

World's Fair looks for 'satellite' sites

Peoria could be designated stopover

By SCOTT WILLIAMS
of the Journal Star

Peoria's sluggish economy could be in line for a sweeping six-month rally seven years from now, when organizers of the 1992 Chicago World's Fair hope to make Peoria a "satellite" for the main event in Chicago.

Within a new plan released last week, the World's Fair Authority identifies Peoria as one of its proposed "satellite sites," which are intended to make the fair more of a state-wide activity.

John D. Kramer, general manager of the World's Fair Authority, said Tuesday that Peoria's proximity to major interstate highways makes it a good location for the official designated stop for people traveling to Chicago.

"A lot of people would be coming to the fair by car," he said. "And we would like to make Peoria the stopping point, sort of a staging center."

Kramer said fair organizers also are interested in using the Peoria Civic Center or another local auditorium as the site for a fair exhibit, possibly highlighting Illinois' many active exporting companies, such as Caterpillar Tractor Co.

Before any decisions are made, fair organizers plan to travel to Peoria for a meeting with local officials and a public forum for area citizens.

"I think it will depend on the initiative of the people in Peoria," Kramer explained. "The city will have to assess its own strengths and how it can take advantage of the opportunities that the fair can offer it."

The scheduled date for the organizers' visit here is May 23.

But the Journal Star has learned that a coordinator for the World's Fair Authority called a meeting with local officials Wednesday morning at Illinois Central College, only to cancel out at the last minute.

Louise Helmann, director of ICC marketing and community relations, said she received a letter late last week from the World's Fair Authority, requesting that a meeting be arranged with "whoever puts on events in your community."

Helmann said she invited about 10 area economic officials from throughout the Tri-County area, but was notified Wednesday morning that the meeting would be rescheduled within a week.

Peoria economic leaders say the
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