



Kentucky State Parks Initiate New Services with Broadband Technology to Better Serve Visitors

Name:
Kentucky State Parks,
Lake Barkley

Internet:
parks.ky.gov

Products/Services:
State Park System,
Resort Park

Location:
Cadiz/ Trigg County

Leadership:
George Ward, Commissioner,
Department of Parks

Reach: International

Innovative Insight: *"When it comes to the technology efforts of the Kentucky State Parks, we must provide the services visitors need with the backdrop of Kentucky's beautiful landscape."*

Way Internet Has Made You More Competitive: *"Since March of 2005, Kentucky state parks have experienced \$110,000 in room bookings as a result of the online reservations systems."*

Advice to Growing Companies: *"Patrons use technology to simplify their lives. Businesses do it to accommodate patrons and simplify processes."*

Cadiz, KY - The state of Kentucky has long been known by Kentuckians and out-of-state visitors alike for its beautiful state parks. Kentucky maps are dotted with parks featuring the lakes of western Kentucky, the rolling hills of central Kentucky and the foothills of Appalachia, each with a unique piece of Kentucky history and tradition. But state parks are not just living in the past. As Kentucky enters the technological age, the park system is following suit.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky is committed to incorporating high-speed technology and Internet service into every operation of the state. One example is the use of high-speed Internet to increase efficiency at all of Kentucky's 52 state parks, 17 of which are resort parks. All resort parks have adopted an online reservation system, allowing visitors to reserve rooms through a web site.

According to Parks Commissioner George Ward " Kentucky state parks have booked more than 11,000 rooms, resulting in \$1 million in revenue. as a result of the online reservations systems."

Currently, the online reservation system is outsourced to a technology firm that is allocated a specified number of rooms to reserve. However, the Kentucky State Park System is making efforts to bring the project in-house to allow visitors to access all rooms at the parks in real-time.

In addition to the room reservations at resort parks, the park system is in the process of implementing an online reservation system for campground sites at each of its parks.

"Kentucky has never accepted reservations for campgrounds," Ward said. "The reservations system allows out-of-town visitors the assurance that they will have a place to camp."

In order to remain in better contact with patrons across the country, the Kentucky State Park System also revamped its website, making it consistent and easier to navigate. The park system advertises discounts and promotions -- including golf courses, weekend trips, and state park gift cards -- to customers who sign up for a monthly e-newsletter. .

The Parks Department also felt it was important to integrate Internet technology into the visitor's experience. The department initiated two pilot programs featuring free wireless Internet access at Lake Barkley State Resort Park in Cadiz and Rough River State Resort Park in Falls of Rough.

Both locations provide wireless Internet service throughout the lodge rooms, convention center, and the surrounding property. The new technology is meant to keep the outside world at visitors' fingertips while they enjoy the beauty of Kentucky's landscape.

The technology provides opportunities to market the resort parks to organizations as meeting places as well as vacation locales. The programs have been a great success in the two pilot locations, and the department is looking to extend these services to the other resort parks.

While trends showed declining revenue at the beginning of 2005, the summer months have created a significant turn-around for the park system, thanks in part to extensive technological and physical improvements.

About KY 120:

In the fast-paced world of technology-driven business, it should be recognized that best practices can be studied and emulated. As a part of the [connectkentucky](#) initiative, CiTE (Center for Technology Enterprise) is profiling business initiatives in each of Kentucky's 120 counties. For more information visit our Web site at www.connectkentucky.org or call 270.781.4320.