

Illinois Tourism News from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism

## HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Looking for the best places to see the leaves? Visit [enjoyillinois.com](http://enjoyillinois.com) and click on the fall colors update icon on the home page.
- ▶ Sports Illinois is hitting the net with a new seasonal eNewsletter promoting Illinois sporting events and facilities. To be added to the distribution list, please email [Kelsey\\_Holt@commerce.state.il.us](mailto:Kelsey_Holt@commerce.state.il.us).
- ▶ The 2004 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held March 29, 30 and 31 at the Chicago Hilton. More information on this not-to-be-missed event is coming soon!
- ▶ IBOT offices are closed on Monday, October 13, for Columbus Day.

### MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR



Jan Kostner

During this period of transition, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism has undertaken a number of challenges and improvements. As we head toward the New Year, another important transition is upon us. On December 31, the current contracts that IBOT holds with our advertising and public relations partners expire.

Our advertising partner, BBDO Chicago, and our public relations partner, Edelman, have both reached the end of their contract term. BBDO has elected not to participate in the upcoming tourism advertising review, so we know that we will be welcoming a new firm next year. Edelman has submitted for renewal along with a number of other firms in both categories.

The process works as follows: When a contract with any vendor expires, a Request for Proposal (RFP) is required to allow any interested firm (meeting a specific set of requirements) to apply. RFPs have previously been a function of the entire DCEO agency, while this year, they will specifically be servicing domestic

and international tourism. We have procured the services of Pile and Company, a Boston-based consulting firm that will interact with interested parties and negotiate the new contracts.

The submission deadline for the advertising RFP was September 22 and September 24 for public relations. The next step will be to eliminate agencies that do not meet our criteria. This stage of the review process will be complete by early October. By the middle of the month, agencies will have the opportunity to make a capabilities presentation. By November, three finalists will be chosen for both advertising and public relations and will be given an assignment by which their resources and skills will be evaluated. Final presentations will be made in mid-November and a decision will be made before the New Year.

It is important to note these industry partners are vital to the success of all of our efforts. The IBOT staff is relatively small, so we rely on our marketing partners to handle a variety of projects. The greater their expertise, the more value they will have as strategic partners, and the better we are positioned to fulfill our mission of managing industry efforts that result in sustainable economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.

Our advertising firm has and will be responsible for helping us

*(Continued on Page 2)*

# STATEWIDE NEWS

## Fall colors updates

IBOT is working closely with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to keep travelers abreast of the fall colors in Illinois. Consumers are now able to visit the home page of [enjoyillinois.com](http://enjoyillinois.com) and find a fall colors update.

With the season already underway, Illinois currently offers many leaf-viewing opportunities, but peak viewing in most regions will occur late this week or next week.

## Haunted happenings

From haunted houses and tours to spooky festivals and pumpkin trails, Illinois offers a harvest of Halloween events and activities. According to author and ghost-hunting tour guide Troy Taylor, Illinois is one of the most haunted states in America. Scary, but true, Illinois also offers plenty of places this fall for thrills and chills.

Explore Chicagoween, a free month-long festival in Chicago's Loop offering a haunted village, performances and activities for the entire family. Or choose Chicago's Navy Fear – a spine-tingling twist on historic Navy Pier. Take Halloween to new heights at Six Flags Great America's Fright Fest featuring themed rides and spirited shows. Visitors to the northern region should not miss the Trail of Terror, which winds through 10 counties. For nine themed mazes, a haunted house, hayrides and more, visit Pumpkin Works in Paris. At Farmer Jack's Haunted

## MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR *(Continued)*

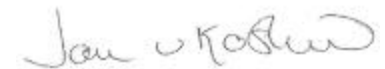
develop our branding message and seasonal campaigns. They produce and develop television, radio and print advertising and are responsible for securing all media buys. They also oversee many of our subcontractors including our minority agencies, currently E. Morris Communications and The San Jose Group, as well as our publishing partner, Redwood Custom Communications. Finally, our advertising agency researches standards and trends throughout the tourism industry. This analysis is very valuable in determining our direction with future campaigns and how to most effectively use our resources to reach our target markets.

Just as important is the work accomplished by our public relations partner. As our media liaison, they are responsible for both proactive and reactive out-

reach. For example, Edelman pitches stories, responds to media inquiries, and monitors our coverage. They also write and distribute press releases and are key developers of our quarterly tourism eNewsletter. And if you've attended the annual Illinois Governor's Conference, you've seen the results of the hard work of our public relations agency.

We've been fortunate to have very productive and rewarding partnerships with both BBDO and Edelman. The process we will be going through over the next few months will ensure that, whoever our new or returning vendors may be, a dedication to quality, resourcefulness and teamwork will prosper in the years ahead.

Best regards,



Hayride & Flashlight Nights in the Maze, travelers ride through 140 acres of haunted orchards. And for a little R&R at a B&B, head to Carbondale for a Bed and Breakfast Ghost Tour where guests can visit any three of the 10 haunted sites on the tour including a burial ground and locations of UFO sightings.

## Illinois makes American Bus Association's Top 100

Four Illinois events made the American Bus Association's (ABA) "Top 100" list for 2004 published in *Destinations Magazine*. With everything from fairs, festivals and parades to exhibits, theater and shows, this annual list guides professional planners, visitor bureaus, tourism officials, travel writers and the general public through the upcoming year. This year's 100

best were chosen from among hundreds of nominated events from across the United States and Canada – spanning 45 states and 11 Canadian provinces.

Top Illinois events included the Grand Excursion 2004 taking place in 54 cities in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, June 25-July 5; the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Eyes to the Skies Balloonfest & Fourth of July Celebration in Lisle, July 2-5; Belleville's Way of Lights, November 15-January 6; and the East Peoria Festival of Lights, November 27-December 31.

## 2003 Illinois Economic Summit

Tourism was one of the industries spotlighted at the recent 2003 Illinois Economic Summit hosted by Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

and DCEO Director Jack Lavin. The summit – designed to address how Illinois' leading industries can help create jobs and spur economic growth – was also the site of the Governor's announcement for the creation of a 10-region plan to accomplish these goals.

The summit, held Wednesday, September 17, in Chicago and Thursday, September 18, in Fairview Heights, attracted more than 500 CEOs, business leaders and academics from across the state. In addition to tourism, key session topics included energy and coal; technology and manufacturing; agriculture and agribusiness; logistics and transportation; film; and entrepreneurship.

Tourism business leaders were invited to the September 18 summit in Fairview Heights, where they had an opportunity to express their opinions, concerns and ideas for developing the tourism industry. A panel of industry experts led the session including Sue Vos, chair, Illinois Council of Convention and Visitors Bureaus; Mitch Saugel, from the Metro East Grizzlies; Sean Shannon, general manager of The Radisson on John Deere Commons and managing director of Illinois Hospitality; and Cindy Benefield, executive director, Southernmost Illinois Convention and Tourism Bureau. The tourism panel was moderated by Mitch Nichols from the strategic planning firm Nichols Gilstrap, Inc.

## 2004 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism

Planning for the 2004 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism is currently underway. Themed, "Make no little plans," the conference will celebrate the great potential of Illinois' burgeoning tourism industry. The conference

will be held March 29, 30 and 31 at the Chicago Hilton – site of the successful 2002 conference – and will feature renowned speakers on a wide variety of topics. Information will soon be available at [www.illinoistourism.org](http://www.illinoistourism.org) and [www.visitillinois.net](http://www.visitillinois.net).

## Chicago is a winner off the field, too

A poll of major league baseball players shows that Chicago is their kind of town. The survey of baseball players from every team showed that an overwhelming number of them say Chicago is

their favorite city to play the game.

"It's a great city with a great ballpark," Milwaukee Brewer Royce Clayton, a former White Sox player, told MLB.com.

"Wrigley is one of those old parks with wild fans, and no matter what their team is doing, they're still out there to have a good time," said Clayton.

And it's not just Wrigley Field that makes Chicago a great baseball town.

Ballplayers said the city's shopping and restaurants make it a true destination.

## INDUSTRY INSIDER: TIM FARLEY



*To help you get to know who's who in Illinois tourism, ITN profiles an industry leader each month. This month we introduce Tim Farley, executive director of the Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB).*

Tim Farley brings to the Springfield CVB more than 20 years of extensive experience in the travel industry. At this crucial time of change within the travel industry, Farley faces the challenges of his new role with a common-sense approach, and determination to focus on the real purpose and role of the CVB in today's world economic development for both the City of Springfield and the State of Illinois.

Since 9/11, the tourism industry throughout the country, and world, has faced some tough times. But, it's still among the fastest growing industries in the world. Farley views the CVB's mission in the coming years as twofold. "First, we need to re-evaluate our product on both the convention and the tourism sides of business," says Farley. "We're going to take a less traditional approach by not only working more closely with major sites, attractions and the hotel community, but also by focusing on developing solid partnerships within the local business community. We need to bring businesses into the fold that can benefit from and assist in the further growth of our industry." Farley's second goal is to focus on the marketing of our industry to the people who live in Springfield and our state. This will ensure their support of our industry initiatives by consistently emphasizing the importance of tourism to enhancing the quality of life in our own community.

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New York had the second most votes with 15. Seattle was third with 13 votes.

The warmest praise came from former Chicago ball players who still had a soft spot for the city. But not all of the former Cubs and White Sox players picked Chicago. Mark Grace, who was once synonymous with Chicago Cubs and Wrigleyville, picked another city: Cubs rival St. Louis.

Many of the players said along with the city's offerings – restaurants, shopping and nightlife – it was the people in Chicago that made it No. 1. Not just the baseball fans, but the way Chicagoans look. Cleveland Indians pitcher C.C. Sabathia told MLB.com, "You're walking down the street and everybody's dressed really nice and like they've got somewhere to go."

"The attitude of the city is just great," said Philadelphia Phillies pitcher Randy Wolf. "All around, it's an awesome place to be."

### **New and improved**

On time and on budget, the renovated Soldier Field was inaugurated Monday, September 29, with a Bears-Packers battle. Despite the team's loss on the field, Illinoisans have gained an incredible facility.

Fans heading to the renovated Soldier Field should expect new travel routes, more parking places, free shuttles from parking garages, a new pedestrian underpass and alternative tailgating opportunities. Other changes include a new staging area at the Museum Campus Transit Center for CTA buses to load and unload passengers.

### **INDUSTRY INSIDER: TIM FARLEY***(Continued)*

"Springfield and Illinois have a wonderful opportunity to show our unique tourism product to the world with the opening of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in 2004," according to Farley. "The library and museum campus brings a new, world-class attraction to the heart of Illinois." Over the next year, Farley plans to concentrate heavily on marketing the opening of what will undoubtedly be the premier library/museum in the U.S. Marketing efforts will focus both domestically and internationally.

"Springfield is particularly fortunate," says Farley. "Over the years, millions of visitors have come here to experience the Abraham Lincoln historic sites. Now, everyone who has visited before has a compelling reason to come back. The state-of-the-art facility has the potential to impact the entire state, if we make a concerted effort to package what Springfield offers with other destinations throughout Illinois."

Farley was born and raised in Springfield and holds a degree in Business Administration and Economics from Illinois College in Jacksonville. He spent his first three years in the travel industry working in hotel sales at the Renaissance Springfield Hotel. For the next 15 years he worked for the Springfield CVB on the convention sales & services side of the business. Twelve of those years, he managed the entire convention sales operation as director of the department. After a 2 1/2-year stint in association management, Farley returned to the CVB last month.

"Springfield has such a diverse product on both the convention and tourism sides of the business. We have the opportunity here to continue to develop and implement a variety of partnerships within our own community and statewide that will make us all more successful."

Farley lives in Springfield with his wife, Kim, and their three young boys.

The \$632-million renovation, which began in 2002, is an effort to improve traffic flow, keep pedestrians safe and meet the demands of Bears fans.

### **New Lewis and Clark microsite launched**

IBOT will soon launch a new microsite on [enjoyillinois.com](http://enjoyillinois.com) commemorating the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1803-1806), a journey that began in a small Mississippi River town in Southwest Illinois.

The microsite will feature pages on the history of the duo's expedition, will offer insights on Illinois' Lewis and Clark attractions, will list the bicentennial events and will provide itinerary suggestions for day and week-long trips.

A must-see along these trips is the Lewis and Clark Historic Site at Camp River DuBois, designated as Site #1 on the Lewis and Clark Historic Trail. A 55-foot keelboat replica is the central exhibition.

The bicentennial is May 13-16, 2004, in Hartford.

# NATIONAL NEWS

## Trade show trade off?

Chicago, once the only city with a convention center large enough to host the nation's largest trade shows, is losing ground to Sun Belt upstarts Las Vegas and Orlando. Last year Chicago hosted only 19 of the top 200 shows, compared with as many as 30 in the early 1990s. In 2002, Las Vegas had corralled 26.1 percent of the top 200 shows, and by 2005 it may snag 30 percent or more. Orlando went from 1 percent of the market in 1990 to 9 percent in 2002. Meanwhile, cities with longer histories as convention and trade show magnets, including Chicago, New York, Atlanta and Dallas, have seen their share of big-show business shrink.

Source: *ChicagoTribune.com*

## Economy helps hotels rates

Hotels in Chicago and Atlanta are experimenting with increased room rates after years of soft markets, says the *Wall Street Journal*. In Las Vegas, the Mandalay Resort Group plans on a hike of 10 percent for its five properties on the Strip. According to the paper, business travelers on expense accounts "are finally hitting the road again." In the leisure market, travelers will find it tougher to find deep discount deals.

Source: *Travel Advance*

## Lodging recovery predicted

The U.S. hotel industry is set for an essentially flat 2003 after a two-

year turndown, but a rebound in occupancy next year will allow hotel operators to raise room rates in 2005, according to a recent study. The forecast by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) points to better times for U.S. hotels but cautions that even after two years of projected gains, the industry will have recovered just over a third of the room revenues lost since 2001 during the deepest drop in demand since the 1930s Depression. PwC forecasts that revenue per available room would stabilize in 2003 at 0.2 percent growth. It also forecasts that room revenues would gain 4.9 percent in 2004 and then 3.4 percent in 2005 as growth heads back toward its historical trend.

Source: *Travel Advance*

## Consumer confidence falls

Dragged down by a sluggish job market, consumer confidence in the economy dropped more sharply than expected in September. The Conference Board's monthly consumer confidence index fell nearly five points to 76.8, its lowest since the start of the Iraq war. The revised index registered 81.7 in August. The findings are based on a survey of 5,000 households.

Source: *Travel Advance*

## Business Travel: Waiting for rebound

To some airlines, what frequent business travelers want most are convenient schedules, no waiting in line to get on a plane and a comfy seat up front in first class. Once the economy fully rebounds this fall or winter, the airlines' thinking goes, the cost of a ticket will be secondary to good service and the chance to earn frequent-flyer miles. But the latest survey of corporate travel and purchasing

managers conducted by the Business Travel Coalition indicates that business-travel spending patterns are unlikely to change any time soon.

Source: *Travel Advance*



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manages industry efforts that result in  
sustainable and significant economic  
and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.