



News Release - April 13, 2024

The Sikeston Regional Chamber and Convention and Visitors Bureau was awarded over \$480,000 from the Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED) through the Local Tourism Asset Development Grant Program Thursday afternoon, for a visitor center and rodeo museum.

The program, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) awarded \$30 million to 26 projects across the state, and is focused on supporting projects that further the recovery of the tourism, travel, and hospitality industries.

The Sikeston Chamber and CVB received \$484,138 and with the money will revitalize the old post office that was built in 1931 and currently houses offices for Historic Downtown Sikeston. The bottom floor of the building will be turned into an official Sikeston Visitors Center and Sikeston Rodeo Museum while also housing the offices of Tourism, Chamber, Economic Development and Historic Downtown Sikeston.

The building will also include additional office space that will be rented to local entrepreneurs to help spur small business growth.

“I am beyond excited to get this grant and can’t wait to start this project,” said Kathy Medley, executive vice president of the Sikeston Chamber and CVB. “It has been a long process, which started early last year. It feels great to have our project approved. We’re proud of it and have had this idea for a long time, especially the rodeo museum. The ARPA Local Tourism Asset Development Grant award helps make this project a reality.”

Medley said the project will save an iconic building in Downtown Sikeston.

“The building has good bones but needs many costly repairs,” Medley said. “The Sikeston Chamber and Convention and Visitors Bureau will benefit from having a Rodeo Museum and Visitors Center in this historic building. Moving our offices to the new location gives us room to host larger meetings that are currently held offsite.”

Medley added the addition of a new Sikeston Rodeo Museum in the same building will be a tourist attraction and asset for the community.

“To my knowledge this will be the only rodeo museum in Missouri, and in our region,” Medley said. “The new rodeo museum will commemorate 70 years of rodeo history in Sikeston. The old post office is such a cool building with so much history and unique architecture; it will provide the perfect space for the Rodeo Museum and Visitors Center.”

The Local Tourism Asset Development Grant Program was launched in October 2022. The program awarded competitive grants to applicants, including destination marketing organizations (DMOs), convention and visitors bureaus, municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and chambers of commerce affected by the pandemic. Grant awards will fund a variety of projects, such as welcome and recreation centers, property renovations, museum expansions, park improvements, indoor and outdoor attraction development, and more.

“Our state’s strong tourism industry is important to our economic success, and we’re proud to provide support through the Local Tourism Asset Development Grant Program,” said Missouri Gov. Mike Parson. “Many Missouri communities rely on tourism, travel, and hospitality for continued economic growth. Grant awards made through this program will give new life to attractions and local assets that are enjoyed by countless Missourians and visitors.”

The tourism industry was one of the hardest hit during the pandemic and the grants are hoping to revitalize the industry.

“The tourism industry has an \$18.4 billion impact on Missouri’s economy, supporting more than 280,000 jobs. It was also one of the hardest hit industries during the pandemic,” said Maggie Kost, acting director of the Department of Economic Development. “That’s why, through this program, we’re committed to investing in the recovery and future growth of Missouri tourism. This is just another way we’re building a stronger economy and creating greater opportunities for Missourians.”

“This award announcement is exciting for recipient organizations and their local economies,” said Shad Burner, Director of Federal Initiatives for the Department of Economic Development. “Our team designed this program to support projects across all our state’s regions, including rural areas depending on tourism to build resiliency. We’re pleased to see communities of all sizes receiving grants that will help them recover today and thrive tomorrow.”

Details on recipients of the Local Tourism Asset Development Grant Program are available at [Local Tourism Asset Development Grant Program Recipients | Department of Economic Development \(mo.gov\)](#)

To learn more about DED’s ARPA-funded grant programs, visit [ded.mo.gov/arpa](https://ded.mo.gov/arpa).