

Fall 2002 - Message from the State Travel Director

The first ad of the state tourism fall campaign hits newspapers around the state this week, noting: "Your free Illinois Now! fall magazine is here. Hey look, so is fall."

It's no mistake that we're positioning Illinois Now! as one of the most anticipated events of the season.

One of our top goals this year is to increase subscriber numbers, particularly now that a new survey confirms Illinois Now! is inspiring a "stunning" number of readers to travel to the destinations they're reading about.

This encouraging news comes from a survey mailed last spring to 3,000 randomly selected readers by the National Laboratory for Tourism and e-Commerce, University of Illinois. More than 60 percent responded, providing a basis for our conclusions -- incredible as they are.

As a result of reading Illinois Now! magazine:

- Nearly 70 percent said they visited a featured attraction.
- 43 percent stayed in paid accommodations.
- 48 percent visited a featured store or shop.
- 46 percent visited a featured event.
- 41 percent visited a featured restaurant.

And while many readers indicated they had decided to take an overnight trip in Illinois before reading the magazine, 22.1 percent indicated that they made the decision after reading the magazine.

I italicize this statement because it is so remarkable that I wanted to make sure you didn't miss it. There is no other element of our marketing campaign that encourages our target consumers to travel quite this effectively.

Even Redwood Custom Communications, the private publishing firm that produces Illinois Now! under contract with the Illinois Bureau of Tourism, is astounded by these results. Our group account director, Richard Power, says in his charming Irish accent: "Some of our clients are quite happy with 12 percent (of readers) taking action. Others are happy with 30 percent or 40 percent. These numbers are phenomenally good. It's stunning!"

Our ultimate goal in creating Illinois Now! was to spur travel. This survey shows we are doing it.

We're also accomplishing several other goals.

About 70 percent of our readers say the magazine made them aware of new places and attractions in Illinois; improved their image of Illinois as a good place to visit; and increased the likelihood that they will take an Illinois trip in the next 12 months.

In addition, 70 percent said Illinois Now! inspired them to seek even more information about Illinois travel opportunities.

And they like the magazine. They really do.

Nearly 95 percent said they actually read it when it arrived. Of these, 73 percent saved it for future use, while more than 20 percent shared it with someone else and a paltry 7 percent threw it away. Of those who saved the magazine, nearly two-thirds said they kept it for more than six months and in many cases, appeared to still have it.

Icing on the cake: Illinois Now! also is delivering on hopes that it would help us zero in on our high-value travelers and let us target other people who fit that category.

More than 80 percent of our surveyed readers said they took an overnight pleasure trip to a Midwest destination in the past 12 months. Of those, more than three-quarters traveled in Illinois. Most say they are likely to visit again and to recommend Illinois to a friend or relative.

Nearly two-thirds are female, more than three-quarters are college-educated and over half earn more than \$50,000 annually, closely matching our target consumer. They skew somewhat older, which is consistent with other benchmarks for newspaper and magazine readership.

In a year that has been marked by tragedy and unprecedented disruptions to the travel industry, the creation of our new quarterly tourism magazine last fall has been one of the bright spots for Illinois.

As D.K. Shifflet & Associates accurately predicted, "(Illinois') leadership in creating the Illinois Now! magazine will pay dividends, as so few states are doing a good job with their communication vehicles."

The partnership we have created among the Illinois Bureau of Tourism, Redwood, BBDO Chicago and the local and regional partners who funnel us information about key travel opportunities is paying off in a measurable way with great results for Illinois.

Happy Birthday, Illinois Now!

Marking the beginning of its second year in print, the fall issue of Illinois Now! is currently available. The award-winning magazine provides fun and informative articles on fall weekend getaways, one-of-a-kind Illinois gifts, haunted (or so they say) Illinois sites, classic Chicago dining and a guide to the top 10 Lincoln sites.

To order a free copy of Illinois Now!, please call 1-800-2CONNECT or visit the Bureau's Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com. Or stop by your local convention and visitor bureau or regional tourism development office to pickup a copy.

A Campaign to Fall For

The Bureau of Tourism recently launched a fall advertising campaign highlighting Illinois' heritage, the great outdoors, fall festivals and family fun. The campaign, which kicked off earlier this week, runs through the end of October. The primary objective of the advertising is to drive fall travel specifically to downstate Illinois with a key focus on stimulating interest in Illinois Now! magazine. Travelers can also choose from more than 100 travel packages available this fall. Visitors can explore these fun and exciting fall travel ideas on www.enjoyillinois.com.

Radio and newspaper advertising will run this fall throughout markets in Illinois and in St. Louis. We will also engage in an email push to further promote fall travel to consumers. In addition, ongoing public relations efforts are in place to encourage fall travel and subscriptions to the magazine.

New this season is an online Illinois trivia promotion where consumers are given Illinois trivia questions via newspaper advertisements and directed to www.enjoyillinois.com to find the answers.

Save the Date!

The 2003 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held March 3-5, 2003, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. More details will be forthcoming, but make sure to save the date for

this not-to-be-missed annual event.

He's Honest and Popular

Honest Abe can add another title to his name: popular. According to a recent national survey of college professors, Illinois' favorite son Abraham Lincoln is the second best and second most popular president in United States' history. Trailing only behind Franklin Delano Roosevelt (#1), Lincoln bested Theodore Roosevelt (#3), George Washington (#4) and Thomas Jefferson (#5) for the honor. Conducted by the Siena Research Institute at New York's Siena College, the survey ranked presidents on party leadership, communication ability and willingness to take risks, among other traits.

And the accolades keep coming for our nation's 16th president - Lincoln will be honored yet again later this year when the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library opens in Springfield on November 18, 2002.

Welcome, Thomas and Jan!

Please welcome Thomas Morretti to the IBOT/Chicago staff as the new call center/TIC coordinator. Thomas was previously employed as the accounts receivable manager with the Chiropractic Referral Center in Chicago. A resident of Chicago's River North neighborhood, Thomas is looking forward to his new position with IBOT. Thomas can be reached at (312) 814-1159 or Tmorrett@commerce.state.il.us.

And we are pleased to welcome back Jan Kemmerling to DCCA's Policy Development, Planning and Research division. Jan returns to DCCA with more than 18 years experience with the State of Illinois. Since leaving DCCA for Texas in 1996, Jan was busy with her own tourism research consulting firm and serving as staff at the National Laboratory for Tourism and e-Commerce at the University of Illinois. Jan will be responsible for DCCA's tourism research program for both domestic and international tourism. Jan can be reached at (217) 557-6855 or jkemmerl@commerce.state.il.us.

International News

This summer, the Illinois Trade Office (ITO) has hosted 12 media outlets from Germany, UK and France for a variety of press trips.

ITO kicked-off June with a joint familiarization trip (fam) hosted by ITO and United Airlines. Seven high-caliber media, representing German, Swiss and Austria financial and daily newspapers and travel trade magazines, visited Chicago. The group saw several city attractions and attended meetings at United Airlines' headquarters. Then, French news/talk radio station BFM Radio was in Chicago to complete four radio programs featuring Chicago's architecture, music scene and the blues. The first BFM Radio program aired in August; the remaining programs will air throughout this fall.

July was also a busy month as ITO hosted four major television stations. Renowned German travel journalist Otto Deppe, with national television stations ARTE, ARD and 3sat, was in Chicago to film six programs slated to air during the next two years. Each program features a different aspect of the city, from Chicago's music scene and culture to its neighborhoods and lakefront, to interviews with DCCA Director Pam McDonough and Mayor Daley. Next, French television station France 2 was in town to film historic Route 66 and explore Lincoln heritage in Springfield for a program expected to air in winter '03. UK's Prima magazine also visited the city and is preparing a feature on shopping breaks to appear in the November issue.

Finally, German magazine America Journal visited Chicagoland for a golfing feature scheduled for the January/February 2003 issue.

Most recently, ITO hosted German daily newspaper, Mitteldeutsche Zeitung, on a four-day Chicago trip. The general destination feature, which is scheduled to appear in winter '03, will showcase the city's music scene and architecture.

Illinois Travel Trivia

Interesting, quirky and odd bits of information about Illinois. Did you know that . . .

The Chicago Tribune Tower is both a modern gothic masterpiece and a great example of Chicago's world-renowned architecture. Embedded into the exterior walls of this building are bricks taken from the world's most famous historic buildings, including: the White House, Great Pyramid, Independence Hall, Westminster Abbey, Fort Sumter, Lincoln's Springfield Home, the Berlin Wall and the Taj Mahal. Every U.S. state contributed a brick or rock, too. Most are within arm's length, so you can touch these pieces of history if you want.

Industry Insider: Sue Vos

To help you get to know who's who in Illinois tourism, ITN profiles an industry leader each month. This month we introduce Sue Vos, executive director of the Aurora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and president of the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (ICCVB).

Sue Vos is a hospitality professional with more than 20 years of industry experience. Her background includes hotel sales and marketing, and convention bureau sales, marketing and administration. She has served on the national board of directors for the Society of Government Meeting Professionals, the state board of directors for the Society of Government Meeting Professionals, and the Kentucky Society of Association Executives.

Currently serving as the president of the ICCVB, Sue acknowledges that this is a very challenging time for the tourism industry. In her own words, "CVBs are faced with a funky economy, a challenging political landscape, pressure to do more with less and an ever-increasing number of outside entities eyeing local hotel tax revenues as if they were next Sunday's chicken dinner. As a result, our organization has become much more focused—about who we are, what we do and why our various publics should care. Crisis always seems to beget new energy. That energy is pushing us to be more effective. I believe the ICCVB is up to the task."

As an adjunct professor at Roosevelt University, Sue teaches tourism management, destination marketing and international tourism. She is a presenter for hospitality industry programs, most recently for the National Scenic Byway Annual Conference and for an international symposium sponsored by the Korean Ministry of Tourism. Prior to her tenure in tourism, Sue was involved in professional theatre.

Born on the prairie in Miles City, Montana, Sue attended Marquette University in Wisconsin and was a speech and theater major. Her trade took her to Florida where she received only one bad review. According to Sue, a Miami Herald critic once said, "This production sinks under the weight of lead dumpling Sue Vos!" And while she vehemently denies his stinging barb, Sue—ever the good sport—always used it on her resume.

In her spare time, Sue enjoys traveling. France is her favorite destination, and on her last trip she discovered a wonderful grilled sardine festival near St. Remey.

To find out more about the Aurora area or ICCVB, contact Sue at sue@enjoyaurora.com or (630) 897-5581.

To add Sue to your mailing list, her address is:

Aurora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
44 West Downer Place
Aurora, IL 60506-51355

Bargains Await Fall Travelers

With hotel occupancy levels among the lowest in 75 years, travelers can expect to find bargains in even the nation's largest cities, where rates usually are at a premium in the fall. Citing economic lethargy, erosion in consumer confidence and frustration over air travel hassles, PricewaterhouseCoopers predicts the lodging industry won't experience a "robust" recovery until 2004. Even hotels in leisure destinations such as Orlando are likely to discount through year's end. *Source: Travel Advance*

Airline Recovery in 2004

The International Air Transportation Association (IATA) said that passenger and cargo traffic should reach pre-September 11 levels in 2003, but globally financial recovery should take another year. "By the end of 2003, we expect to recover most of our lost ground and to be back at pre-September 11 volumes," said IATA's new director general Giovanni Bisignani. Passenger traffic is expected to decline 3 percent this year before rebounding to 6 percent in 2003. Average growth through the end of 2006 is expected to reach 4 percent. *Source: Travel Advance*

New Pact Heads Off Hotel Strike in Chicago

Union officials said Tuesday their tentative agreement with more than two dozen of the Chicago area's leading hotels is possibly the best ever won by hotel workers in the nation. Wages and benefits will increase 11 percent during the four-year agreement, officials disclosed. Hourly workers will get a \$3.27-an-hour pay hike over the terms of the contract, plus lower healthcare costs. The union credited Governor George Ryan with keeping talks alive when a Sunday night walkout seemed imminent. The agreement covers about 7,300 workers at 27 hotels. *Source: Travel Advance*

Traveler Confidence Returning

One year after the events of 9/11, traveler confidence is on the upswing, according to a recent report from the Travel Business Roundtable (TBR). According to the report, price-cutting by the travel industry and enhanced security measures at airports have stimulated demand and largely restored the confidence of U.S. travelers. The nationwide survey found that nearly 90 percent of Americans are now traveling more or at about the same level as before September 11. *Source: Hotelbusiness.com*

Business Travel: Hotels Getting Tough on Late Cancellations

A recent USA Today article found that hotels are cracking down on no-shows by requiring guests to give more notice—as much as 72 hours—when canceling reservations. No longer can travelers cancel by 6 p.m. on their first day of arrival to avoid paying the first night's stay. In 2001, 0.2% of industry revenue came from hotel cancellation fees, says Smith Travel Research. *Source: Travel Advance*