

FAIR

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offer to make Peoria a World's Fair "satellite" has tremendous potential for the local economy, but they are cautious about what will be included in the offer's fine print.

"You have to look at it on the surface and say it looks interesting," said Grant Mathey, executive director of the Peoria Convention and Tourism Bureau. "I just hope the down side isn't a major investment."

The idea of trying to link Peoria to the World's Fair has been discussed among area business leaders ever since the project first got under way, Mathey said, because it could generate substantial business for local hotels, restaurants and retailers.

Scheduled to run from May until October of 1992, Chicago's fair would be the first "world class" fair since Japan hosted one in 1939.

Designating Peoria as a satellite would appeal to some fair-goers, Mathey said, because prices here are cheaper than in Chicago, and because Chicago probably would be terribly over-crowded.

"They'd miss all the congestion and a lot of the problems that are associated with a big city in an event like this," he said. "And as long as you have people in the community, they're in here and they'll spend money."

Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce President Philip Carlson agreed, saying whatever tie-in Peoria can make to the fair would be beneficial.

But Mathey and Carlson both questioned whether fair organizers

are proposing downstate "satellites" only to gain downstate support for the multi-million-dollar financing package that has met stiff resistance from the state legislature.

In addition to Peoria, fair organizers have proposed that Springfield, Champaign-Urbana, Galena and several Chicago suburbs be developed as fair "satellites."

State Rep. Fred Tuerk, R-Peoria, on Tuesday would not question fair organizers' motives for spreading the fair across the state, but he did say downstate support is their only

hope for getting the state's legislature's approval.

"The only way that they're finally going to get approval for the fair state-wide is to try to make it attractive to certain areas of the state," he said.

Tuerk, who last year unsuccessfully proposed a Chicago property tax to fund the fair, said Tuesday he will not support the financing package unless Chicago funds a proportionate amount, or the areas sharing the cost all benefit equally from the fair.