

Ellicottville will host an international bow hunting competition next year - the community's initial foray into using the tourist town as a special events destination.

The International Bowhunting Organization will bring its 2008 world championships to Ellicottville for four days, beginning Aug. 20 at the Holiday Valley Ski Resort.

The competition is expected to attract more than 2,000 contestants with their families and is projected to have a \$4 million economic impact while showcasing the town and region. The competition will be aired on ESPN2.

"This is our perfect opportunity to let the events industry know that we, Ellicottville, can be a host sports venue," said Brian McFadden, Ellicottville Chamber of Commerce executive director. "As it is, we attract more people than the Bills do to Ralph Wilson Stadium."

The competition had been held for many years at the Snowshoe Mountain resort in West Virginia and this past summer was held in Anderson, Ind.

The Holiday Valley selection includes options for the 2009 and 2010 competition. Holiday Valley invested more than \$100,000 to attract the competition to Ellicottville. Local leaders spent a year pitching the bowhunting association. Landing the event is a critical part of a long-term strategy by Ellicottville leaders to make the picturesque town a 12-month destination.

While the bulk of the economic impact will be felt in Ellicottville, McFadden said he is working with the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau on showing off other regional highlights during the competition.

"Downtown Buffalo is important to us," McFadden said.

When bed-and-breakfasts, privately leased out townhouses and chalets are included, McFadden estimates Cattaraugus County has sleeping options for 7,000 people. He expects many competitors will stay in their own RVs. McFadden thinks hotels in southern Erie County will handle some spillover from those attending the competition.

"This is definitely going to fill a lot of hotel rooms," said Jane Eshbaugh, Holiday Valley director of marketing. "More importantly, this is going to introduce this region to a lot of people who haven't been here before."

Ken Watkins, International Bowhunting Organization, said Holiday Valley and Ellicottville were particularly attractive because of their location.

"We think having the tournament at Holiday Valley will allow more archers to attend the festival," Watkins said.

The event attracts what Watkins called the "Tiger Woods" of archers who will track 3D animals around Holiday Valley's hills and trails. Archers will compete for \$200,000 in cash and prizes. No live animals are part of the competition.

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