



# Sharing the Journey

in Lake County



# Moving Forward Together

Visit Lake County (VLC) is the voice for tourism in Lake County, Illinois. Through unique and targeted branding and marketing initiatives, we're enhancing the public perception of Lake County as a premier destination. Our image building work encourages residents and visitors to support local businesses – the economic foundation of Lake County. This, in turn, boosts the economy and contributes to a better quality of life.

In FY '23, VLC continued to connect with visitors and residents through proven marketing and media strategies and daily digital posts. Seasonal campaigns showcasing special events and attractions, plus promotions for Lake County Restaurant Week and Libation Trail, provide reasons to visit throughout the year – while offering campaign partnership opportunities to increase visibility for communities and local businesses. Our location and amenities continue to be a big draw for recruitment of business meetings, sports tournaments, tour groups, and more.

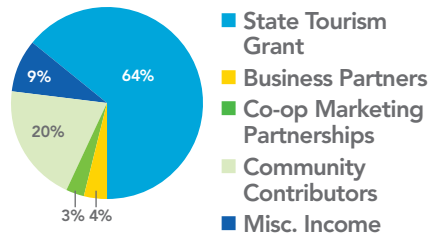
As a public/private partnership and the certified convention & visitors bureau for the county, we receive an annual grant awarded through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity/Illinois Office of Tourism. We're required to match the grant through local funding sources which include county, municipal and hospitality-related business partnerships as well as co-op advertising programs. We are grateful to our strong network of community investors and industry partners for sharing in the journey and helping VLC shape a vibrant tourism economy in Lake County.

Let's continue the journey together.

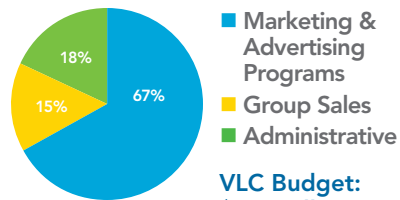


Visit Lake County Staff at Par-King Skill Golf

## VLC Revenue Sources



## VLC Expenses



VLC Budget: \$2.2 million

## FY '24 Board of Directors

<b>Chair</b> <i>David Motley</i>	City of Waukegan
<b>Vice Chair</b> <i>Randy Ebertowski</i>	Gurnee Mills
<b>Treasurer</b> <i>John Krajnak</i>	Six Flags Great America/ Hurricane Harbor Chicago

**Secretary**  
*Sonolito Bronson* City of Zion

**Past Chair**  
*Cheryl Ross* Village of Gurnee

**President**  
*Maureen Riedy* Visit Lake County

<b>Directors</b> <i>Brad Burke</i>	Village of Lincolnshire
<i>Carissa Casbon</i>	Lake County Board
<i>Justin Keenan</i>	Village of Deerfield
<i>Jim Keim</i>	Village of Antioch
<i>Ray Keller</i>	Village of Lake Zurich
<i>Greg Koeppen</i>	Lake County Farm Bureau/ Village of Grayslake
<i>Brad Lajoie</i>	Lincolnshire Marriott Resort
<i>Jonathan Petrillo</i>	Village of Vernon Hills
<i>Heather Rowe</i>	Village of Libertyville
<i>Brieanna Ruggia</i>	Great Wolf Lodge Illinois
<i>Tim Wilson</i>	Village of Mundelein

## Bureau Staff

<i>Maureen Riedy</i>	President
<i>Hazel Gayheart</i>	Community Engagement Specialist
<i>Kimberly Ghys</i>	Senior Account Executive
<i>Jonathan Jones</i>	Marketing Manager
<i>Teresa Lewis</i>	Account Executive
<i>John Maguire</i>	Community Outreach & Programs Director
<i>Jayne Nordstrom</i>	Group Tours & Partnership Manager
<i>Jeff Randolph</i>	Partner Services & Marketing Coordinator

# FY '23 Highlights

## Putting Lake County on the Map

**Communicated the importance of tourism** as an essential investment to our key stakeholders through quarterly Tourism Economic e-newsletters, our annual report and presentations to civic groups.

**Awarded two VLC Hospitality Scholarships** to College of Lake County students pursuing careers in the industry.

**Partnered with Lake County Forest Preserves** to promote a series of concerts at the Beer Garden at Independence Grove which serves only Lake County-produced craft beverages.

**Partnered with Gurnee Mills** on a VLC selfie station, map and wall clings of Lake County.

**Received Lake County ARPA Funds to support our fall & holiday marketing campaigns**, and provide business incentives to help recruit new meetings and events.

**Launched a business intelligence geolocation research platform** (Zartico) to provide visitor insights and market impact reports.

**Hosted four Partner Events** at Genesee Theatre, National Museum of the American Sailor, American Place Casino and the Gold Pyramid House.



## Marketing Highlights

**Continued to elevate** our annual partnership with the Chicago Bears Training Camp with on-site activations during all public days at Halas Hall.



**Named a Daily Herald Readers' Choice Best CVB Finalist** in April 2023.



**Won an Illinois Excellence in Tourism Award** for Best Social Media Marketing at the 2023 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism.

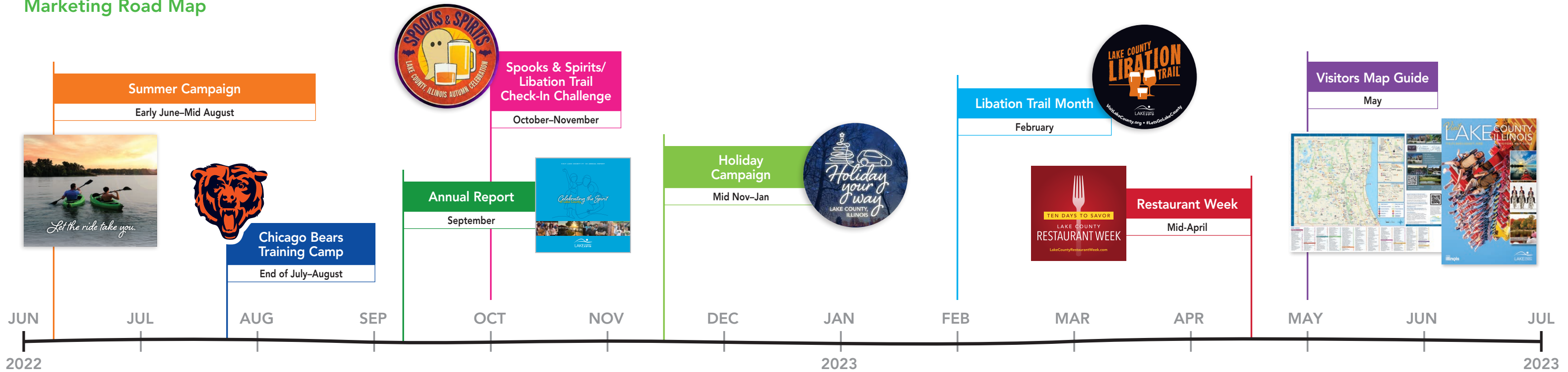


**Hosted Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP) class** by Service Speaks Solutions at the Genesee Theatre, with 17 partners earning official certification.

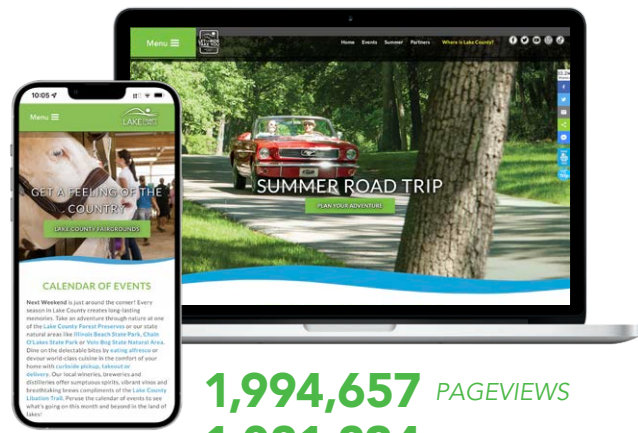




# Marketing Road Map



## Digital Engagement



Top Viewed Page: Events

**1,994,657** PAGEVIEWS  
**1,021,234** USER SESSIONS  
on VisitLakeCounty.org  
Up 2.2% YOY

## FY '23 Lake County Hotel Performance July 2022 – June 2023



**Social Media Engagement** **1,432,870**  
Up 41% YOY

FOLLOWERS

**f 64,000+** **t 7,240** **i 6,150**

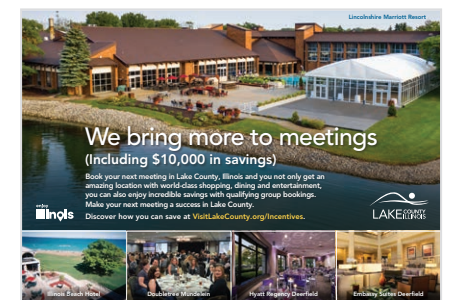
## Group Sales Highlights

**Generated 417 referrals** for future group business opportunities valued at \$21 million in visitor spending.

**Confirmed 210 contracts** for group business using 17,530 hotel rooms with an economic impact of \$6.8 million.

**Awarded Lake County ARPA Funds** to 11 groups through June 2023 using 2,500 hotel room nights with \$1 million in economic impact.

**Created new ads** for meeting, sports and group tour audiences.





# Every Season is Special in Lake County



**Holiday Your Way** ▶  
**9,970,824**

Total impressions delivered through radio, print, digital display and social advertising

Landing page sessions up **9.76% YOY**

◀ **Spooks & Spirits**  
**4,332,347**

Total impressions delivered through radio, cable, connected TV, digital display and social advertising



**Holiday Your Way** campaign featured our four returning community co-op partners—Villages of Antioch, Gurnee, Libertyville and Vernon Hills.



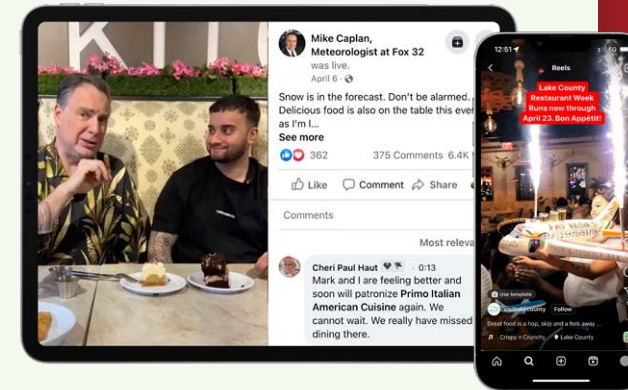
Hosted our **8th annual Lake County Restaurant Week** featuring 80 participating restaurants, including 15 new locations!

**Check-In Challenge winners earned dozens of gift cards.** The grand prize was an overnight stay at Lincolnshire Marriott Resort with a dinner/theater package and a cooking class for four at The Joyful Gourmet.

**Restaurant Week**  
**4,885,573**

Total impressions delivered through print, TV, OTT, digital display and social advertising

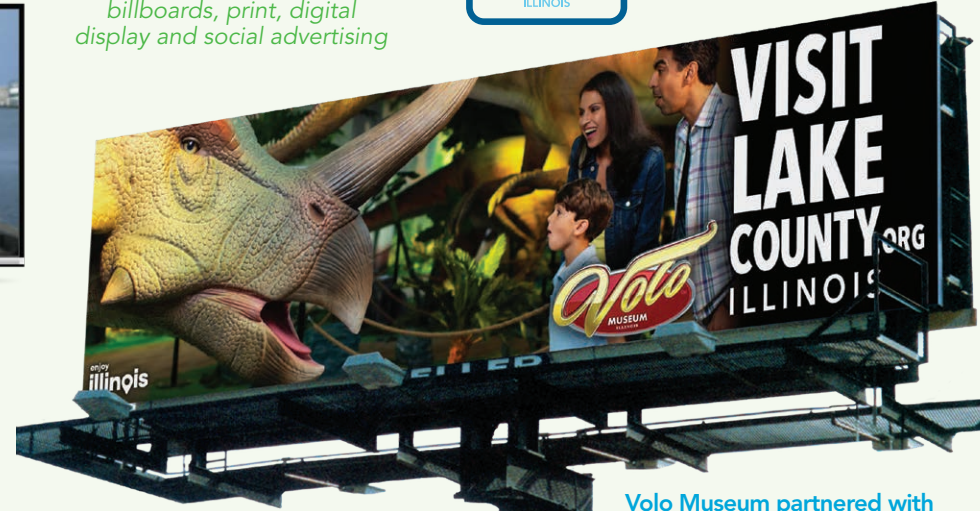
Web sessions up **31% YOY**



Kicked off summer **Road Trip** campaign to promote events, attractions and seasonal activities to boost tourism and support the local economy. The multi-platform campaign included TV, radio, billboards, print, digital display and social advertising.

**Road Trip Summer Campaign**  
**50 million+**

Total impressions delivered through TV, radio, billboards, print, digital display and social advertising



Volo Museum partnered with Visit Lake County for the 2023 Summer Campaign.

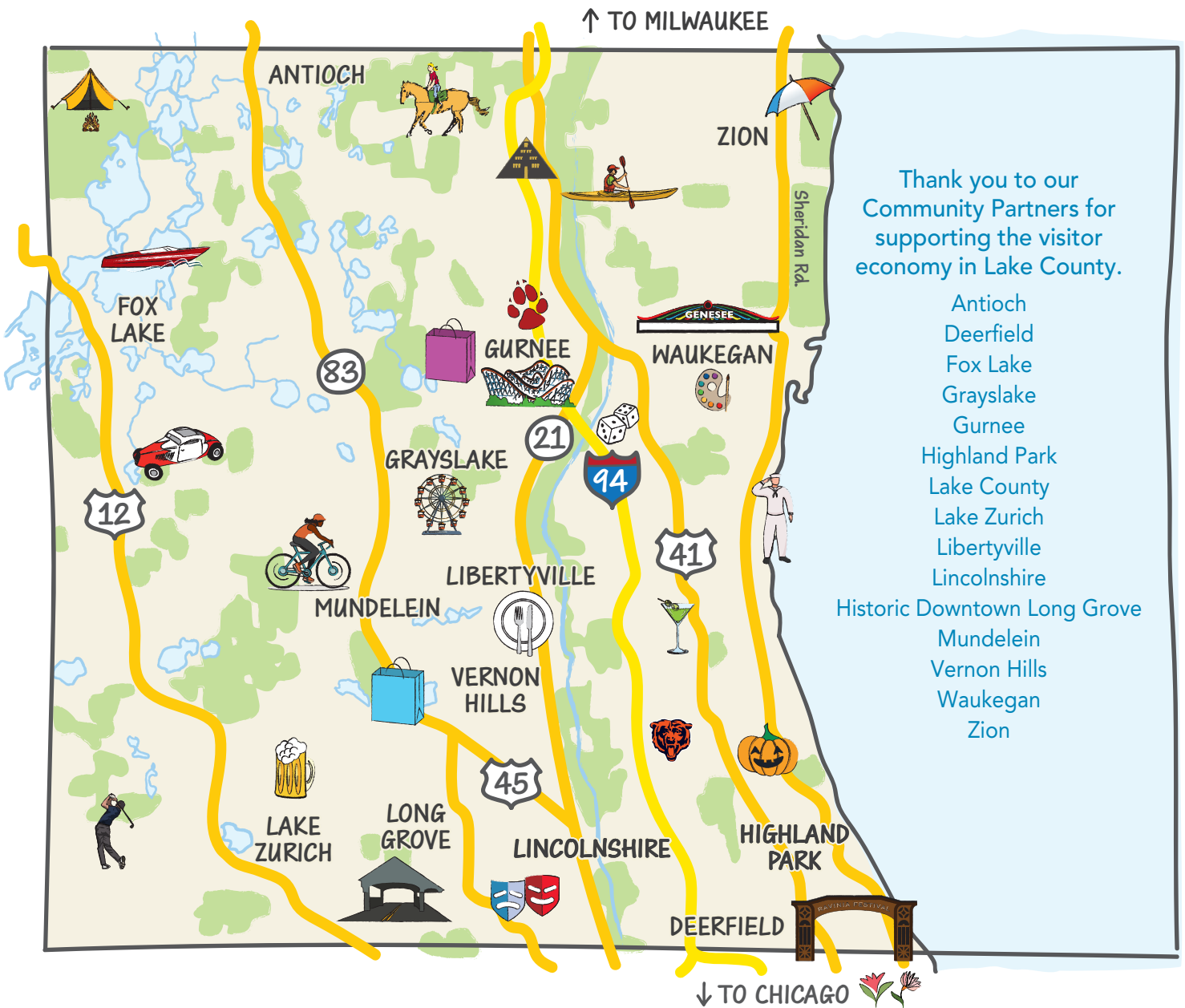
Held Lake County Libation Trail Month and **Check-In Challenge** to showcase craft breweries, wineries and distilleries and capture emails for future use. Tracked 1,530 check-ins at 29 locations during LC Libation Month in February.



One lucky Check-In Challenge follower won a **Libation Trail Bus Tour** with 95.1 WII-Lock to his favorite tasting rooms: Harbor Brewing & 9th Hour Brewing, Black Lung Brewing, Oppidan Spirits and Nightshade & Dark's Pandemonium Brewing.







Thank you to our Community Partners for supporting the visitor economy in Lake County.

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



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