

Hear About

Hamilton County Tourism News

Tourism Development Update

If a plan under advisement by Hamilton County Tourism is implemented, Northeast Hamilton County could gain yet another new tourism attraction. Atlanta, Indiana will become the Midwest's Train Town, USA and could be completed with the addition of the Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad, Inc. in 2018.

The proposal highlights an important cultural heritage asset that could include 12 miles of train operations between Noblesville and Atlanta. The Arcadia Heritage Depot would serve as the nonprofit Nickel Plate Heritage Railroad's headquarters and feature exhibits about the region's gas, glass and train heritage.

Most trains would depart from Atlanta, however, several train-focused businesses in downtown Atlanta would be complemented by an almost \$100,000 investment in the Atlanta downtown park and community center to accommodate the anticipated visitor growth as well as pay tribute to train heritage. You can learn more about the [proposed project here](#).



Selling Hamilton County

Hamilton County Tourism hit the road this summer to sell event planners and sports organizations on the benefits of bringing conferences, events and sports tournaments to Hamilton County. When Tourism went to the Meeting Planners International World Education Congress in Las Vegas to support its sister organization Visit Indy, there were two goals in mind: Tell event planners about Hamilton County, and encourage them to attend the 2018 conference, which will be hosted by Indianapolis.

Hamilton County Tourism partnered with Visit Indy to promote Central Indiana. Tourism met with new prospects for a Topgolf party, and it served up pies in a jar from Lisa's Pie Shop during the trade show. Hamilton County will be a partner with Visit Indy for the 2018 MPI conference, June 2-5.

Most recently, HCT and Hamilton County Sports Authority were in New Orleans for Connect to court meeting planners within the sports, corporate and association markets. Closer to home, HCT was in Muncie for the Indiana Society of Association Executives annual meeting, an event Hamilton County will host in 2018 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Hotel and Conference Center in Noblesville, which will add 30,000-square-feet of meeting space and nearly 200 hotel rooms.

"Grand Park is well known in the sports market and can draw from a national level," said Laura Kelner, HCT director of sales. "Some trade shows allow us to draw more regionally, but we're also trying to be more nationally known, so we're introducing our community and assets to a broader audience for the first time."

Those introductions are leading to more conferences, events and visitors to Hamilton County.



Ahead of the digital media curve

The world of online marketing changes rapidly, and Hamilton County Tourism works to explore the best ways to reach target audiences online. We dipped our toes in the digital marketing world in 2015, and hired TwoSix Digital to create a campaign for Tenderloin Tuesdays. HCT had two critical results: More people ate tenderloins, and HCT learned a whole lot about how to leverage digital marketing as part of the overall marketing strategy.

TwoSix Digital conducted a social media audit for HCT this spring; not only did it confirm that digital marketing helps reach people who have become visitors, but it solidified that social media strategies are on target. The company's blog even featured examples from HCT on how to use hashtags and engage locals as ambassadors in social media.

HCT wanted to share the wealth of knowledge its has learned since doing that first digital campaign in 2015, so this June, the HCT boardroom became a classroom for more 30 HCT partners. They learned tips and insights as TwoSix Digital presented on how to be successful using digital marketing. [View the presentation.](#)