Cook County
TOURISM ALIVE
More to Explore.

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

THANK YOU for being a partner and supporter of Cook County Tourism Alive.

This past year was an exciting one for the program, as we launched all of the elements of this effort to support the tourism and hospitality industry in suburban Cook County. We'd like to share with you some of the highlights of 2024.

COOK COUNTY BUREAU OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tourism Alive is a program run by the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development, utilizing a $10 million grant from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. We are proud to support tourism recovery in partnership with the suburban Cook County convention and visitors bureaus.

Tourism Alive is divided into four distinct programs targeting different aspects of tourism:

Promoting Nature and Outdoor Recreation

Supporting Hospitality Workforce Development

Funding Regional Marketing Campaigns

Supporting Local Sales and Marketing Programs

All four of these pillars of Tourism Alive were activated in 2024 with impressive results.

Visit Chicago Southland

MEET CHICAGO NORTHWEST

CHICAGO'S NORTH SHORE
CITY LIFE, ELEVATED.

ROSEMONT CONVENTION | TOURISM BUREAU

VISIT OAK PARK

LEARN MORE

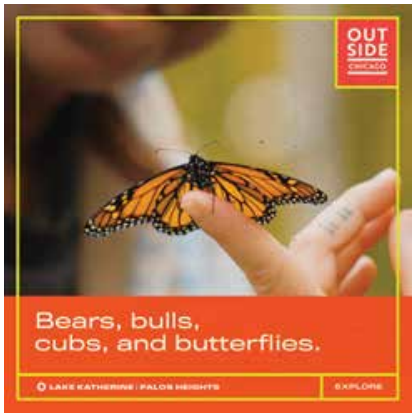
cookcountytourism.com

Promoting Nature and Outdoor Recreation

OUTSIDE CHICAGO

Cook County is blessed with a wealth of natural resources, forests and open lands, despite being an urban metropolis. Working closely with the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the five suburban convention and visitors bureaus, a new online resource was created — outsidechicago.com.

Outsidechicago.com was launched in May and is supported by a robust paid, earned and social media marketing campaign. For the first time, users can find the outdoor attractions and resources in suburban Cook County in one easy-to-navigate website.



2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- Significant growth in user sessions, with estimated 130,000 in 2024
- Multi-channel digital marketing campaign reaching wide audience
- Social media content driving visitors to website
- Local media coverage boosting awareness of Outside Chicago
- Links to CVB websites and local businesses promoting tourism

Cook County TOURISM ALIVE

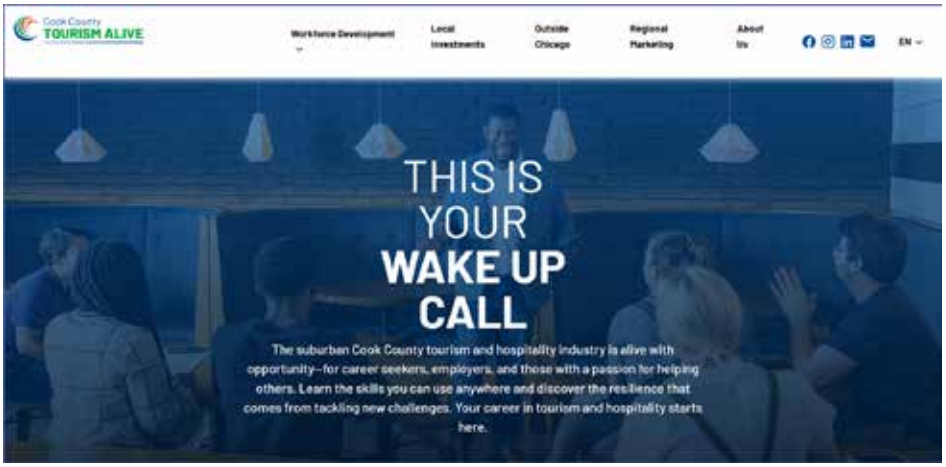
FOREST PRESERVES of Cook County

LEARN MORE

outsidechicago.com

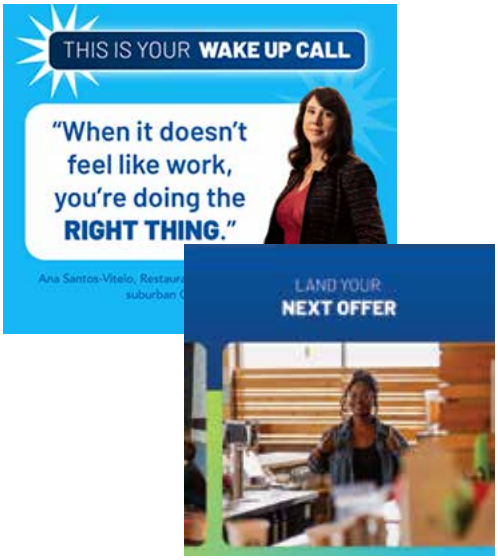
Supporting Hospitality Workforce Development

Tourism Alive is dedicated to supporting the tourism and hospitality industry as it continues to grow after the pandemic. Through a unique information hub — cookcountytourism.com — we have created an online resource for both career seekers and employers in the hospitality industry in suburban Cook County.



VIEW MY **SUCCESS STORY**

The information hub includes resources to help prepare job seekers, advice for employers on job retention, links to industry training and job listings and other helpful material. Since its launch in April 2023, CookCountyTourism.com has attracted over 82,000 sessions, an engagement rate of 16.4%, and over 100,000 pageviews, including significant engagement with Spanish-speaking users.



An awareness-building campaign was launched called "This Is Your Wake-Up Call," aimed at showing the successful career paths possible in the hospitality industry. Through paid digital and social media marketing, the campaign focused on the stories of people who have gone from entry-level positions to robust careers in hospitality.

Cook County TOURISM ALIVE

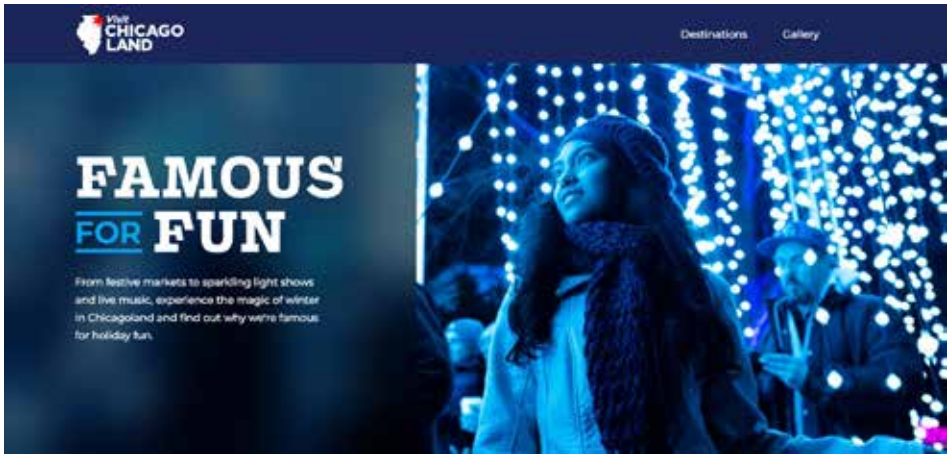
LEARN MORE

cookcountytourism.com/workforce

Funding Regional Marketing Campaigns

Visit CHICAGO LAND

As a result of Tourism Alive funding, suburban Cook County communities were able to significantly increase tourism marketing. The five suburban convention and visitors bureaus participated in "Visit Chicagoland" seasonal campaigns.



Chicago's North Shore, Visit Chicago Southland, Meet Chicago Northwest, Rosemont and Visit Oak Park were all featured in the digital marketing effort. This summer's theme was "Famous For Fun" and showcased events and attractions.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

The results were impressive, targeting audiences in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa. Using digital display ads and paid social media posts, the engagement numbers proved the campaign delivered.

- Digital ad click-through rate performed 250% above industry benchmark
- Audiences measured 36% more likely to book hotels and vacation travel
- Paid social media campaign showed 191% increase in clicks from last year
- Overall, more than 5 million campaign impressions

Cook County TOURISM ALIVE

LEARN MORE

visitchicagoland.com

Supporting Local Sales and Marketing Programs

A cornerstone of Tourism Alive is direct investment to support tourism in local suburban communities. In partnership with the five suburban convention and visitors bureaus, new initiatives were launched, as well as expansion of existing ones. This boost in funding would otherwise not have happened without Tourism Alive dollars.

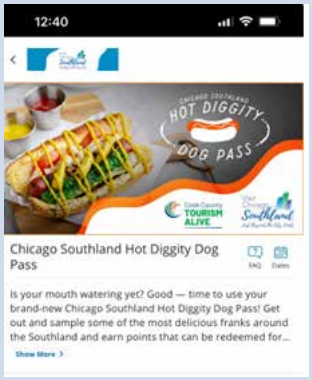
2024 HIGHLIGHTS

SKYNAV

Chicago's North Shore developed an immersive digital experience in partnership with SkyNav, a custom mapping service. Visitors experience "sky to ground" visualization of web content using 3D 360° technology.

Meet Chicago Northwest significantly boosted its visibility through a strategic partnership with a public relations firm, made possible with Tourism Alive funding. The year-long program generated 134 million impressions through coverage.

Rosemont Convention Bureau is developing a new online virtual tool for meeting planners to explore the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, as well as a drone video of the entire village. Tourism Alive funding is also allowing Rosemont to participate in IPW, the world's leading travel trade show, coming to Chicago in 2025.



Visit Chicago Southland developed a mobile passport program with Bandwango, a company that builds custom online tools for destinations. More than 390 local businesses joined the program, driving new awareness and engagement.

Visit Oak Park and the Oak Park River Forest Museum partnered to bring a Black history tour and a hometown heroes tour to the area. The guided bus tours featured the homes of notable and famous people who lived in the communities of Oak Park, River Forest and Maywood.

Cook County TOURISM ALIVE

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COOK COUNTY BUREAU OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT