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VISITORS BUREAU MAGAZINE

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JOLIET - What's there to do in Joliet?

The new Joliet 2007-08 Visitors Magazine has some ideas even for a native.

The latest edition of the annual places-to-go guide came out last weekend.

It offers an assortment of suggestions ranging from the Autobahn Country Club, the members-only racetrack not far from the Chicagoland Speedway, to Andy & Sophie's Tavern, the North Hickory Street locale known among the Joliet cognoscente for its home cooking.

"It's a hometown favorite," Rebecca Lantka, marketing manager for the Joliet Visitors Bureau, said of Andy & Sophie's. "We try to be as comprehensive as possible."

Listings include the obvious destinations - such as the city's casinos, the Joliet JackHammers, hotels and major restaurants - to local favorites like the Ace Drive-In on Plainfield Road. Local chain restaurants and stores also are included for the convenience of visitors.

The Joliet Visitors Bureau had 50,000 copies of its Visitors Magazine printed. That's the same amount as last year, when copies lasted until the end of December.

Primarily a visitors' guide, about 25,000 copies are distributed to hotels around northern Illinois and the Chicago area.

But the magazine has other uses, too, Lantka said.

Joliet residents can get their own copies or ask for magazines to send to out-of-town friends and family who visit.

The magazine is free and available upon request from the Visitors Bureau, which is located at 30 N. Bluff St., and has the phone number 1-877-4-JOLIET, and the Web site www.visitjoliet.org.

Some people are surprised to find what Joliet has to offer when it's all packaged into one magazine, Lantka said. She's seen people page through the magazine and say, "Wow, I want to visit this place. This looks great," Lantka said. "There are places you're not always aware of. We want people to see what's in Joliet."

One "hidden treasure" of Joliet is the Pilcher Park Nature Center, she said. An overlooked regional asset, she said, are the hiking and biking trails in the Will County Forest Preserves. The magazine lists eight trail access points in and around Joliet.

It's hard to measure just how much local people use the magazine, Lantka said. But copies placed at Union Station constantly run out, which is a sign that Metra commuters are grabbing them.

The magazine also is placed in hotels in the Joliet area and others along Interstate 80, Interstate 88, and the Chicago area of Midway Airport. Copies also go to 15 state Tourist

Information Centers in Northern Illinois.

The magazine this year also includes two maps - one focusing on the downtown district and another on the Joliet region.

Stories in the magazine cover the new Inwood Athletic Club, downtown Joliet and Billie Limacher Bicentennial Park.

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