

# IHSA BOYS BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT RETURNS

The Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Board of Directors announced on Monday, June 13, that the IHSA Boys State Basketball Tournament will return to the State Farm Center in Champaign starting March 11–13, 2021.

Visit Champaign County, University of Illinois Division of Intercollegiate Athletics, State Farm Center, cities of Champaign and Urbana, along with area municipalities and business leaders joined forces to create a comprehensive and compelling bid package that was over a year in the making.

The bid focused on the student-athlete experience at the State Farm Center as a superior competitive environment. Through state-of-the-art technology to create an atmosphere worthy of a championship, competing teams will receive the experience of a lifetime. From customizing the lights on the dome to fireworks during the championship games, competitors will get the atmosphere experienced by our collegiate athletes.

Families, fans and students will be able to immerse themselves in the latest technology with the TechHub, while younger family members will enjoy interactive play through activity areas hosted by [chambanamoms.com](http://chambanamoms.com). Addressing the student needs of these athletes, the University of Illinois will provide students and families the opportunity to take part in an academic fair to not only learn about possibilities with the University of Illinois, but also colleges across the country. Fan will also engage further in the history of IHSA Basketball through a unique, temporary exhibit that will be located on the upper concourse of the State Farm Center.

The IHSA, Visit Champaign County and the State Farm Center have begun preparations for the return of the IHSA Boys State Basketball Tournament. Critical to the experience is the hospitality of our community, starting with area hotels offering competitive spectator rates. Through our hotel partner program, over a dozen hotels have committed to a reasonable rate for the duration of the initial three-year contract. We will also be coordinating with area restaurants, shops, and attractions on promotions related to the tournament in order to roll out the “orange” carpet for athletes, families, and fans alike.



Those interested in volunteering during the tournament should contact Visit Champaign County at [mikek@visitchampaigncounty.org](mailto:mikek@visitchampaigncounty.org).



## FROM OUR CEO

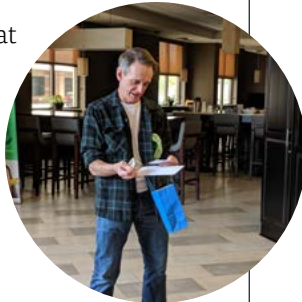
Wrapping up the last quarter of FY20 seems like three years instead of months! As we enter Restore Illinois Phase 4, I've never felt more challenged and inspired by our community and the hospitality industry.

Our hotels faced record low occupancy levels, resulting in laid off staff and some hotels who even closed their doors on a temporary basis. In talking with our hotel partner general managers, it was heartbreaking to face their reality of displacing hotel team members, many of whom are like work family.

Faced with canceling our annual Toast to Tourism celebration on May 13, the VCC Foundation Board decided to earmark anticipated event funds toward creating a Hospitality Relief Fund. Together with a generous donation from the CU Hotel Lodging Association and private donors, we awarded \$250 cash awards to 42 displaced hotel team members in the Champaign County area, and \$750 cash awards to 2 "grand prize" recipients from that group.



To say this pandemic has impacted our hotel industry frontline employees is an understatement. The stories I personally heard, both through nominations and the personal interactions with our hotel GM's, have literally left a couple of them (and me) in tears. With their permission, we captured the true faces of our area hospitality industry in [this short video](#).



The spirit of travel is found in our hospitality heroes and outside of ordinary residents who support local businesses and help our neighbors. The spirit of travel isn't only found in far-off places. Together, we will rebuild our community.

Thank you to our partners and work force who support destination promotion, which benefits the well-being of every person in our community. As a public good, it is an essential community investment to develop opportunities and build quality of life for the people of our community. Everything starts from that point.

Jayne DeLuce

# CHAMPAIGN COUNTY SAFE

## Champaign County Safe

As we neared Restore Illinois Phase 3 starting May 29, 2020, discussions began in the economic development leaders group on how to communicate re-opening safety measures to both local businesses and to the public. To help communicate the Restore Illinois guidelines and localized best practices, [ChampaignCountySafe.org](https://champaigncountysafe.org) was developed.

This website, created by Terri Reifsteck, hosts the best practices for nearly 20 industries, including bars, restaurants, hotels, retail, entertainment venues among many others, created by the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with local industry leaders. Additional businesses resources can be found on the site including a list of PPE suppliers, local printers, cleaning companies, and sample signage.

A critical component of the site is the Champaign County Safe pledge. Local businesses are encouraged to sign the pledge online that they will follow guidelines outlined by the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, and the CDC including wearing masks, proper sanitation, and enacting social distancing protocols. Since launching on May 26, over 300 local businesses have signed the pledge. Consumers are encouraged to go to the website for a complete list of businesses that are committed to safety prior to patronizing a local business. This site is being heavily promoted by over 20 local organizations, and will be utilized extensively by the University of Illinois as students, faculty, and staff return to campus.

Through this site, PSAs have also been released, including the "5 Things to Do When Visiting a Local Business" that can be found posted in the five kiosks located throughout downtown, campustown, and midtown, on city light poles, and posted in local businesses. Additional PSAs are planned in Phase 4 as we prepare for the return of students to the community.

## 5 THINGS TO DO WHEN VISITING LOCAL BUSINESSES

[CHAMPAIGNCOUNTYSAFE.ORG](https://champaigncountysafe.org)

<b>WEAR A MASK IF MEDICALLY ABLE</b>	<b>ENTER WITH CLEAN HANDS</b>	<b>ADHERE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES</b>	<b>USE RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE</b>	<b>BE PATIENT AND KIND</b>
While dining out, masks should be worn when not eating or drinking.	Utilize hand-washing stations or sanitizer as needed.	Do not gather in crowds. Wait in line 6 ft. apart or wait in your vehicle.	Cover coughs and sneezes. Do not go out if feeling ill.	Businesses are working hard to keep employees and customers safe. Respect their rules.



# PROMOTING SAFETY IN HOSPITALITY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20 | 10:00 AM

Featuring Champaign-Urbana Public Health Department, Clanin Marketing

visit **champaign** county

## Promoting Safety in Hospitality Webinar

As businesses looked to re-open safely, we held a webinar, Promoting Safety in Hospitality, on May 20. Nearly 100 attendees participated to learn best practices from the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, marketing strategies to promote safety standards and changes to business operations from Clanin Marketing, and easy tips for using video to showcase safety from Five Foot Productions. These tools and practices are critical for businesses that ensure the safety of their customers.

## Champaign Makes Top 50 Small Cities

In June, Resonance Consultancy, issued their Top 50 Small Cities in the United States, where Champaign made #35. Resonance is a consulting firm focusing on economic development, tourism, and real estate, that works with clients around the globe on branding and communication to achieve economic strength. The cities were ranked based on six factors: Place, Programming, Product, People, Prosperity, and Promotion. Among the reasons why Champaign made the list was the People category, coming in at #19. The report also states, "And while Champaign residents may work hard, they also have plenty of options to play hard, with an overall Programming score of #17, driven by high rankings in Culture (#100) and Nightlife (#88). Expect arts and entertainment sectors (among others) to further flourish: the 11-acre Yards project proposes a hotel and conference center, office tower, apartments, University of Illinois sports arena and more, generating an expected \$112 million plus in annual economic activity."

## Adams Outdoor Billboard

Throughout the stay-at-home order, Adams Outdoor Advertising is running a campaign, "Adams Loves CU", promoting local businesses that have made an impact. Nominations are accepted for local organizations to be featured on the digital billboards across Champaign-Urbana. Visit Champaign County was recognized in May citing our "great support of local businesses." Thank you to Adams Outdoor and our local community for sharing the love!



## All In Illinois—National Teacher Appreciation Week

As part of the All In Illinois campaign, the State sought out submissions to include in their National Teacher Appreciation Week video. Visit Champaign County submitted the video created by Krannert Center, in collaboration with ChambanaMoms.com, of local teacher, Brandon T. Washington hosting an online sing-a-long. The submission was included and can be found at the end of the video [found here](#).

## ICCVB Virtual Meeting

With the postponement of the Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism and the restrictions about meeting in person, Jayne, Terri, Mike and Caitlyn participated in the Illinois Council of Convention & Visitors Bureaus (ICCVB) Spring Meeting virtually on June 17-18 for education and networking. There was a CEO Virtual Summit, followed by online niche discussions for Sports, Tour, Market, and Finance & Administration. Melissa Luebke, Meredith Media, also highlighted traveler insights and sentiment during COVID-19.



**35 CHAMPAIGN,**  
ILLINOIS

**POPULATION** METRO 237,356

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 8** NIGHTLIFE
- 10** CULTURE

People power this diversified mini metropolis.

Self-described as a "micro-urban" community and home to the University of Illinois, Champaign prides itself on its diverse economy. Education, health care and banking are leading employers, while jobs are also abundant in light manufacturing and social services. The diversity extends to demographics, too—in fact, outside of Chicago, the county has one of the largest immigrant populations in Illinois. Champaign made the Top 20 in our People category, at #19, with a #14 ranking for Educational Attainment and #40 for Foreign-Born Residents. Hailing from nearly 80 countries (from Colombia to Democratic Republic of Congo), immigrants make up more than 20% of the area's STEM and education workforce. And while Champaign residents may work hard, they also have plenty of options to play hard, with an overall Programming score of #17, driven by high rankings in Culture (#10) and Nightlife (#8). Expect arts and entertainment sectors (among others) to further flourish: the 11-acre Yards project proposes a hotel and conference center, office tower, apartments, University of Illinois sports arena and more, generating an expected \$112 million-plus in annual economic activity.

# SALES & MARKETING EFFORTS

## Meetings & Conferences Overview

With the devastating effect that COVID-19 has had on the meetings and event industry, Caitlyn Floyd has spent the majority of her time working with planners on keeping them up-to-date on what is going on in our community, specifically with hotel venues and points of interest that would be used during their event. Although there has been a significant amount of canceled business, VCC and our partners have been able to work with many of our groups to reschedule for later dates, most into 2021. With the allowance of groups up to 50 people, Caitlyn is letting our association partners know that Champaign County is open for business with increased cleaning procedures and safety precautions for all groups. We want our clients to know that we value their business and take their safety, and the safety of our community seriously.

## Sports & Events Overview

Champaign County is already home to three IHSA State Championships. Visit Champaign County is teaming up with the Village of Rantoul to bid on the IHSA Softball Tournament, which would be held the first two weekends in June from 2021-25 at the new Rantoul Family Sports Complex, scheduled to open in April 2021.

The two largest Champaign County spring sports events, which bring in a combined \$13 million to the area, were canceled due to COVID-19. The Illinois Marathon, which was scheduled for April 23-25, brings in about 15,000 participants and has an estimated economic impact of \$9.6 million each year. Registration and planning are already underway for the 2021 Illinois Marathon on April 29-May 1.

The first weekend in May typically brings youth soccer to Champaign-Urbana, during the spring Illini Futbol Club Invite. IFC brings in nearly 3,000 players from across the Midwest for a two-day tournament which has an estimated economic impact of \$3.2 million. The IFC is hoping to hold its Fall Cup in September.

Game Day USA also had three baseball weekends canceled, but hopes to hold two of its tournaments during the second half of 2020, including an added event during the first weekend of October.

## Group Tour Summary

Caitlyn has been reaching out to all our tour operator contacts, inviting them to discover the greater Champaign County area on their next road trip. With drive markets being the first to return, we want to ensure that we are top of mind for tour operators. While many tours will be smaller in numbers, they are still looking for places to access as restrictions are lifted. VCC is continuing to update travelers with information on what is open, what is required when they visit, and the safety measures that are being met both in attractions and venues.

## Occupancy Rate

Reporting March-May 2020

Champaign	31.8%
Bloomington	27.7%
Peoria	22.6%
Springfield/Decatur	32.9%

Down  
27.7% from  
Q4 FY19

## Average Daily Rate

Reporting March-May 2020

Champaign	\$63.59
Bloomington	\$70.30
Peoria	\$76.92
Springfield/Decatur	\$75.12

Down  
\$30.59 from  
Q4 FY19

This data is collected and reported by STR®.

## SPORTS, EVENTS, & FILM

3  
leads

1  
tentative

2  
definite

1,226  
estimated room nights

## CONFERENCES

3  
leads

1  
tentative

2  
definite

1,215  
estimated room nights

## GROUP TOUR

0  
leads

0  
tentative

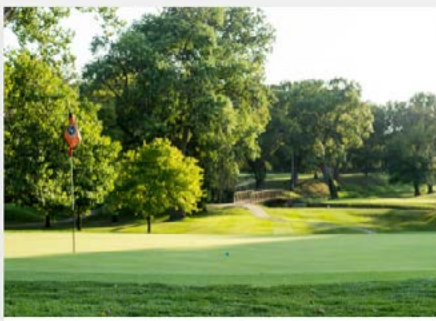
0  
definite

**LEAD:** Potential business distributed to hotels

**TENTATIVE LEAD:** Potential business, no commitment yet

**DEFINITE LEAD:** Business secured





#### AJGA JUNIOR ALL-STAR AT URBANA

Visit Champaign County to Sponsor AJGA Junior All-Star at Urbana

Tournament to be held August 3-6 at Urbana Country Club

## AJGA Tournament Coming to Urbana

In May, VCC and the American Junior Golf Association announced a tour stop at Urbana County Club this August 3-6. The AJGA Urbana All-Star Event brings 78 of the top junior players, the pros of tomorrow to town. The tour has produced the likes of Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Sergio Garcia, Jordan Spieth, Rickie Fowler, Justin Thomas, Paula Creamer, Morgan Pressel, Inbee Park, Lexi Thompson, Stacy Lewis and Alison Lee. The Urbana event is expected to be an annual stop on the AJGA tour. Visit Champaign County is the title sponsor for the event on August 3, which allows area golfers to play a round with some of the junior players.

## Virtual 27th Mile Celebration

Visit Champaign County organized a virtual 27th mile on Friday, April 24, which would have been the day of the 5K in association with the Illinois Marathon. The Facebook Live event featured VCC staff reminiscing about past years, as well as Matt Riggs from Riggs Beer Company, the official beer provider for the Illinois Marathon, and co-race director Jan Seeley each providing messages. 90s Daughter, the entertainment for the event, provided a two-hour virtual concert.

## IRUC Consulting Project

The VCC team facilitated with IRUC Consulting, a group of three students from the University of Illinois Department of Recreation, Sport, and Tourism on a virtual internship project. The students spent a couple of weeks working on deliverables as part of the Sports Playbook. Those included a mock-up of a brochure, updated site map for that portion of the VCC website, and a detailed spreadsheet of sports spaces throughout the Champaign County area.

## National Travel & Tourism Week

This annual celebration of the impact of travel and tourism looked significantly different this year. While we were unable to host Toast to Tourism, we shared stories under the U.S. Travel Associations theme, "The Spirit of Travel." Video from area businesses detailing the importance of community support were shared by Spurlock Museum, Blind Pig Brewery, Industrial Donuts, Staerkel Planetarium, and the Land Connection. Additionally, we showcased past Tourism Impact Award winners alongside all Cream of the Crop winners. Blog content centered on community support was also shared throughout the week. Cream of the Crop continues to be awarded every week to recognize those hospitality heroes going above and beyond.

## We Will CU Again

As we stayed home through most of April and May, we recognized the emptiness that many were experiencing in the community, including ourselves. Typically, during May, we would release a new community video, showcasing the many experiences available in our Outside of Ordinary area. Working with our videographer, Amanda Baker of Five Foot Productions, we instead released a brief, but impactful video showcasing those experiences we were all missing. From tailgating to live music to dining out with friends, the video acknowledged that "We Will CU Again." Find the video on our [YouTube channel here](#).



## Virtual Tours

Recruiting for area businesses has not slowed down during COVID-19, making it challenging for local talent acquisition to promote the community. In response, we created short, virtual tours that highlight different areas of our community: Arts & Culture, Museums, Culinary, Breweries, Outdoor Spaces, and Agriculture Adventures. These videos visually showcase the amenities and experiences in our area for both residents and potential visitors. Find these [videos here](#). These and other VCC resources were shared during a joint recruiters round table with the Champaign County EDC and the University of Illinois on June 30.

## Illinois Road Trip Round-Up

Like other parts of the country, the COVID-19 pandemic brought unique challenges to the state of Illinois and its destination marketing organizations. To help promote statewide travel, Visit Champaign County and 18 other ICCVB members began collaborating on the Illinois Road Trip Round-Up blog series. Over the course of the summer, every participating DMO features attractions, businesses, and highlights of their community with readers all across the state under each week's specific theme. In the spirit of All In Illinois, VCC and our partners across the state are standing stronger together and promoting safe travel.

## 217 Black Restaurant Weekend

In collaboration with Buy Black Champaign, Visit Champaign County promoted their new 217 Black Restaurant Week, happening over the Juneteenth holiday. Participating restaurants included Caribbean Grill, Stango Cuisine, Wood N' Hog, C&C Kitchen, Rumberger's Wings, CBPB Popcorn Shop, and japattuglyburger. The event gained a lot of attention, with many businesses selling out of food over the weekend.



## TOP SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



### Facebook

IHSA Boys Basketball  
911 engagements  
40 Shares  
8,554 Reach



**7,690**

Followers



### Twitter

IHSA Boys Basketball  
22,259 reached  
894 engagements



**6,169**

Followers



### Instagram

5 Things Reminder at Blind Pig  
254 engagements  
2,942 impressions



**5,353**

Followers

## VIRTUAL TOURS



ARTS & CULTURE



MUSEUMS



OUTDOOR SPACES



AGRICULTURE ADVENTURES



BREWRIES



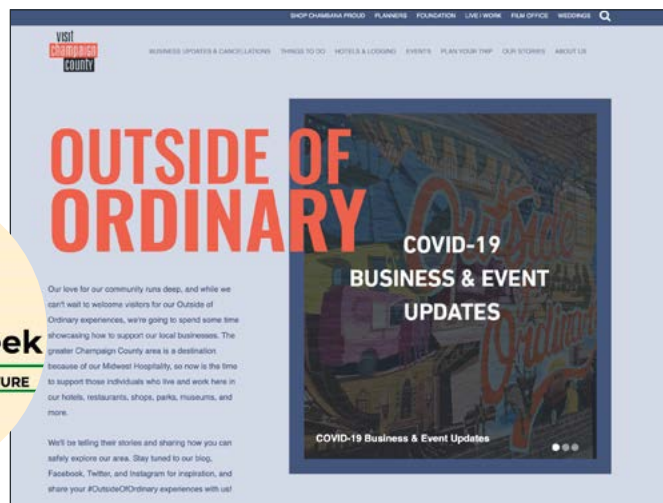
CULINARY SCENE

**8** press releases resulting in

**100** media placements.

**495**

reader responses



## Website Report

27,621 Visits  
46,707 Page Views  
20,841 New Visits  
1.69 Pages/Session  
01:25 Avg. Length of Visit

## Top Visited Pages

COVID-19 Updates  
Events  
Food & Drink  
Virtual Experiences  
Sports & Recreation

**54.07%**

of website traffic is from outside the greater Champaign County area

**29%**

is from outside of Illinois

**17**

events submitted on our website



## Our Mission

We promote a welcoming destination experience for visitors to strengthen economic opportunity and enhance the lives of residents.

## VISIT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY PARTNERS

### Founding Partners

City of Champaign

### Platinum Partners

University of Illinois

### Gold Partners

Busey :: Carle :: Champaign County

City of Urbana :: Village of Savoy

Village of Rantoul

### Silver Partners

Illinois American Water :: Parkland College

### Bronze Partners

Village of Mahomet :: Village of St. Joseph

Urbana Park District

### Regional Partners

Allerton Park & Retreat Center :: Arthur Area Tourism

Council :: City of Tuscola :: Monticello Chamber of

Commerce

### Hotel Partners

**ORANGE PARTNERS:** Eastland Suites & Conference

Center :: Hilton Garden Inn :: Holiday Inn :: Hyatt Place

I Hotel & Conference Center :: Illini Union Hotel

**BLUE PARTNERS:** Best Western Plus :: Candlewood Suites :: Comfort Suites Country Inn & Suites :: Courtyard by Marriott :: Drury Inn & Suites :: Fairfield Inn & Suites Hampton Inn Urbana :: Hampton Inn Champaign Southwest :: Holiday Inn Express :: Holiday Inn Express Rantoul :: Home2 Suites by Hilton :: Homewood Suites LaQuinta :: Residence Inn by Marriott :: TownePlace Suites by Marriott

For information on our Tourism Industry Partner Program and how you can support our mission visit:

[visitchampaigncounty.org/partners](http://visitchampaigncounty.org/partners)



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**Lynne Barnes**, Carle

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**Bob Flider**, University of Illinois

**John Hammond**, Candlewood Suites

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### Visit Champaign County Team

217.351.4133 | 17 E. Taylor St., Champaign, IL 61820



**Jayne DeLuce**, President & CEO

**Terri Reifsteck**, Vice President of Marketing & Community Engagement

**Caitlyn Floyd**, Director of Sales & International Travel

**Mike Koon**, Director of Sports, Special Events & Film

**Taylor Bauer**, Communications Manager

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**Brooke Mayer**, Visitor Experience Coordinator

**Leslie Lundy**, Finance Manager

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### Visit Champaign County Foundation Charter Partners

Adams Outdoor Advertising :: Don & Suzi Armstrong of Northwestern Mutual\* :: BankChampaign\* :: BPC :: Carter's Furniture\* :: Champaign Park

District\* :: Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District\* :: ciLiving from WCIA\* :: Clifton Larson Allen\* :: Cozad Asset Management\* :: Jayne & Joe

DeLuce\* :: Farnsworth Group\* :: First State Bank\* :: FRASCA International\* :: Gordyville USA\* :: Grow Marketing & Communications :: Hickory Point

Bank & Trust\* :: Rob & Jennifer Kowalski :: Market Place Shopping Center :: Martin Hood LLC\* :: Martin One Source\* :: Midland States Bank\* :: The

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