

Hear About

Spreading holiday cheer throughout the Midwest

It's one thing for Hamilton County Tourism to tell visitors how great it is here, but it's even better when those accolades come from other sources... someone like the editor of Midwest Living. In a [new video](#), Editor Trevor Meers tells viewers the Palladium is one of the most beautiful performance spaces he's ever seen, and Conner Prairie is among the best history museums in the country. Meers knows firsthand. He and a team of writers, editors and photographers were in Hamilton County earlier this year. The segment is being promoted online and also has aired in St. Louis and Michigan.

There's one gift you should never return: Vacation Days. That's the theme of a special promotion in the November/December issue of Midwest Living. The magazine and Project: Time Off, a U.S. Travel initiative, are promoting getaways, which includes two full pages of things to do, see and experience in Hamilton County. Highlights include shopping in the Nickel Plate Arts district, browsing the new Christkindlmarkt and making your own Hearthside Supper at Conner Prairie. More than 50 percent of Americans didn't use all their vacation time in 2016. Hamilton County is encouraging people to take days off this holiday season right here in Hamilton County.

"It's a real opportunity to have Midwest Living highlighting our destinations and offerings during the holiday season," said Ashley Ledford, HCT's director of marketing and promotions.

Tourism also partnered with KIT Magazine to highlight some of Hamilton County's local boutiques and shops in a special holiday shopping feature. KIT ramped up the promotion this year creating a shopping trail, which offered special discounts Dec. 1-2.

Social media and mobile and radio ads in the Cincinnati and Louisville markets also promote holiday getaways and shopping in Hamilton County. Campaigns direct people to the VisitHamiltonCounty.com where they can learn more, request holiday planning guides, enter contests and plan a memorable [holiday getaway](#).

Hamilton County Tourism

37 East Main Street
Carmel, IN 46032
P 317.848.3181 / 800.776.8687
VisitHamiltonCounty.com



Atlanta improvements pave way for train

Hamilton County Tourism helped Atlanta secure a grant and local investments totaling \$88,500 for improvements to its civic plaza and community center, creating a gathering place for new train excursions in spring 2018.

Atlanta celebrated the dedication of its updated plaza, by including new landscaping, in November. Phase II of the project will include updates to its community center and gazebo. Additional grants have been written for other improvements to Arcadia and Atlanta.

“The goal year one is to bring new train excursions from Arcadia to Atlanta. For example, there could be a ghost train excursion where riders could gather around the fire pit for ghost stories before or after a ride on a historic train on the Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad,” said Brenda Myers, HCT president and CEO.

Tourism conducted market research that showed value and interest in themed excursions. While there was some interest in train rides, research showed more value when those rides were part of an overall experience.

Mr. Muffin’s Trains – a local train dealer and collector – moved from Carmel into an old flour mill in downtown Atlanta this summer. This fall, Mr. Muffin’s partnered with Nickel Plate Arts to offer kids’ art classes in the building. Myers likes the connection between the new Atlanta business and the interest in train excursions. This is a true public-private partnership.

Tourism is hoping to secure additional dollars to help make improvements around the depot stop in Arcadia, too, hoping to spur additional interest in the downtowns and bring in visitors through train excursions.

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Sandy Allen joins HCT as visitor experience manager

A veteran event planner and tourism promoter, Sandy Allen of Carmel has joined the Hamilton County Tourism staff, where she will service meetings and sports events by working closely with partners and service providers. Allen will develop the Hamilton County Ambassadors program. This program was designed to make sure the local hospitality community and volunteers have the information and tools they need to make visitors feel welcome in Hamilton County.

Before joining Tourism, Allen was tourism and marketing consultant for Legacy Travel Club. Allen also is the former facility sales, events and tourism manager for the Indianapolis Zoo, where she was responsible for planning events and conventions.

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