



Prepared for New Hampshire Division of Travel of Tourism Development

Illinois DMO isn't ready to promote pot

When January first rolls around, President Lincoln attractions in Springfield, Ill., might have some competition.

Recreational marijuana dispensary owners in the city factored in tourists to their revenue projections. However, the Springfield Visitors Bureau is not ready to advertise marijuana to draw people to the Capital.

Officials say they are taking a "wait and see" approach but would not rule the option out in the future.

Mayor Jim Langfelder, on the other hand, did not like the sound of it.

"Probably not. I think its like alcohol. It's going to go that route. Smoking in general is going to be a product they can use, but we don't advertise Abe with alcohol," the mayor said.

Dispensary owners are not expecting a major boom in the first year.

The drug will become legal for recreational use on Jan. 1, 2020.

Source: wcia.com



Sandusky Register photo/ERIN CALDWELL

The Cedar Point Sports Center features about 145,000 square feet of playing areas, an indoor walking track, an orthopedics and sports rehabilitation facility, various recreational activities.

DMOs, communities see sports venues as a win for tourism, economic growth

Youth sports tourism has become a big allure for communities and DMOs, each hoping to score a share of the dollars that families spend to attend matches.

Consider these stories:

- The Panama City (Fla.) Beach Sports Complex earlier this month hosted an estimated 6,000 people as part of the annual U.S. Youth Soccer National League Boys Fall Showcase. The \$37 million sports complex opened in July.
- In Ohio, West Chester Twp.'s Voice of America Athletic Complex will host the 2021 US Youth Soccer Midwest Presidents Cup in June 2021, with more than 7,000 athletes, coaches and spectators from 160 teams expected.
- The Grand Park Sports Campus,

developed by the City of Westfield (Ind.), annually drives more than 350,000 hotel rooms to central Indiana. It is one of the largest in the country with more than 400 acres of field and diamond sports, indoor facilities and is now home to a sports training program.

- In Sandusky, Ohio, construction is almost finished on a \$42 million indoor sports center that joins the outdoor fields at Sports Force Parks at Cedar Point Sports Center.

But not everyone is on the same team.

- Voters in Missouri last month rejected a proposal from the Tri-County Lodging Association to double the lodging tax across

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DMOs and communities see sports venues as a win for tourism, economy

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Camden, Miller, and Morgan counties from 3 to 6 percent to fund a \$20 million destination tournament soccer complex. The debate was fierce and after the vote a campaign began to de-fund the association, which proposed the idea with the Lake of the Ozarks Convention & Visitor Bureau.

Supporters cite the economic benefits of such facilities and events.

“People are here from as far as California and Vermont ... it’s a great economic driver,” said J.D. Wood, general manager of the Panama City complex. “And the teams play only one game a day, so the rest of the time everyone is out spending money in restaurants and shops.”

Chris O’Brien, director of sports, marketing and special events for Visit Panama City Beach, said the large event is great for the area, particularly for this time of year.

“Normally we don’t have a lot of events this time of year,” O’Brien said. “And it’s great exposure for us because there’s people from places who have never been here before.”

The influx of visitors to West Chester Township will bring an estimated \$4.3 million in local economic impact to surrounding communities, according to Tracy Kocher, director of marketing for Butler County Visitors Bureau.

The complex has proven to be a huge economic driver in the region, said Kelly Barkley, supervisor of



News Herald photo/JOSHUA BOUCHER

Athletes exit the field during the US Youth Soccer National League Showcase in Panama City.

Community and Enterprise Initiatives.

Since the facility’s opening in 2014, the total investment for improvements has been \$8.57 million, with a total economic benefit from those major tournaments of \$64.8 million through 2018, Barkley said.

Cedar Point owns the Cedar Point Sports Center’s land. Sports Facilities Management, working in conjunction with Cedar Point’s team, runs the entire indoor complex.

Sports Facilities Management and its affiliated company, Sports Facilities Advisory, oversee a portfolio exceeding \$6 billion in sports and entertainment centers. The firm manages about 15 venues across the U.S., including in Chicago and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

A thorough review of all potential benefits is vital, according to Brenda

Myers, president and CEO of Hamilton County Tourism, which worked closely with Westfield in development of the project.

“Hotel yield management has been the biggest challenge since the destination opened in 2014,” Myers said. “Understanding the impact of sports tourism on a local lodging market should be a critical part of planning and implementation.”

Sources: newsherald.com, journal-news.com, sanduskyregister.com, lakeexpo.com.



Grand Park also hosts the Indianapolis Colts summer training camp. Indystar.com photo