Board of Directors

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Visit Lake County is the official destination marketing organization and champion for tourism for Lake County, Illinois. The organization is comprised of municipalities, hotels, attractions and hospitality-related businesses throughout the county who recognize the powerful economic impact of tourism.

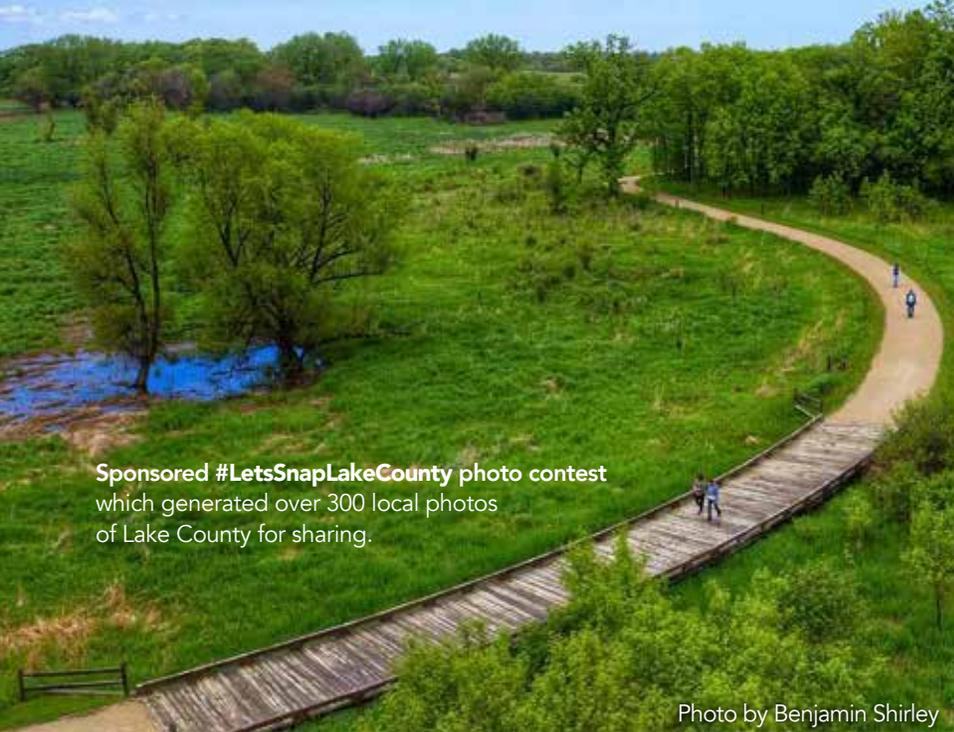
Visit Lake County embraces diversity with respect to all individuals. This commitment and mindset are the foundation put in place every day as we provide the highest-quality travel resources and visitor experiences which enhance the well-being of our communities and support the livelihoods of our neighbors.



Community Partners

Antioch
Deerfield
Fox Lake
Grayslake
Gurnee
Lake County
Lake Zurich
Libertyville
Lincolnshire
Historic Downtown Long Grove
Mundelein
Vernon Hills
Waukegan
Zion

2021 Highlights



Sponsored **#LetsSnapLakeCounty** photo contest which generated over 300 local photos of Lake County for sharing.

Photo by Benjamin Shirley



Photo by Megan Guerrero



Photo by Meghan Anderson Leverenz



Photo by Shawn Ford

Our FY '21 Community Building Efforts

Served as a **voice for the hospitality community** during the pandemic and as a trusted source for resources and information.

Shifted to a **hyper-local focus** promoting virtual events, outdoor events and dining options on our social media platforms.

Secured **COVID-relief grants** from Lake County government for \$75,000 for a digital holiday campaign and \$150,000 for Lake County Restaurant Week and Lake County Road Trip campaigns.

Communicated the **importance of tourism** as an essential investment to our key stakeholders through e-newsletters and virtual Partner Forums.



Photo by Amit Patel



Our Group Sales Efforts

Hosted a mini-Familiarization Tour for group travel planners in April. Twenty-seven representatives from 17 companies attended the one-day tour of northern Lake County — highlighted by a visit to Richardson Adventure Farm’s new Tulip Festival. The successful event signified the return of tour groups after the pandemic.

Nurtured relationships with clients through a variety of touchpoints from personal calls to cards and production of hotel videos showing safety protocols.



Initiated Mug Shot Monday promotion to showcase group tour-friendly venues across Lake County.

 Created a LinkedIn page featuring content of interest to meeting and event planners.



Customer Engagement — Marketing & Communications

Focused on short-term marketing strategies to support the industry.

Used social media and our website as trusted sources of information to engage with residents during the pandemic. Shifted to reassuring and rich messaging as we moved into the reopening phase.

Regularly posted COVID-related content and resources on our website from dining options to hotels' status, virtual and live events, inspiring blogs and more.

Enhanced the design of our homepage and other website sections, including the dedicated Lake County @Home page, our Summer Guide, Outdoor Recreation and Road Trip pages.

Curated content from social media postings, blogs, videos and more, resulting in an increase in engagement.

Continued monthly appearances on Alpha Media's WXLC radio. Also cultivated relationships with WILL ROCK and TUDN stations.

Continued our weekly *Daily Herald* column highlighting festivals and events.

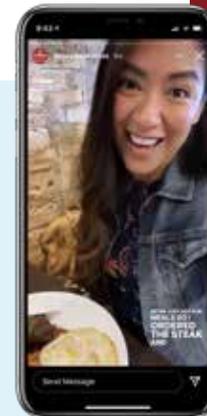
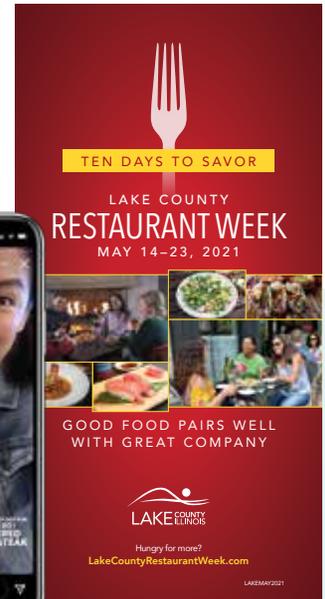
Held two Lake County Libation Trail Check-in Challenges to showcase craft breweries, wineries and distilleries. Facebook Live Happy Hour Chats proved to be very popular.



704,026 USER SESSIONS
359,120 CONTENT SESSIONS
1,314,754 PAGEVIEWS
on VisitLakeCounty.org — All new record highs!



Conducted two Lake County Restaurant Rally events to encourage support of local eateries.



Hosted our 6th annual Lake County Restaurant Week with 65 participants from 21 communities. Digital and traditional marketing combined to deliver over 4 million impressions, prompting 218,000 pageviews and 192,000 clicks on our website.



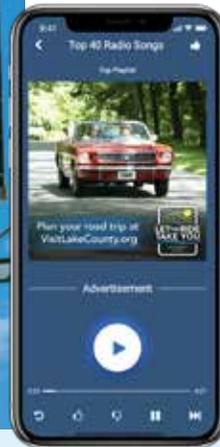


Launched summer **Road Trip** campaign to promote events, attractions and seasonal activities to help boost tourism and support the local economy. The multi-platform campaign included broadcast radio and TV, targeted streaming video and audio, Google Display and YouTube, a billboard and *Chicago Tribune* newspaper inserts.

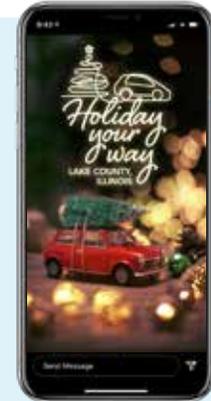
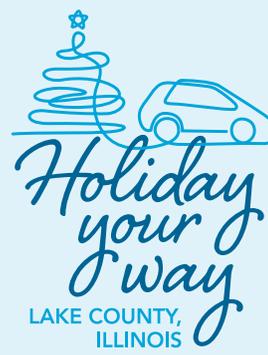
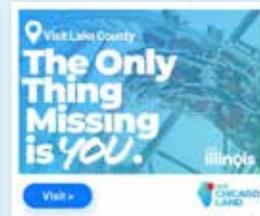
Our multi-platform summer **Road Trip** campaign generated over

8,606,000 IMPRESSIONS

by adults 25-54 in the Chicago market.



Produced a visitors **Road Trip** guide with inspirational editorial content and suggested itineraries on major roadways throughout Lake County. Distributed as a *Chicago Tribune* insert to over 80,000 homes.



Collaborated with **Chicagoland CVBs** on a digital marketing campaign with the theme *The Only Thing Missing Is You*, to encourage summer travel to the Chicago region.

Created a successful digital holiday campaign. Digital radio delivered 755,000 impressions and display ads delivered 482,945 impressions, boosting web traffic 103% over the previous year.



Share Your **#LetsGoLakeCounty** Experience



Visit Lake County would like to extend a special thank-you to its partners, businesses and communities throughout Lake County, and residents, for the amazing support and efforts for our organization and each other, throughout the pandemic and reopening.



5465 West Grand Avenue, Suite 100, Gurnee, IL 60031
847-662-2700 • VisitLakeCounty.org