

Chicago Southland

Tourism Marketing Information

Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau

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~ CVB Invests in New Interactive Tool for Planners ~

The Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau is pleased to announce a new partnership with Threshold 360. This platform allows location-based organizations, like the CVB, to easily create and distribute 360° virtual tours of hotels, sports venues, unique venues and attractions in the Chicago Southland.

These virtual tours are interactive and user-controllable, allowing viewers the ability to customize their virtual visits. Meeting and event planners can quickly and easily tour local hotels and venues. Meeting spaces, room types, on-site amenities and more are included in each virtual tour. Planners will be able to watch a video or virtually walk through a property.

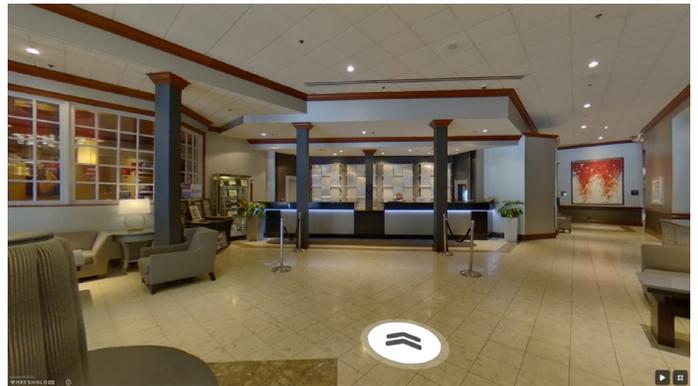
Virtual tours are the perfect budget-friendly option for event planners. Plus, those who are able to tour sites in person will be able to revisit the property after their tour.

These virtual tours will be integrated into member listings on the CVB website. Each participating property will receive a shareable link that can be sent to prospects and clients. Additionally, each Threshold 360 video will be included in each location's Google listing, allowing a wider audience to virtually experience the property.

The CVB sales team will be able to share these virtual tours with planners at tradeshows too! All tours are compatible with the sales team's Send Sites proposal software.

Filming for remaining hotel properties and sports venues will continue throughout June and July. Unique venues and attractions will be invited to sign up in June. Information will be sent to members as sign-ups become available.

If you have any questions, please contact Kim Kislowski at Kim@VisitChicagoSouthland.com or Mary Patchin at Mary@VisitChicagoSouthland.com for more information.



The World Wiffle® Ball Championship Returns to Midlothian this Summer



The 42nd annual World Wiffle® Ball Championship will return to Memorial Park in August! This year's tournament will take place August 14-15, 2021, which coincides with National Wiffle® Ball Day on the 14th!

“After taking a trip down memory lane in Mishawaka, Indiana for last year's Championship, we are looking forward to coming back to Midlothian this summer. We are even more excited than usual to gear up for this year's Championship, considering everything we have all dealt with for the past year. We can't wait to see old and new Wifflers alike this summer come together to beat some plastic,” said Mike Baniak, one of the Commissioners of the World Wiffle® Ball Championship.

Registration for this year's event is now open! Teams must consist of four or five players made up of all ages. As always, games will be played with plastic bats and Wiffle® balls on miniature fields. Each team will be able to play four round-robin games on Saturday, with qualifying teams playing in a single elimination tournament on Sunday. The registration fee is \$149 and includes a WWBC t-shirt for each rostered player. Proceeds from this year's event will benefit the South Suburban Humane Society in Chicago Heights. Go to WorldWiffleBall.org for more information or to register your team!

Leisure E-Newsletters Used to Attract Visitors



Each month, the CVB sends out a leisure e-newsletter to over 1,500 leisure contacts. This e-newsletter features the latest travel ideas, upcoming events, holiday info, CVB announcements and more, used to invite travelers to visit the Chicago Southland. This month, we featured Memorial Day ceremonies, the Chicago Southland's 30+ public golf courses, farmers markets, live music performances and more exciting happenings throughout the region.

Become a tourist in your own town! Read our June edition at <https://conta.cc/34dpLog>. Sign up to receive our e-newsletters by going to VisitChicagoSouthland.com/E-Newsletter! If you'd like to submit content or ideas for future e-newsletters, email Katie Arvia at Katie@VisitChicagoSouthland.com.

CSCVB Promotes Road Trips this Summer

The summertime is the perfect season for taking a road trip, especially now that road trips are quickly becoming a popular travel trend! The Chicago Southland CVB has created a series of road trip itineraries, with a variety of plans perfect for families, couples, Baby Boomers and more. Plus, more itineraries are coming soon! These road trips will be shared on our social media channels and in upcoming leisure e-newsletters throughout the summer. Experience a Chicago Southland road trip for yourself! Go to VisitChicagoSouthland.com/RoadTrips to see the itineraries, and don't forget to share your road trip adventures with us on social media using [#ChicagoSouthland!](https://www.instagram.com/ChicagoSouthland/)

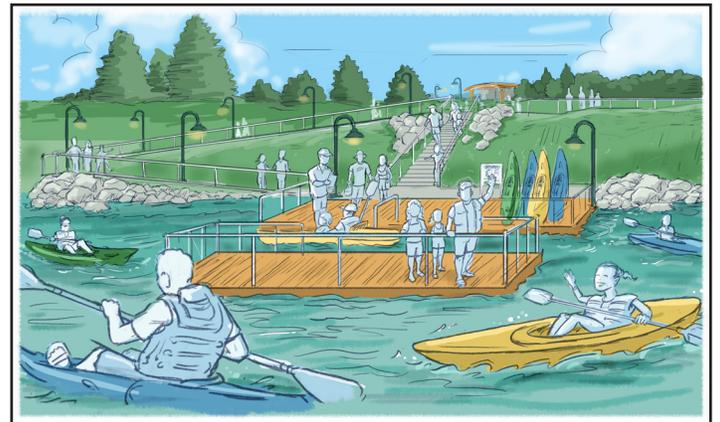


CVB Staff Joins Calumet City for Blues Water Run Groundbreaking

Several Chicago Southland CVB staff members joined the City of Calumet City on Thursday, April 22 for an Earth Day celebration and groundbreaking of the new Blues Water Run site. Located along the Little Calumet River in Calumet City, Blues Water Run will be a 15-acre park featuring a canoe and kayak launch, two dog parks, a river walk, multi-use trails, a band shell and space for bocce ball and frisbee golf.



The Earth Day groundbreaking ceremony was lead by former Calumet City Mayor Michelle Markiewicz-Qualkinbush, marking one of her final public contributions after 40 years of elected service. The ceremony featured a presentation of the flag by local Boy Scouts, speeches by Calumet City elected officials, an Earth Day poem and a special planting of the park's first trees.



Blues Water Run will be located near the intersection of Torrence Avenue and Ring Road in Calumet City. This \$2.4 million park is funded by a series of grants, including grants from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Set to open in Fall 2021, Blues Water Run is sure to be a beautiful, safe space that provides recreational activities for families and visitors!

CVB Joins Collaborative Visit Chicagoland Project



The Chicago Southland CVB has partnered with eight other area tourism organizations to launch a summer campaign to encourage travel to and around northeastern Illinois. The Visit Chicagoland campaign, themed “The Only Thing Missing Is You,” aims to promote awareness and generate interest in attracting visitors back to the region’s many sights and experiences. This leisure campaign highlights local attractions and businesses within a one-hour drive of downtown Chicago. Visit Chicagoland reintroduces the Chicago metropolitan area as a welcoming, thriving destination and a region that is open for business.

“The Chicago Southland CVB is thrilled to be a part of the collaborative Visit Chicagoland campaign,” said Jim Garrett, President/CEO of the Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau. “The Chicagoland region is home to a wonderful collection of diverse attractions that we are excited to promote. As the State of Illinois continues to safely reopen, we are looking forward to inviting residents and visitors to enjoy everything that the Chicagoland has to offer.”

We would like to invite our partners to participate in the Chicagoland Project with us! Please share beautiful photos of the Chicago Southland to your Instagram page using [#VisitChicagoland](#). For more information and to see the campaign in full, go to [VisitChicagoland.com](#)!

Chicago House Athletic Club Coming to SeatGeek Stadium this August

Chicago's newest professional soccer team, the Chicago House Athletic Club, will kick off their inaugural season this August at SeatGeek Stadium in Bridgeview! Chicago House AC Managing Partner, President and CEO Peter Wilt and Village of Bridgeview Mayor Steven Landek announced that they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on a multi-year agreement.



Mayor Landek said, "This is welcome news for soccer fans throughout Chicagoland who want to watch their team play in an intimate venue built to showcase their favorite sport, and it is welcome news for the residents of the Village of Bridgeview. SeatGeek Stadium is a great platform for high level professional soccer and I'm thrilled the Chicago House AC will play here."



SeatGeek Stadium opened in 2006 as the home of Major League Soccer's Chicago Fire and added the National Women's Soccer League Chicago Red Stars in 2009. The Fire departed after the 2019 season, but the Red Stars continue to play home games at SeatGeek Stadium.

"I'm excited to return to Bridgeview. SeatGeek Stadium has terrific fan amenities, sightlines built for soccer and offers affordable parking conducive to tailgating for fans. We considered several venues, polled soccer fans online and were convinced SeatGeek Stadium is the best venue for a pro soccer team in Chicagoland," said Wilt, who also launched the Fire and Red Stars.

Chicago soccer legend, CJ Brown, was recently named the team's first head coach and technical director. The Chicago House AC plays in NISA, a third division professional soccer league with plans to add a second and even a first division to its open system pyramid in the future. The team's official name, the Chicago House Athletic Club, plays tribute to the city's music, arts and cultural image throughout the world. It recognizes being a home for everyone who loves and identifies with the city and its future. The team is described as "community-based," and is committed to transparency and working with its constituents to use its platform for social justice, diversity, equality, inclusion and community improvement. Tickets are now on sale for the Chicago House AC's inaugural season! For more information, visit ChicagoHouseAC.com.

CVB Welcomes Four New Members



Chicago House Athletic Club
SeatGeek Stadium
7000 South Harlem Avenue
Bridgeview, IL 60455
773-577-3938
ChicagoHouseAC.com



Hidden Manna Cafe
3613 216th Street
Suite I
Matteson, IL 60443
708-248-5571
HiddenMannaCafe.com



**Orland Park History Museum
and Stellwagen Farm**
14415 South Beacon Avenue
Orland Park, IL 60462
708-873-1622
OrlandPark.org



Runco Office Supply
1655 Elmhurst Road
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
847-437-4300
RuncoOfficeSupply.com

Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park Wins Top Spot in USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards

The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park was recently chosen as the Best Sculpture Park by USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards! The sculpture park, located on the campus of Governors State University in University Park, beat other sculpture parks from across the country to snag the #1 spot on the list. Go to <https://bit.ly/3uBIDbi> to see the top ten list of nominated sculpture parks!

The 10Best Readers' Choice Awards highlight the best of the best! These awards cover categories such as destinations, food and drink, hotels and things to do. The nominees in each category are chosen by a panel of experts, and winners are chosen by the readers.

The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park is a collection of 30 master works of large-scale sculpture situated across 100 acres of prairie landscape. This "museum on the prairie" provides programs for adults and children that integrate art and nature. It is open to the public 365 days a year, free of charge. For more info go to GovSt.edu/Sculpture/.



CVB Staff Attends Ribbon Cutting for New Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Mokena

On Thursday, June 3, the Chicago Southland CVB staff attended the ribbon cutting celebration for the new Holiday Inn Express & Suites – Orland Park/Mokena. The new hotel features 96 guest rooms, including 30 suites, as well as several meeting rooms. The Holiday Inn Express & Suites is located conveniently off of LaGrange Road, and is about one mile from I-80. With plenty of surrounding restaurants and attractions, this location is perfect for group tours or families attending events in the Chicago Southland.

Village of Mokena Mayor Frank Fleischer spoke about the importance of developing a new hotel in Mokena and how it will benefit other local businesses. The hotel's owner and President & CEO of Indiana Hospitality Group (IHG) Sajid Chaudhry was presented with a certificate from the Mokena Chamber of Commerce and thanked the Mayor and those involved with the hotel's development.

Jim Garrett, President/CEO of the Chicago Southland CVB, echoed Mayor Fleischer's sentiments and expressed his delight at welcoming a new hotel to the Chicago Southland region. Derrick Sousley, Vice President of Operations at IHG, was also in attendance. The team at the Chicago Southland CVB is looking forward to working with the new Holiday Inn Express & Suites!



EVEN Hotel – Tinley Park Advances to Final Round for 2021 Stella Awards



The Chicago Southland CVB is excited to announce that EVEN Hotel – Tinley Park has been chosen as a finalist for the 2021 Stella Awards! EVEN Hotel was nominated by the CVB in the Best Hotel Renovation (Midwest) category. The Stella Awards recognize excellence in the meetings industry. With nearly 20 categories, the Stella Awards honor both national and international nominees, celebrating overall excellence, superb food and beverage, professionalism of staff, sustainability initiatives and other critical aspects of the meeting and event experience.



The EVEN brand was first launched in 2012 and is a national chain that specializes in serving travelers' holistic wellness needs. EVEN Hotel – Tinley Park recently completed full rebranding efforts of the existing Holiday Inn Hotel at the Tinley Park Convention Center. The hotel underwent a comprehensive \$10 million renovation throughout 2020. Meeting and convention attendees utilizing the convention center space will now be able to stay at the newly renovated property. Nominees will be judged by a select jury of meeting and event professionals. Winners

of the 2021 Stella Awards will be announced on November 4, 2021!

Save the Date: Chicago Southland Blood Drive

The Chicago Southland CVB has proudly partnered with the American Red Cross to host a blood drive in support of Sickle Cell Awareness Month. According to the CDC, sickle cell disease affects approximately 100,000 Americans.

On Thursday, September 2 from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM, please join us at the Southland Center in Lynwood to donate blood. Donating is easy and safe! Plus, donating blood helps save lives. Donors must be at least 17 years old (16 with a signed consent form), weigh at least 110 pounds and be in good health.

If you are interested in signing up, please email Katie Arvia at Katie@VisitChicagoSouthland.com. More information to follow.



Sally Schlesinger Celebrates 30 Years



Congratulations to Sally Schlesinger, CPA, Executive Vice President, who is celebrating her 30 year anniversary working for the Chicago Southland CVB this June! Sally began her career with the CVB in 1991. Over the past 30 years, Sally has been an integral part of the CVB. She helped increase the budget and added 14 municipalities to the CVB through thoughtful and innovative means.

“Sally has been a pillar of knowledge and strength for the CVB. For the past 30 years, she has been the heart and soul of this organization. We would not be where we are today without her major contributions and passion for the tourism industry,” said Jim Garrett, President/CEO of the CVB.

Congratulations, Sally, and heartfelt thanks from the entire staff at the Chicago Southland CVB!

Recent and Upcoming Industry Tradeshows

Attending national tradeshows is vital to bringing new meetings, group tours and sporting events to the Chicago Southland region. It is the responsibility of the Chicago Southland CVB to represent the Chicago Southland and its hotels, venues and communities on a national level at these tradeshows. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, our sales team has been hard at work representing the Chicago Southland by not only attending virtual tradeshows, but by also continuing to build and maintain relationships with meetings and events planners. If you have any important hotel or attraction updates that you would like to share with our sales team before their next tradeshow, please email Mary Patchin at Mary@VisitChicagoSouthland.com.



Smart Meetings National
January 21, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



Heartland Travel Showcase
February 9-12, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



Smart Meetings National
February 25, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



Heritage Clubs International
February 22-26, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



Connect Cyber
March 2-4, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



Smart Meetings National
March 25, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



American Bus Association
April 13, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



Smart Meetings Mid-Atlantic
April 29, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



Smart Meetings National
May 17-18, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



Sports ETA – Sports Xchange II
May 18-20, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



American Bus Association
May 25, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



American Bus Association
June 8, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



HelmsBriscoe
June 29-30, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



SYTA
August 17-19, 2021
Virtual Tradeshow



Connect Marketplace
August 30-September 1, 2021
Tampa, FL

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Chicago Southland
Convention & Visitors Bureau



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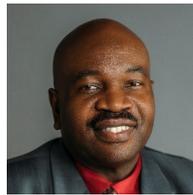
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Olympia Fields, IL 60461-1057
VisitChicagoSouthland.com

PRESORT STANDARD
AUTO
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OLYMPIA FIELDS, IL
PERMIT NO. 170

CVB Welcomes New Board Members



Derrick Champion
City Administrator/Economic
Development Director,
City of Markham



Ashield Forbes
General Manager,
Holiday Inn Express – Crestwood



Lana Rogachevskaya
Executive Director,
*Governors State University
Center for Performing Arts*



Paul Ruane
Community Planner,
City of Oak Forest



Alex Scharf
Economic Development
Coordinator,
Village of Orland Park



Christy Yoder
Director of Sales,
*Holiday Inn Chicago Matteson
Conference Center*