

# Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau Outlines Plans and Priorities for Community

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON/GODFREY - The [North Alton-Godfrey Business Council \(NAGBC\)](#) held its monthly meeting with guest speaker Cory Jobe on Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024.

Business owners and community members gathered at the [National Great Rivers Research and Education Center](#) in East Alton to listen to Jobe speak. He discussed the [Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau](#), of which he is the president, and the organization's goals for the community.

The Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau represents Madison, Macoupin, Montgomery, Jersey, Calhoun and Green Counties in Illinois where the Mississippi, Missouri and Illinois Rivers intersect. The Great Rivers and Routes region is the only place where Route 66 meets the Great River Road.

Jobe's presentation focused on the region's unique assets, including the rivers, the Great River Road, Route 66 and Pere Marquette State Park. He noted that the annual visitors to Pere Marquette rival that of the largest state park in Illinois, with 2.8 annual visitors to Pere Marquette vs. 3.8 annual visitors to Starved Rock State Park in Oglesby.

Jobe stressed the need for investing in the area's tourism products, assets and infrastructure to attract even more people to the region. He emphasized the benefits that the region could reap by prioritizing riverfront improvements and a downtown hotel.

Argosy Casino and their parent company, Penn Gaming, have been conducting an independent hotel study. Alton Works has conducted a study, as well. This process includes looking for funding assistance from the State of Illinois. More information will be available soon as these studies are completed.

In addition to riverfront improvements, Jobe said that sports tourism could be another draw to the community. This \$50 billion-a-year industry is a "major opportunity" for the Great Rivers and Routes area, and the bureau recently welcomed Jason Troop onto their staff as the Director of Sports Marketing and Sales.

There are several other tourism projects in the works. Jobe highlighted the [LED lighting that will be installed on the Clark Bridge](#), which is expected to boost tourism. He noted that Great Rivers and Routes has been in contact with Whereabouts, a company that plans to design a strategic plan for the bureau. A recent grant also provided ten kayak kiosks along the Mississippi River.

Jobe concluded his presentation by inviting community members to the Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Bureau Annual Summit, to be held on Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024, at the Gateway Convention Center in Collinsville. For more information, including how to [buy tickets](#), visit the [official event page](#).

Next month's NAGBC meeting is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. on Feb. 14, 2024, at Baker's & Hale in Godfrey. Dawn Fisher from Ameresco will be the guest speaker, and she will talk about [the solar farm](#) that is in construction on North Alby Street in Alton.

[John Hentrich also contributed to this story.](#)