

Economic Development Insight

Greene County Visitors Welcome

By *Brianne Perigo*

Some time ago, Greene County Economic Development Corporation (GCEDC) challenged the third and fourth graders in the county's schools to imagine that the President of the United States, or someone else important to them, was coming to visit them here in Greene County for a day. Then they were asked "Where would you take them to eat (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and what would you take them to see?" and instructed them to write a one-page essay describing their idea of a "Perfect Day" in Greene County.

The winning essay by AV (name withheld) of Linton-Stockton Elementary School says, *"We will begin our journey at Jim Carey's Grill for breakfast. Not only do they have great food but you can meet great people here as well. After our bellies are full we'll travel to the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area to work off our breakfast and if we don't get this accomplished here, we'll travel onto Jasonville to the Shakamak State Park where we will walk the Piankeshaw Trails. Here we are sure to work up another appetite! From here we'll head out to Hendricksville to visit an old nostalgic building for lunch...Rosie's Diner. After lunch, we shall journey towards Tulip to visit the forever famous Tulip Trestle, commonly known as the Viaduct. From here we head to where Greene County bottles their water in glass bottles and ships it all over the United States, Walnut Grove Spring Water Factory. This is just south of Bloomfield! Now we'll set sail towards Scotland to visit Crane's new Tech Park. From here, we have become mighty hungry, so back to Bloomfield to visit the Pepperoni Grill for dinner. From here, we'll travel back to Linton to visit Humphrey's Park and wind down and see what Greene County is all about... its people."*

In February I wrote an article encouraging folks to go on a 'staycation' over Spring Break. Well, this past weekend I was able to enjoy my own staycation when a friend of mine came to visit from Bella Vista, Arkansas. For over a year I have been telling her what a beautiful area I moved back home to and was given the opportunity to show her. It also gave me a chance to "practice what I preach."

Friday night we went to the Annual Ag Day at the 4-H Fairgrounds and she enjoyed the friendly folks she met while we were there. Saturday morning we went shopping in the unique shops around Greene County. She liked going in them to look around at the interesting items they had in stock. We drove around the county for the next few days and she agreed that the scenery was gorgeous and that the people of Greene County seemed genuine and that was refreshing to her.

There were a few moments, however, when she was not greeted with a warm welcome from people working in the shops and she commented on that as well! It made me wonder, how many

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other folks are there, who vacation here anticipating a friendly rural community, end up going away feeling disappointed? Not only do visitors want go shopping at distinctive shops or eat at a rustic diner, they want the warm smile that goes along with it.

I also wondered, does this happen to a site selector (the owner or representative of a company looking to relocate their business) when they come to secretly scope out our community? They do this when Greene County has already made it through a very tough elimination process and is now one of only two finalists and after many, many hours GCEDC staff have spent nurturing this potential client. If so, then they probably leave with a poor impression and pick the other community and we've lost them forever.

Would you know the difference between a visitor and a site selector if you saw them at the coffee shop, grocery store or gas station? Chances are you probably wouldn't. Site selectors and visitors are all over the county all the time and it is up to us to show them the greatest amount of hospitality, an even greater amount than we show the familiar faces we see around town.

Being small town, it's pretty easy to identify foreigners and strangers, so let's make a strong effort to make each and every one of them feel welcome.

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