

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
MAY 2, 2005**

The Economic Development Committee of the DeKalb County Board met on Monday, May 2, 2005, @ 7:00p.m. in the Legislative Center's Freedom Room. Chairman Jeff Metzger called the meeting to order. Members present were Steve Faivre, Steve Slack, Frank Van Buer, Dennis Sands, Julia Fullerton, and Sally DeFauw. Others present were Kim Kubiak and Sarah Sibert.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Moved by Mr. Van Buer, seconded by Ms. Fullerton, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from March 2005.**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Moved by Mr. Faivre, seconded by Mr. Sands, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda.**

**PRESENTATION BY THE DEKALB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE DEKALB AREA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**

Chairman Metzger introduced Ms. Kim Kubiak, Executive Director of the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce and the DeKalb Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and Ms. Sarah Siebert, the Coordinator for the Visitors Bureau.

Ms. Kubiak turned the beginning of the presentation over to Ms. Siebert to explain what they have been doing so far. Ms. Siebert said that there are three primary objectives that the CVB is designed to do: to increase visitors as a means to increase hotel/motel tax and food and beverage tax, and to have a positive impact on tourism. DeKalb County ranks 27<sup>th</sup> out of 102 counties for tourism

Their marketing portfolio is a resource for the local area to be viewed as a "one-stop shop" item. Their meeting planner resource guide took 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism last month. Their DVD, which is included in the portfolio also took 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

Ms. Siebert said that they have established very good partnerships with the hotels in the area and there is now a hotel council that has been formed.

They have a wonderful website that they are very proud of and their web stats are going up each month. Many local businesses have been contacting them to place their events on their website.

They are working to seek other funding sources to expand their budget and work towards economic independence. They held a fundraising event in March 2005 in conjunction with NIU Convocation Center, called the DeKalb Golf Thaw Indoor Outing. They were able to raise \$3,000.00 and then received a 40% match amount with it. It went so well that they are planning another one for the year 2006.

As far as recruitment of convention business or events, they will be submitting a proposal to the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) to host the Illinois High School Football championship Games from 2006 – 2010. This is a 5-year bid and has a potential of drawing 30,000 visitors a year to the event. There is a committee already

comprised of 15 people, including themselves who are meeting for this purpose. The City of DeKalb has endorsed it already and many local businesses, schools, and NIU Coach Novak. They are seeking a letter of support from these entities and from this committee.

The committee asked Ms. Siebert how many hotel rooms do we have in the county to support this event? Ms. Siebert said that currently there are 700 hotel rooms in the county.

Mr. Slack asked Mr. Metzger if he knew when the Sandwich Convention Center would be completed and if they have broken ground yet? Mr. Metzger said that they have broken ground, but that he did not know when it would be completed by.

Ms. Kubiak and Ms. Siebert both said that the one thing that the area is lacking is a full service hotel. There is interest from surrounding areas that would help with the hotel rooms at this point in time.

Ms. Siebert said that another “buzz” word in the industry is “Agritourism.” That is very hot right now and that DeKalb County does have wineries, Christmas Tree Farms, etc. that could encourage people to visit DeKalb County and help build this industry in our county.

They have also submitted a bid to hold the State Association for City Managers conference here in DeKalb County and they are currently awaiting that decision.

They now need to apply for certification and they will begin that process soon. When they get certified they will be able to get the State to give them dollar for dollar matching funds for the bureau.

**Moved by Mr. Sands, seconded by Mr. Faivre, and it was carried unanimously to present a resolution to the full board for support of the bureau’s bid for the IHSA State Football Championship Games for the years 2006 through 2010.**

Mr. Sands further stated that he would be approaching the committee next month to ask them to go to the full board to allocate \$50,000 to the Bureau for tourism. The State of Illinois will match these funds of \$50,000 and the City of DeKalb already gives them \$50,000 in support. With matching funds from both entities and the State’s matching funds they could generate \$200,000 to work with each year for the promotion of tourism this our county. Mr. Sands said to remember that the County and Cities would be making money off of this endorsement. Mr. Sands said that this would be a yearly funding source, not a one-time allocation. He further stated that he would be approaching the Finance Committee about this issue too. The committee agreed to place this on the committee’s agenda again for next month and invited both Ms. Siebert and Ms. Kubiak to return to the committee for this issue.

Mr. Van Buer said that we need to remember that there are entertainment taxes in DeKalb and Sycamore that would also contribute to this fund.

Ms. Kubiak said that another side note would be that the annual event with the Jehovah Witnesses that they have each year in the City of DeKalb is a 3-year commitment that runs for 5 weekends long. She said that in one weekend alone these 4,000 visitors spent \$600,000 in our communities.

The committee thanked both Ms. Siebert and Ms. Kubiak for their very informative presentation.

**JUNE MEETING DATE**

Because of the date for the county board meeting in June, the committee agreed to meet on the first Thursday (6/2/05) for the month of June @ 7:00p.m. at the Legislative Center.

Before adjourning, Ms. Fullerton, said that she visited the Eiger Lab in Rockford recently and toured their facility. They have agreed to allow the committee to come out there and tour the facility also if you are interested, she said.

Mr. Sands said that he wanted to inform everyone that the casino deal is a “no go” because they did not renew their option. It can always be revisited again if they want to.

The committee thanked Mr. Van Buer for his service to them to his constituents and wished him well in his new endeavors as Mayor of the City of DeKalb.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by Ms. Fullerton, seconded by Ms. DeFauw, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Jeffery Metzger, Chairman

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Mary C. Supple, Secretary