

percentage of time to sports. Springfield-Greene County Parks Director Dan Kinney says the area has experienced some significant things because of sports tourism. "The most significant is yet to come," he added. Jordan Valley Park, with its new ice park and a \$22 million baseball stadium under construction, fuels his enthusiasm. "That minor-league ballfield will



Kinney

necessary volunteers — often a formidable task — and provide the upfront money needed to seal the deal.

Many of the 250 or so sports commissions throughout the country started from a base of inexperience.

The Greater Wichita Area Sports Commission was in its infancy when Bob Hanson was hired to lead it in 1997.

For this fiscal year, the sports commission will end up about \$13,000 in the red, an improvement over last year, when expenses outpaced revenues by \$40,000.

Commission Chairman Tom Mast is pleased with the progress. "I'm pretty encouraged in the work Brad's been doing," Mast said. "He really has taken the executive director's role and run with it. He's done a good job of digging down and finding some of the obscure

in '04 and '05 some of the big events are going to start homing in on Springfield," Mast said.

Even if they do, there will remain a need for community support. That's where "Brad the booster" comes into play, a reputation he gained in Ozark.

And it's one that serves him well. Karen Trimble, an Ozark Realtor, recently became the latest among a still small group of individual donors to the commission.

Meanwhile, area is still rearing. Kimberlin said. "When you hire a director of a sports commission, there aren't any people in the community with that experience. So he and (Krauck) need to be working closely together."

"We have targeted amateur sporting events as one of our major growth areas for overnight travel to the Springfield area," Kimberlin added. "And there's a lot of room to grow."

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