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FEATURED

Hotels begin to fill as businesses prepare for Camporee in 2024

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Fireworks kickoff the 2019 Chosen International Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Courtesy Photo

Some local hotels are already booked as entities in Gillette continue to prepare for the International Pathfinder Camporee, which makes its way to Gillette in August 2024.

At least four Gillette hotels are already booked for the event that takes place Aug. 5-11 next year, local hotel managers said during a lodging association meeting Thursday.

After it was announced that Gillette would host the event in 2024, Jessica Seders, executive director of Gillette Main Street, said she and others reached out to organizers in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, for tips on how to prepare for the population of visitors that will more than double Gillette's population come next summer.

Oshkosh had previously housed the Camporee every five years since 1999.

Of the more than 50,000 visitors, more than 100 countries will be represented, Seders said. Many of the suggestions organizers in Oshkosh gave dealt with the lodging industry but also for local entities interacting with language or cultural barriers on a daily basis.

For hotels and restaurants, Seders said that keeping food orders in mind will be important.

"The majority of visitors, not all of them, but the majority are vegetarian and sometimes even vegan," Seders said. "Making sure that the breakfast options for them have a lot of vegetarian or vegan options, which for us is unusual, if we can accommodate that for them they would really appreciate that."

Seders said extra cleaning will also be required because in many of the countries, toilet paper isn't able to be flushed because of poor sewer systems. Instead, the paper is thrown away, which will increase the amount of time needed to take out trash at places throughout the city and county.

Tips for locals include fueling up and servicing vehicles before the tens of thousands of people arrive, as well as buying groceries, if possible a couple of weeks worth. Anyone wanting to go on vacation during the mass

population increase could also think about renting out their home or RV for visitors, making some extra money and dipping out before anyone even arrives.

The past few years, Gillette has had three different groups make site visits and five groups will visit this year. Seders said that in 2022, 26 countries were represented in the three site visits.

Ron Whitehead, Camporee director, will speak with more updates at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon Tuesday at Cam-plex.

Seders said a daily schedule should be presented that will help businesses and organizations know when they need to clean or order food and prepare for the next round of guests.

Giving back

Jessica Seders, Gillette Main Street executive director, said the 50,000 visitors making their way to Gillette for the International Pathfinder Camporee in August 2024 intend to give back to the community.

Local nonprofits and organizations are currently coming up with community service projects the guests can pitch in on while they're here.

The projects can range from simple to extensive.

For example, Robert Henning, Rockpile Museum director, said that some of the museum's ideas include painting the trademark boxcar or helping with a possible outdoor exhibit.

Seders said the projects don't have to be limited to nonprofits but could also extend to the school district, college and other entities.

"They're willing to go anywhere," Seders said. "They can't come up with money but they have great relationships across the country where they can get physical items donated to them for specific projects."

At the end of the week-long gathering, Seders said everyone from the Camporee is already planning on donating back to the community as well.

Any extra food or supplies like sleeping bags and camping materials will be passed on to organizations like the Council of Community Services, the Salvation Army, or others who have the need.

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