

Marketing Update



Reminder: The Mission

- Positioning Lee County as a popular destination in Northern Illinois.
- Promote the beauty, peace, history, and recreation it has to offer.
- Highlight the unique retail opportunities to be found throughout Lee County, and the people who make our communities thrive.
- Spur travel and stays, build connections, foster traditions.



A summer full of outreach

Visit Lee County has spent the past few months continuing to cement its spot in the Northern Illinois tourism landscape.

The brand has been highlighted in social media, print, and digital advertisements.

New short-form video advertisements have hit the market, and have been received well in target areas.

Visit Lee County has also begun directly partnering with local events and groups on paid digital advertisements, promoting recent events such as Depot Days and Sublette Fest.



THIS WEEKEND IN **ASHTON**



JUL
18-20

Ashton Town-Wide
Garage Sale

JUL
19

Ashton Cruise-In Night

JUL
20

Boxed Lunch Splash Pad
Fundraisor at Mills & Petrie
Gymnasium



BIG RIG SHOW 2024

FRANKLIN GROVE
HARVEST FESTIVAL

AUGUST 3RD



Social

- Multiple posts weekly, focusing on upcoming events, tourist destinations and businesses in Lee County
- Partnered with local groups on influencer visits, including the Lee County Fair and 4-H Show, as well as paid advertisements for Sublette Fest and Amboy Depot Days
- Continued focus on increasing engagement

Social Examples

Visit Lee County is in Franklin Grove.
July 31 · 🌐

THIS WEEKEND: Franklin Grove Summer Harvest Festival 🍂🍷
Come on out to Franklin Grove for the annual Harvest Festival this Thursday, August 1st through Sunday, August 4th.
Shop the local rummage sales and the library book sales! Enjoy daily events like family movie night, antique equipment displays, various kid's activities, the Big Rig Show, the vintage baseball game, pork chop dinner, parade, beer garden, live music, and MORE! Fun for all ages! 🍷
📞 (309) 291-9452
📍 201 S 2nd St, Harmon, IL

See more



FRANKLIN GROVE SUMMER HARVEST FESTIVAL
AUG 1-4

Visit Lee County is in Harmon.
June 26 · 🌐

Explore the taste of Mexico at **Luchadores Mexican Grill!** 🌮 Treat yourself to some tasty nachos, tacos, or the giant burrito at this hidden gem located in Harmon!
📞 (309) 291-9452
📍 201 S 2nd St, Harmon, IL



21 likes · 3 comments · 26 shares

Like Comment Share

View more comments

Di Anna
The best Birria tacos ever! And everyone is so sweet there, it just makes it even better! Personal notes on every to go container is the icing on the cake 🥰

11w Like Reply Edited

Visit Lee County is in Lee County, Illinois.
July 19 · 🌐

Creating core memories in Lee County 🌳



4 likes

Visit Lee County is in Sublette.
July 1 · 🌐

Located in Sublette, Little Ruth's Boutique is a charming children's boutique. Their specialty lies in crafting custom, handmade clothing items that are truly one-of-a-kind! 🧵👕 From bows to onesies - they offer a diverse selection of unique pieces for your little ones. ❤️

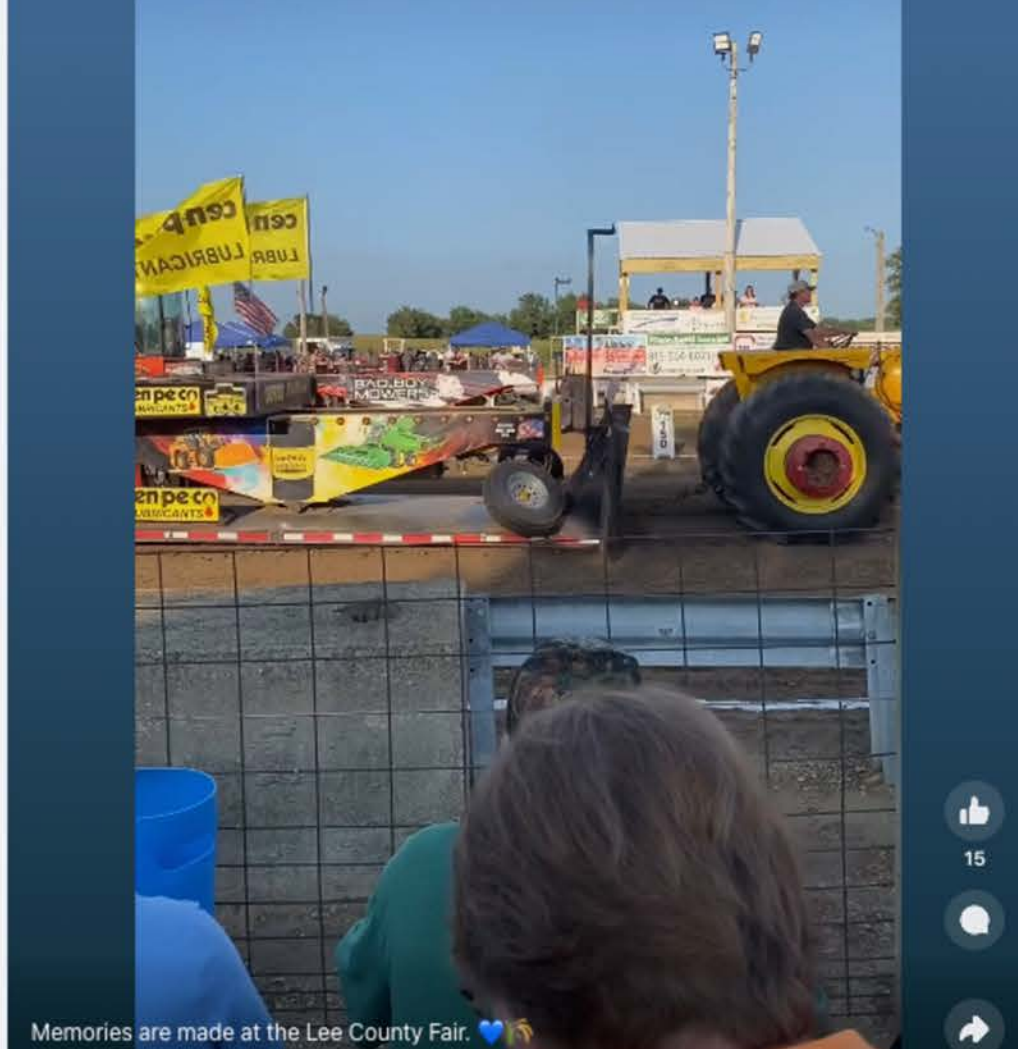
Monday-Friday | 9 a.m-5 p.m.
Little Ruth's Boutique@hotmail.com



8 likes · 10 shares

Visit Lee County · Follow
Reels · Sep 4 · 🌐

Lee County Fair Recap 🔄




Memories are made at the Lee County Fair. 💙🍷

15 likes

Visit Lee County · Follow
Reels · Aug 1 · 🌐

Step back in time and walk through Ronald Reagan's childhood home with us....



Visit Ronald Reagan's Boyhood Home in Dixon, Illinois, and discover the roots of our 40th president. 🇺🇸
Tour the restored home where the Reagan fami... See more

Long Cool Worr

6 likes · 1 comment · 3 shares

Visit Lee County is with Longbranch Saloon in Amboy.
August 9 · 🌐

From dinner to dessert, **Longbranch Saloon** is a great spot for grabbing a bite with the family! Their homemade meals will keep you full and their drinks are tasty too! 🍷🍰

What are you ordering?!

📞 815-857-3486
📍 5... See more



12 likes · 24 shares

Like Comment Share

Visit Lee County
4 days ago · 🌐

Fuel up at **The Huddle Cafe** in Ashton! Whether you're craving a hearty breakfast or a tasty lunch, they've got something for everyone. Stop by for a meal that always hits the spot! 🍳🍷

📍 802 Main St, Ashton, IL



25 likes · 8 shares

Visit Lee County is of Franklin Creek State Park.
July 21 · 🌐

Discover the hidden wonders of Franklin Creek State Natural Area just northwest of Franklin Grove, IL. Established in 1982 as Illinois' 24th nature preserve, this 682-acre state park boasts natural springs, hardwood forests, and diverse flora and fauna. Get out and explore today! 🌳🦋




6 likes

Visit Lee County is in Franklin Grove.
September 6 at 8:00 AM · 🌐

Experience the charm and comfort of **Lincoln Way Stay** - the perfect retreat in the heart of Franklin Grove! 🏡 Whether you're there to explore or unwind, their cozy accommodations make every stay unforgettable. Book your stay today and discover the best of small-town hospitality! 🌳

lincolnewaystay.com



Visit IL Illinois, Lincoln Way Stay and 20 others · 5 shares

Like Comment Share

Visit Lee County
September 6 at 8:00 AM · 🌐

Mark your calendars for the first annual **Pawpaw Festival** in Pax Pave! 🍷
A celebration dedicated to the unique pawpaw fruit! Sponsored by the Paw Paw Lions, this event offers fruit tastings, cultivation tips, and a glimpse into local Paw Paw history. Enjoy pawpaw-themed food and drinks, and purchase fresh pawpaws from local growers. Get started on your own pawpaw patch with seeds and young plants available for purchase. Expert speakers will share their knowledge on pawpaw cu... See more



Visit IL Illinois and 25 others · 18 shares

Like Comment Share

Visit Lee County · Follow
Reels · Jul 23 · 🌐

I THINK I'LL TAKE MY COFFEE



Support your local coffee shop! ☕ Coffee Crush is a favorite in our community! Stop by for a coffee or a lunch date! The atmosphere is inviting and re... See more

100 MEX itago_j



Social Media Analysis



In the past 3 months, we have continued to see impressive growth on Facebook and Instagram. Paid advertisements have been scaled back, with more focus placed on organic content.

Facebook and Instagram:

- Facebook organic reach continued to rise, after being up 18% in Q2, it was up another 32.2%
- Instagram organic reach was up 102.7%.
- Facebook content interactions were up 136.9%
- Link clicks are up another 25%, just in the past 28 days.

Paid advertisements:

- Helped Sublette Fest and Amboy Depot Days reach 130,000 potential attendees. Sublette Fest saw nearly 2,000 people attend its Diamond Rio show, reported it was a success and is looking forward to partnering with Visit Lee County next year. Amboy Depot Days saw an increase in visitor traffic from 2023.



Social Media Influencers

A summer full of great visits! You can view these visits and itineraries at the Visit Lee County website.

- **Spring Family Stay in Lee County:** 18 locations, and 4 adventures
- **Discover Lee County: From Delicious Bites to Historic Sites:** 11 locations, and 4 adventures
- **Fun at the Lee County Fair and 4-H Show:** Highlighted all the fun of the annual fair with dozens of pictures and videos
- **Bison Encounters & Bee-Keeping in Lee County:** 11 locations, and 3 adventures

Advertisements

Ads are currently running in regional print publications in Illinois and surrounding states, in local lodging and campground publications, and yes, even on the back of a Reagan Mass Transit District bus.

Ads continue to increase brand awareness, and have produced hundreds of visits to the website.

We will continue to set benchmarks for our advertising goals, and assess and adapt looking ahead to 2025, as we decipher what works best.

We will also continue to seek out upcoming grant opportunities to bolster advertising capabilities.



Advertisements

Early in Q3, Visit Lee County wrapped the final video needed for traditional TV and digital video ads, and promptly unveiled ads in target markets throughout the Midwest in early summer.

The ads focus on what we believe are the cornerstones of Lee County: Nature, Recreation, Peacefulness, and Unique Shopping Opportunities Galore. The goal for these ads is to promote Lee County as a place to “Stop and Stay Awhile”.

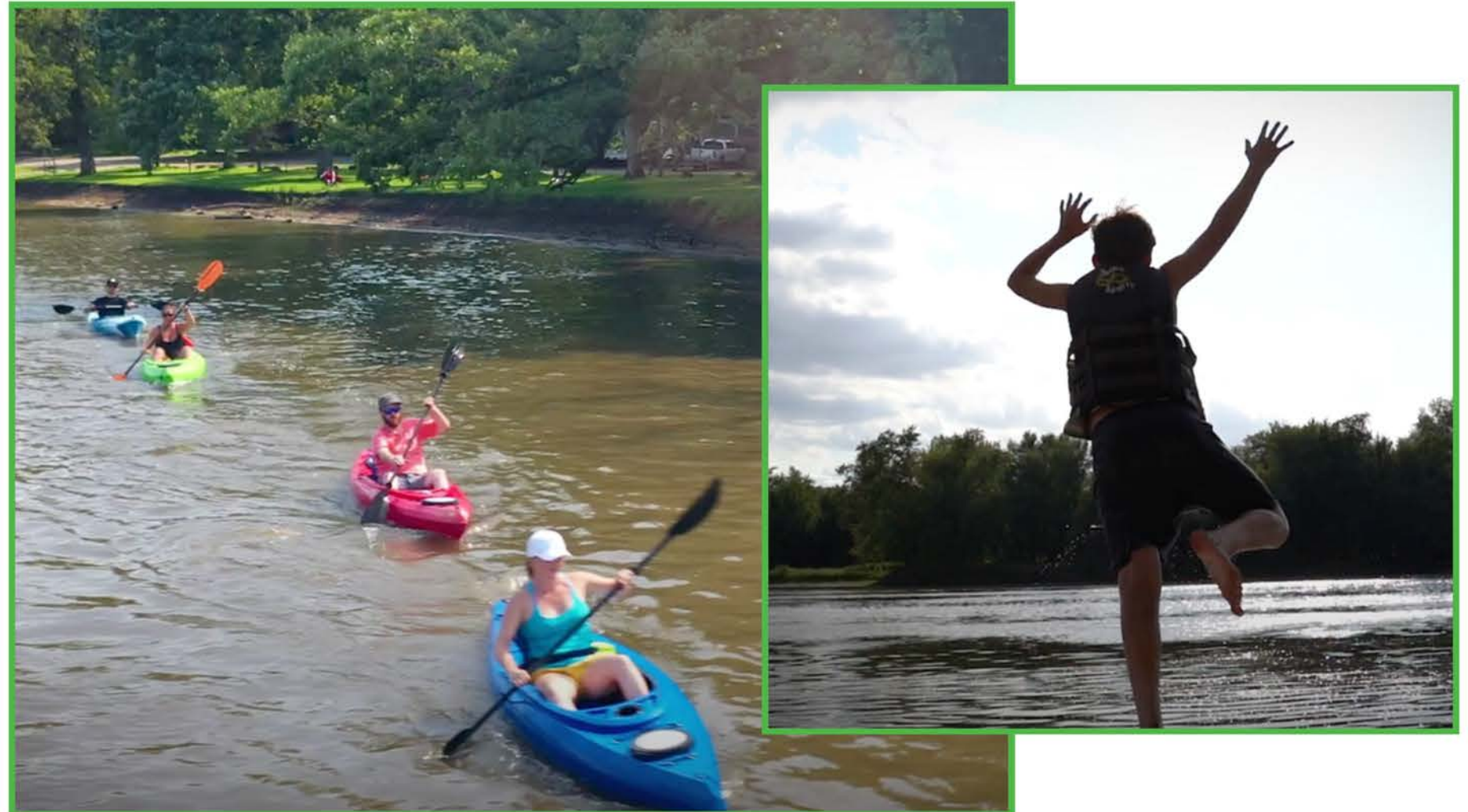


Television/Digital Analysis

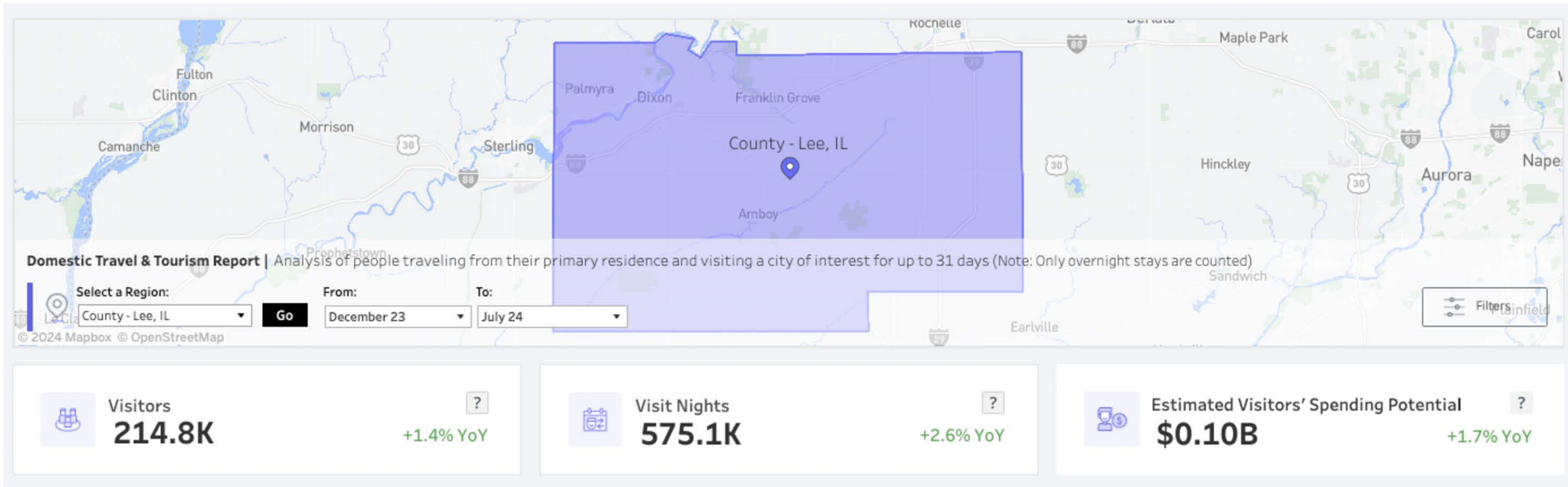
Television/digital video ads will continue to target potential visitors in multiple markets:

- Chicago/Naperville/Crystal Lake
- Eastern Iowa
- Quad Cities
- Springfield/Peoria
- St. Louis
- Milwaukee
- Madison

In August, all digital streaming campaigns overdelivered and retargeting completion rates were all above average. Delivered click rates are above the industry average. More in-depth analytics will be available and shared in Q4.



Tourism Analysis



During the time period since Visit Lee County officially took over the County's tourism efforts:

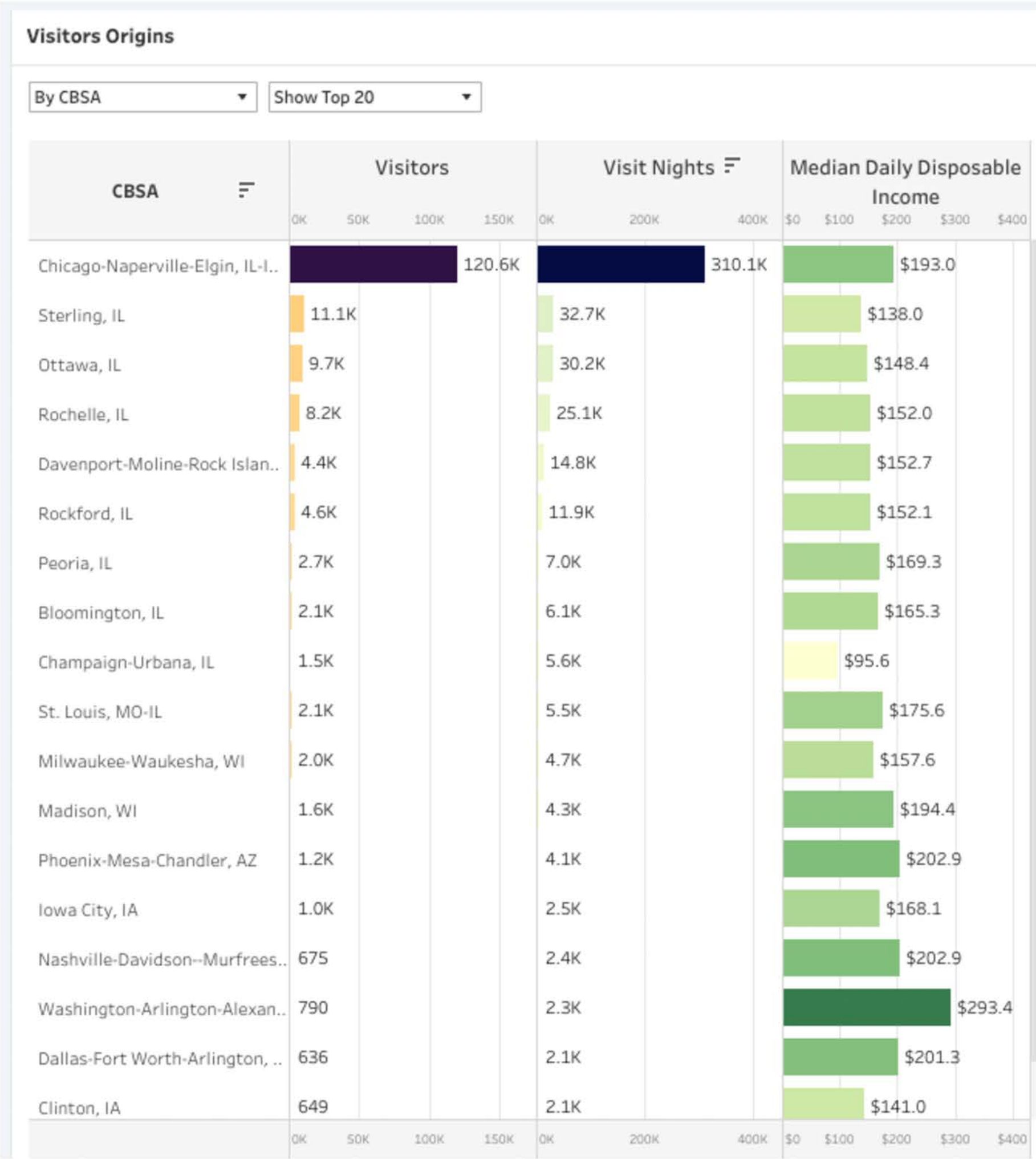
- Visitors are up 1.4%
- Visit Nights are up 2.6%
- Estimated Visitors' Spending Potential is up 1.7%

Tourism Analysis

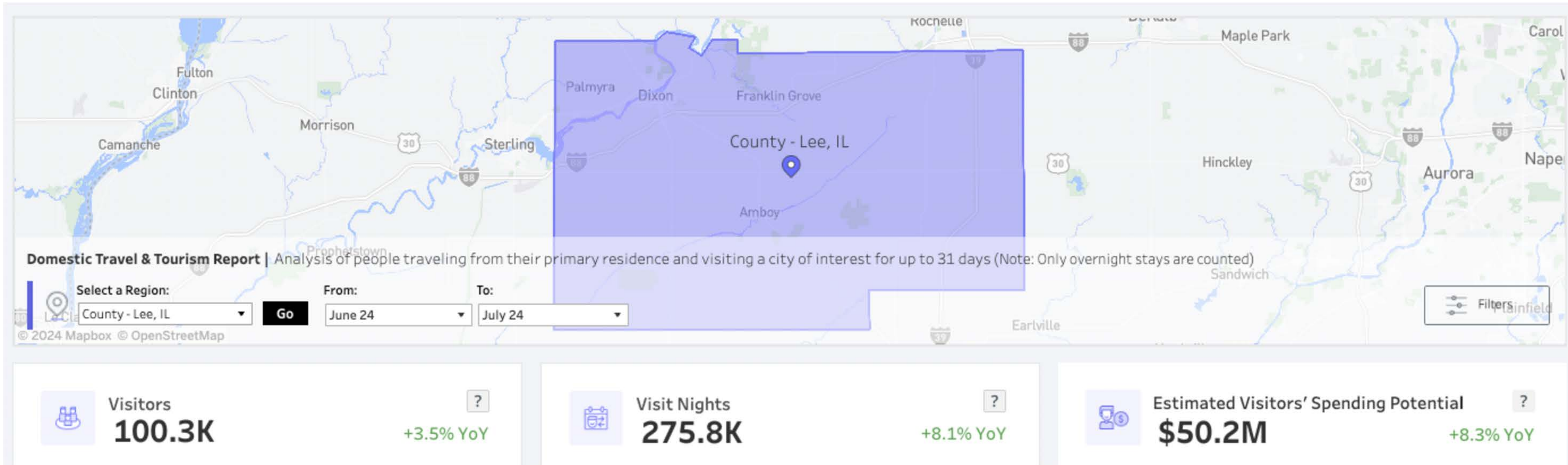
Lee County continues to find success attracting visitors from the **Chicago-Naperville-Elgin** metro area, with **120.6K Visitors** and **310.1K Visit Nights** from **Dec. 2023 to July 2024**.

Other larger metro areas with more than 1K Visits:

- Davenport-Moline-Rock Island
- Rockford
- Peoria
- Bloomington
- Champaign-Urbana
- St. Louis
- Milwaukee
- Madison
- Iowa City



Tourism Analysis



During the past 2 months, Lee County has seen even more impressive growth.

- Visitors are up 3.5%
- Visit Nights are up 8.1%
- Estimated Visitors' Spending Potential is up 8.3%



Looking ahead



In 2024, thanks to the tourism grant partnership, Visit Lee County has built an impressive and reengaged following, and has continued to reach new potential travelers throughout the Midwest.

We have reinvigorated marketing through the new brand, and with the help of 1,000+ new photos, videos and professional videography, we have positioned Lee County as an attractive destination for potential travelers of all ages.

Advertisements will continue to run through multiple platforms through the end of the year, continuing to bring folks into our area for fall and early winter events.

In the next couple of months, Visit Lee County will finalize plans for 2025 marketing goals and efforts, which we will share during the Q4 report. We're looking forward to a great end of the year!



Thank you.

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