

TALKING TOURISM

January 10, 2010

Each month this space will be devoted to a column written by Debbie Robinson, executive director of the Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitors & Convention Bureau, who will provide information about upcoming events, area attractions, bureau services and projects, and most importantly, communicate the tremendous impact that the travel and tourism industry has on this region.

Building on Success

Tourism for our region in 2009 was full of many notable firsts and significant accomplishments. While communities and states (including our own Ohio) suffered significant losses in lodging revenues and declines in visitor attendance to attractions, Guernsey County emerged above average. We held our own in a tough economic climate.

The Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitors & Convention Bureau reported an increase in 2009 inquiry leads, website hits, calls, and new initiatives. Almost 4,000 visitors stopped by the Tourist Information Center in downtown Cambridge last year. The VCB office also received over 7,000 direct leads from advertisements and serviced over 53,000 requests for vacation guides from its new website and toll free calls. In all, almost 80,000 vacation guides were distributed in 2009.

The VCB staff and board members are collectively seeking new opportunities to increase awareness regarding the tourism industry in Guernsey County. In 2010, we will continue with an aggressive marketing plan by making upgrades to our interactive award-winning website, unveiling new social media pages and links specific to Cambridge/Guernsey County tourism, and presenting a new co-op marketing opportunity to our Team Tourism members as well as continuing our popular Savings Card promotion.

Speaking of **Team Tourism**, mark your calendars for the VCB's next quarterly meeting scheduled for Monday, **January 25, 2010** at Noon at Theo's Restaurant in downtown Cambridge. The topic for our industry luncheon is emergency preparedness presented by Ron Clawson. Clawson has over 25 years experience working with insurance and property management professionals providing solutions to mitigate properties affected by mold, water, fire and smoke. His experience with Rainbow International includes assisting insurers, professional property managers and real estate professionals to develop plans to restore properties following any natural or man-made disaster.

Lunch is Dutch treat. Please RSVP to the VCB office by Wednesday, January 20 by calling 740-432-2022 or 800-93-5480. We will also conduct a brochure swap! Please bring your new 2010 brochures, rack cards, or flyers to share with your Team Tourism partners. The VCB will have plenty of their 2010 Official Vacation Guides on hand.

Be on the lookout for our 2010 Official Cambridge/Guernsey County Vacation Guide! The guide this year is 8.5" wide by 10" tall and in full color. A smaller companion brochure will also be used for fulfillment in display racks throughout area hotels, attractions and state welcome centers. Features of the new guide include our new Cools Sites and Great Times pages, attractions and museums, outdoor recreation, shopping, arts & entertainment, lodging, and dining. Activities for families in the Cambridge/Guernsey County area include Salt Fork State Park, Seneca Lake, horseback riding, The Living Word Outdoor Drama, shopping in Historic Downtown Cambridge, glass factory and museum tours, the Wilds, train rides, and over 100 festivals and events held throughout the year, and much more.

To learn more about the VCB, area events and activities, visit the Cambridge/Guernsey County VCB office at 627 Wheeling Avenue, Suite 200 in downtown Cambridge, call 740-432-2022, email info@visitguernseycounty.com, or at www.VisitGuernseyCounty.com.