

May 2002 - Message from the State Travel Director

Following the most difficult year for the tourism industry in many decades, it's more important than ever to turn our thoughts to celebrating the positive contributions of the people who make tourism work.

The 18th annual observance of National Tourism Week is scheduled for the first full week of May, commencing on May 4 with National Travelers Appreciation Day. Here in Illinois, we will be marking this occasion with a proclamation issued by Governor George H. Ryan and a General Assembly Resolution recognizing the contributions Illinois tourism makes to our state's economy.

Visitors to our state's 13 highway-based tourist information centers will get in on the fun, with opportunities to take part in special programming and collect a remembrance of the celebration, including water bottles, coffee mugs, drink coasters and Lincoln postcards.

Our TIC contractor, Western Illinois Tourism Development Organization, worked with the Travel Industry Association (TIA) to create a special bookmark featuring the new SeeAmerica campaign's powerful message on the front: "It's Your Country. See It." On the back, for the traveler's convenience, is a listing of Illinois' TICs.

And for those who appreciate a high-impact message, there's a special National Tourism Week flyswatter, bearing this slogan: "Illinois. A hit every time."

National Tourism Week is a time for everyone in the industry to take a moment to reflect on the bigger picture: how we contribute to the whole of an industry that constitutes America's second largest service export and third largest retail sales industry. (More information is available on TIA's national publicity campaign on www.tia.org.)

It's a time for us to remember that in Illinois, tourism has been a nearly \$24 billion industry, employing nearly 670,000 people in our state and contributing \$4.6 billion in tax revenues.

And very importantly, it is a time for industry leaders to carry that message to their own communities and constituent groups. It is a time to remind local and state leaders that tourism is a strong contributor to the bottom line - that every public dollar invested in promoting tourism brings home many more dollars.

Take the opportunity this week to spread the word about the good work tourism is doing in Illinois, the state that ranks fifth nationally in travel-related spending. Talk about how tourism is improving the quality of life in your part of Illinois by allowing local residents to enjoy the kind of amenities every day that other people travel hundreds of miles to see.

As our new Illinois Tourism Strategic Plan points out, it's not enough to devise smart marketing strategies or invest in new product development. It's a necessary part of our day-to-day success and long-term survivability to continue to educate both leaders and residents about the benefits that tourism brings.

And when you're done with all that, reach around and give yourself a pat on the back. Thanks for being one of the people who makes tourism happen in Illinois.

--Cathy Ritter

Promoting the Prairie

The phones started ringing with the launch of the new spring/summer advertising campaign on April 15. Two new radio spots, a print ad featuring the Illinois Travel Kit and a remixed 30-second television spot inspired an 82 percent increase in calls during the first week.

The spring campaign focuses on enticing consumers to order the free travel kit and begin planning for summer. This year's kit includes the Illinois Travel Guide, Illinois NOW!, the Illinois State Park Guide, a special Summer in Chicago brochure and the official Illinois highway map.

In mid-May, the campaign also will begin offering consumers the opportunity to order the Illinois Summer Savings Coupon Book offering 150 ways to save money on Illinois accommodations, attractions, entertainment, dining and shopping. For consumers in northern Illinois, the message will be reinforced with posters at booths throughout the Illinois Toll Highway Authority system.

Consumers are directed to 800-2CONNECT and www.enjoyillinois.com to order the free kit. The second phase of the campaign launches May 19 with an emphasis on booking travel, including Illinois travel packages and special offers related to [Chicago's "Music Everywhere" celebration](#).

It's Summer in Illinois NOW!

The [summer issue of Illinois NOW!](#) is arriving in mid-May, just in time to offer travelers a lineup of the 50 best places to enjoy summer fun in Illinois. The fourth edition of IBOT's new quarterly publication also includes a chance for readers to win a luxurious weekend getaway at The Peninsula Chicago plus a Magnificent Mile shopping spree, courtesy of the Greater North Michigan Avenue Association.

Also featured in this issue is a review of the latest "kicks" on Route 66, showcasing sights, tastes and upcoming festivals. There's also a traveler's guide to "Amazing Architecture," with a special emphasis on Chicago skyscrapers and Oak Park's magnificent collection of Frank Lloyd Wright structures. And for road trippers, there's a compilation of fascinating, scenic drives encompassing Illinois' historic river towns. The 48-page issue also offers a listing of not-to-be-missed activities from June through August, including the "Best of Fests" for every region of the state.

For a [free copy of Illinois NOW!](#) or more information about traveling throughout Illinois this summer, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com. The magazine also is available at tourism information centers, convention and visitors bureaus, regional tourism development offices and state park lodges throughout Illinois.

Software Implementation

At press time, DCCA/IBOT was poised to launch the much-anticipated Siebel-based tourism software, a comprehensive solution designed to support the Bureau's Web site, call center, tourist information centers, the extranet, a statewide tourism database, and ongoing research efforts and collection of performance indicators.

IBOT Technology Manager Phil Solomonson will be setting up trainings on the new Web-based system the week of May 20. The new search engine will allow consumers and counselors to

conduct detailed searches for information, while collecting far more data about the consumers who contact Illinois for travel information.

Many thanks to all of our industry partners for your assistance in creating our new and up-to-date database. This launch is only the beginning. We will continue to build upon the new system and improve our resources.

Online Offerings

After months of planning and research, DCCA/IBOT is proud to introduce an exciting new design for www.enjoyillinois.com. Targeted for launch on May 4, the improved site features a much more engaging home page highlighting Illinois' greatest assets. It also offers a variety of features leading consumers to sample the latest offers and find the information they most want about travel in Illinois. The new Web site design incorporates the new Siebel software, which allows consumers to search 10 categories of information, including accommodations, attractions, events, dining, nightlife, shopping, transportation, outdoor/recreation, sports and travel packages.

The new navigation system also provides easy access to a listing of "new" features, including a calendar of events for the current season. A "tools" section on the navigation bar offers easy access to maps, related links and brochure-ordering functions.

The site, www.enjoyillinois.com, remains a work in progress, so keep watching for even more enhancements. Among the latest highlights:

- An upgraded search engine allows visitors to complete more extensive information searches. For example, consumers can now search for restaurants by type of cuisine, and the accommodations search now includes everything from cabins/lodges/rental houses to corporate apartments. Also new to the site is the ability to search a variety of nightlife options from Blues Clubs and Jazz Clubs to Irish Pubs and Dinner Playhouses.
- A new site specifically for planning sporting events, www.sportsillinois.com. This site includes a database of facilities that can be searched by sport, city and/or region. For planners seeking an Illinois venue, the site offers an event posting section where they can submit event specifications (in an RFP) to Sports Illinois members for review and response.
- Coming soon: www.meetinillinois.com - a complete meeting planning resource that also offers online RFP capabilities

2002 Illinois Tourism Road Show

Even though budgets are leaner this year, the message about Illinois tourism is more compelling than ever. So rather than leading a colorful motorcoach loaded with tourism partners on a statewide "road show" this year, State Travel Director Cathy Ritter will take to the road for a three-day tour of state media markets, spreading the news about Illinois' recovery efforts.

Set for June 3-5, the 2002 Illinois Tourism Road Show will feature an announcement of the latest economic impact numbers, the latest Shifflet travel report, an overview of the spring/summer campaign and ongoing efforts to promote recovery of the tourism industry in Illinois. Stay tuned for more information.

New look for Illinois TICs

A new look is coming to Illinois' 13 highway-based tourist information centers (TICs). In pursuit of providing a consistent "look and feel" for all Illinois tourism marketing efforts, the TICs will incorporate several branding elements of the "Right Here Right Now" campaign, including the display of fun, engaging colors and bold typography. Each center will be enlivened with colorful new signage inspiring visitors to seek out additional travel information and get help in making Illinois hotel reservations.

Consumers will especially enjoy the chance to interact with a life-sized cutout of Abraham Lincoln, perfect for a photo opportunity. Other branding elements include window decals reminding travelers to drive safely, counter signage advertising Illinois travel services and improved brochure rack signage that organizes collateral materials by region.

Additionally, in a cooperative effort with the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois tourism images on TIC travel monitors will be interspersed with messages about Illinois highway conditions.

All of these enhancements help to further showcase what the great state of Illinois has to offer.

The Spin on 'Wheel of Fortune'

The Wheel of Fortune was spinning in Chicago in April. On April 11-13, the hit game show was at Navy Pier taping 15 shows that are scheduled to air during the weeks of May 6, 13 and 20.

Wheel watchers from across the U.S. will have a glimpse of Illinois on May 9, when contestants compete for the opportunity to win an Illinois getaway complete with a weekend stay for two at The Ritz Carlton Chicago, dinner at the Signature Room and a Magnificent Mile shopping spree. All prizes featured in a 15-second promo spot were generously provided by the [Greater North Michigan Avenue Association](#).

Tourism Coordinating Committee

The next quarterly meeting of the Tourism Coordinating Committee is scheduled for 10 a.m. May 22 at the Chicagoland Speedway, 500 Speedway Blvd., Joliet. Topics slated for discussion include updates on Illinois tourism programs as well as a discussion of new federal guidelines facilitating tourism-related highway signage. For more information, contact Gemma D'Anca at 312-814-2348.

Lincoln Log: Lincoln Items Donated to Illinois State Historical Library

Illinois' First Lady Lura Lynn Ryan recently announced that numerous Abraham Lincoln-related items have been donated to the Illinois State Historical Library, all stemming from recent publicity about the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

"All of these items were donated after the owners learned about the Presidential Library and Museum, which will be the new home of the Illinois State Historical Library," said Mrs. Ryan. "The owners felt this new facility would be an ideal home for these precious artifacts and documents."

The items include:

- An original deed written in 1845 by Lincoln for a piece of property in Springfield.
- A collection of 33 law books from the Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices.
- A collection of 83 original legal documents, most pertaining to Stephen A. Douglas and one written by Abraham Lincoln.
- Numerous original documents written by Abraham Lincoln's family and associates, many of which give valuable insights into Lincoln's political career.
- A collection of artifacts, photographs and recollections from Grace Bedell Billings, who as an 11-year-old girl urged Abraham Lincoln to grow a beard.

Upcoming Lincoln Library and Museum Events

On June 10, 2002, members of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and other national dignitaries will help Governor George H. Ryan with a ceremonial positioning of the Library Cornerstone.

Just announced, the grand opening of the Presidential Library will be commemorated on November 18, 2002.

Hispanic High-Notes

This spring, DCCA/IBOT enjoyed several print placements in Hispanic media markets. The media placements showcased Illinois NOW! while highlighting the Spanish toll-free number 866-291-AHORA and www.aquiyahora.net.

Illinois Goes to Canada

The [Illinois Trade Office](#) is excited to announce the launch of the first international tourism campaign in Toronto this summer. The campaign launches the week of May 20 and will include backlit boards, and transit, subway and print executions. We'll be promoting [Chicago's "Music Everywhere"](#) program in an effort to lure Toronto residents to enjoy a summer getaway to Chicago for an experience they can't get anywhere else.

IBOT Staff Updates

Please join us in welcoming Greg Mihalich and Mary Wood to the IBOT Springfield staff. Greg Mihalich has assumed the position of tourism attraction grant program manager. Greg has a communications degree from the University of Illinois at Springfield. He comes to the agency with

several years of experience in the telecommunications industry. Greg can be reached at (217) 785-6337 or

Gmihalich@illinoisbiz.biz

Mary Wood was hired as the marketing partnership grant program manager. Mary has worked at the Illinois State Board of Education as a quality review specialist, has been a teacher in the Porta School District in Petersburg, Illinois, and a principal in the Pleasant Plains School District. Mary has an associate degree from Lincoln Land Community College, a bachelor's degree from Sangamon State University, and a master's degree from Illinois State University. Mary can be reached at (217) 557-2409 or

Mwood@illinoisbiz.biz

Welcome Greg and Mary!

Industry Insider: Doug Arnold

To help you get to know who's who in the Illinois tourism industry, we profile someone each month. This month we would like to introduce Doug Arnold, president of the [Greater Alton/Twin Rivers Convention and Visitors Bureau](#).

With 25 years in the field of public relations and marketing for non-profit and the corporate sector, and having owned a creative agency, Doug is well-suited for his current position. As president of the Greater Alton/Twin Rivers CVB since 1997, Doug directs the integrated marketing communications and administration for the Bureau.

In addition to the many responsibilities that the position entails, Doug has also been actively involved in the forthcoming Lewis & Clark Bicentennial. Wood River and the Hartford Area --both of which fall into the Greater Alton/Twin Rivers coverage area -- is National Trail Site #1 on the Lewis & Clark Trail. Doug serves on the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission in Illinois and has attended national council meetings. To keep abreast of efforts in the area, Doug is also affiliated with the St. Louis Coordinating Committee.

Prior to joining the Greater Alton/Twin Rivers CVB, Doug held marketing, public relations and director positions at the Bi-State Development Agency, the Missouri Botanical Garden, Missourians for Higher Education, Cushman Public Relations and others. A graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, Doug has also been actively involved in a variety of boards and committees including the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitor Bureaus, National Great Rivers Museum, and the National Advisory Marketing Committee of the Federal Highway Administration Byway Program.

If you are looking for the royal treatment in the Greater Alton area, ask for Doug. He has hosted an impressive number of VIP's including the Emperor and Empress of Japan, Margaret Thatcher and the Dali Lama of Tibet.

To find out more about the [Greater Alton/Twin Rivers Convention and Visitors Bureau](#) or the upcoming Lewis & Clark celebration, you can contact Doug at (618) 465-6676 or

darnold@altoncvb.org

If you would like to add Doug to your mailing list, his address is: Greater Alton/Twin Rivers Convention and Visitors Bureau, 200 Piassa Street, Alton, Illinois 62002-6271.

Illinois Travel Trivia

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

The "American Brownie" was invented at The Palmer House Hilton in Chicago. Mrs. Palmer wanted a unique dessert to include in box lunches the hotel was providing for the Columbian Exposition in 1893. She asked the chef to develop "something that would not crumble like a cookie and not be runny like a pie" and the "American Brownie" was invented. The hotel is still using the original hand-written recipe today.

The [Historic Mormon town of Nauvoo](#) is home to the recently opened Nauvoo Temple, a replica of one originally built in the 1800s. The Temple is only open to the public from May 18-June 22, so make sure to get your tickets soon!

Chicago, Chicago, they'll show you around

They range from a folk-dancing flight attendant with a thing for architecture to a pro-baseball scout who can show you the bases at Wrigley Field.

As of mid-April, 120 volunteers are standing ready to unlock the mysteries of Chicago via the new Chicago Greeter program. The program promises free, customized tours for out-of-towners seeking insider info on anything from where to find the best art galleries in River North to the wildest rides on Navy Pier.

Patterned after New York's decade-old Big Apple Greeters (two Australian cities, Melbourne and Adelaide, also have similar programs), Chicago Greeters pairs knowledgeable locals with visitors who have similar interests. General topics might be as broad as the city's history or outdoor sports. But once visitors hit the pavement (most tours involve walking and public transportation), commentary is customized to the moment.

Visits generally last two to four hours and should be arranged at least two weeks in advance. The volunteers speak 13 languages and specialize in dozens of interest topics and neighborhoods. Information: (312) 744-8000; or register online at www.chicagogreeter.com.

Source: USA Today

Safe Travels

Safety remains a major concern of Americans planning spring and summer vacations, according to a survey released by Roper ASW. Sixty-four percent of respondents said that safety is a "very important" factor in their choice of a vacation destination--placing it first in a list of four factors.

Seeking the security of home, the survey said, 82 percent of respondents plan to stay within the continental U.S. during their vacations.

Source: Travel Management Daily

Business Travel

The one-day business trip is an endangered species for many flyers, says USA Today. Airlines' schedule cutbacks since Sept. 11 have resulted in hundreds of routes that no longer have non-stop departures after 5:00 p.m. That has forced business travelers to make hard choices. They must cut their workday in half to get home the same day or extend their trip into a second day.

Source: Travel Advance

Surveying the Scene

An annual survey of the travel habits, preferences and intentions of Americans indicates the immediate prospects for leisure and business travel seem bright despite the lingering effects of Sept. 11 and qualms about the economy.

According to the 2002 National Travel Monitor study, leisure travel is projected to increase 6 percent this year, while business trips will rise 8 percent. Nevertheless, the economy still weighs heavily on the minds of travelers: Nearly four in 10 business travelers who plan to take fewer trips point to "company restrictions because of concerns about the economy" and current economic conditions as the reasons.

Affordability appears to be the main hurdle for consumers interested in taking a leisure trip, according to TIA's Traveler Sentiment Index. Although the quarterly index shows consumers are more positive about taking leisure trips than the last time polled, it suggests negative perceptions about the affordability of travel might be holding some people back.

Source: Travel Management Daily

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