

New kiosks help tourists find their way

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Visit Syracuse is trying to make it easier for travelers to navigate Central New York with the help of new technology.

The group, formerly known as the Syracuse Convention & Visitor Bureau, recently installed 11 interactive kiosks around downtown Syracuse and the Syracuse University campus. The Connective Corridor, SU's effort to connect its campus and the rest of the city, covered the cost of the installation, which totaled more than \$90,000.

The kiosks, which are called tourist assistance portals, come from a company, Blue Focus Media, that has installed them in tourist hotspots such as Newport, R.I., and Savannah, Ga., said David Holder, Visit Syracuse president.

The unit's touchscreen display allows users to navigate through various categories include an events calendar, restaurant listings, shopping directories and recreation options. The kiosks can display videos, deals and promotional materials from businesses.

A hotel, for example, might want to display its room layouts, Holder said. A restaurant could upload its menu.



David Holder, president of Visit Syracuse, demonstrates one of the agency's new interactive kiosks. (Kevin Tampone / ktampone@syracuse.com)

Eventually, the system will be able to send deals and coupons directly to users' phones. Visitors will also be able to buy tickets to events right at the kiosks in the future, Holder said.

Visit Syracuse undertook a market study in 2012, which uncovered a need to better connect visitors with things to do in the region once they're here, Holder said. The kiosks are meant to help solve that problem.

Visit Syracuse wants to see the units spread throughout the region. Businesses can buy them, at a cost of

more than \$7,000, and place them on site.

They gain access to a marketing and advertising campaign on the kiosks if they buy one. Companies can also buy ad and marketing space without paying for an entire unit, Holder said.

Visit Syracuse runs the system's back end. The goal is to pull content from throughout the greater Syracuse area, Holder said.

Contact Kevin Tampone at 454-2112 or by email.

PORTAL LOCATIONS

Tourist assistance portals operated by Visit Syracuse can be found at these 11 sites:

- CenterState CEO
115 W. Fayette St.
- City Hall Commons
233 E. Washington St.
- Erie Canal Museum
318 Erie Blvd. E.
- Everson Museum
501 Harrison St.
- Landmark Theatre
362 S. Salina St.
- The MOST
500 S. Franklin St.
- The Oncenter
800 S. State St.
- Onondaga Historical Assn.
321 Montgomery St.
- Redhouse Arts Center
201 S. West St.
- Schine Student Center
303 University Place