



ILLINOIS TOURISM NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, BUREAU OF TOURISM

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Happy holidays! IBOT will be closed for the Christmas holiday on December 25 and on January 1 for New Year's Day.
- ▶ Winter edition of the award-winning *Illinois Now!* magazine is currently available by calling 1-800-2CONNECT or by visiting enjoyillinois.com.
- ▶ Save the date! The 2004 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held at the Hilton Chicago March 29, 30 and 31.
- ▶ Chicago advertising agencies, Euro RSCG Tatham Partners, J. Walter Thompson and Young & Rubicam, are finalists for the IBOT account. Final presentations will be made today and tomorrow (December 11 and 12) with a decision to be made by year end.

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR



Jan Kostner

While most of our resources at IBOT are focused on encouraging the general public to choose Illinois as their travel destination, no less important are efforts designed to encourage travelers to come to our state for more specific purposes. Group tours, meetings and conventions, and sports are the three segments that make up our niche marketing program.

Promoting group tours is a key marketing element in spreading the word about Illinois. We work in conjunction with Team Illinois, a statewide marketing group that specifically promotes to the group travel industry. Numerous accommodations, attractions and restaurants are also involved in our efforts to appeal to leisure groups. To reach the group tour market, we take full advantage of advertising opportunities in publications and on the Internet, and itineraries are developed for tours throughout the state that showcase each region.

Being that most group travel occurs on buses, working with the motorcoach industry is a high priority. In fact, Illinois was

selected as one of the "Top 10 States" in the Annual National Motorcoach Network Survey. Our prominence in the national motorcoach marketplace is demonstrated by the fact that the American Bus Association's (ABA) most recent issue featured no less than four stories about Illinois – more than any other state. Additionally, Chicago and Illinois have also received the honor of being asked to host ABA's 2005 convention.

Another important niche market, meetings and conventions, has as its mission to promote Illinois as a diverse meetings and conventions destination. In partnership with CVBs and the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitor Bureaus Sales Committee, we have established a "Keep Your Meeting in Illinois" campaign that promotes our state as an ideal location for all varieties of meetings and conventions. And we are proud to say that Chicago is the nation's top city for business travel and, at 2.2 million square feet, Chicago's McCormick Place is North America's largest convention center.

One key strategy in marketing these meetings is to have a major presence at industry trade shows that facilitate reaching a large number of decision makers within a short period of time. We are also pleased to be producing – for the first time – a comprehensive listing of meeting venues in the

(Continued on Page 2)

STATEWIDE NEWS

2004 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism

"Make no little plans" for the 2004 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism, March 29-31, 2004, at the Hilton Chicago. Early bird registration is about to begin, with rates starting from \$325 for an individual registration and as low as \$250/per person for groups of three or more. Watch your mailbox for more details. We hope you'll join us at this must-attend industry event, complete with a stellar speaker lineup that will provide you with up-to-the-minute information on industry trends and happenings. For more information, call (888) 658-0749. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, call Patrick Snyder at (312) 658-1047.

Illinois Now!: Hot off the press with cool information

The winter forecast in Illinois is bright! From dazzling festivals and light displays to bargain-priced entertainment, and quaint bed and breakfasts tucked in with a slice of the state's history, Illinois is a wonderland of activities and events. Four feature articles headline the winter issue, which also includes a spotlight piece on Wilmette's Bahá'í House of Worship, great Chicago shopping venues, romantic evening suggestions and a complete events listing for winter, sure to get readers out of the house and into the spirit.

To receive your free issue, call 1-800-2CONNECT or visit enjoyillinois.com.

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR (*Continued*)

Illinois Marketing Destination Guide.

Sports fans and professionals have an excellent resource at their disposal through Sports Illinois, which promotes Illinois as a sports destination. We are proud of our quality facilities that host teams and competitions at all levels, from professional to minor league to college athletics. Our CVBs and sports commissions are vital in this effort as they provide information on upcoming sporting events and submit applications for venue use.

Recently, Sports Illinois has taken its marketing to the next level by producing its first seasonal eNewsletter. This has proven to be a valuable marketing tool in other areas of tourism and, by proactively reaching out to sports industry professionals, this newsletter will help to build enthusiasm and interest. The

Sports Illinois eNewsletter includes features spotlighting the latest trends in the sports industry, a showcase of a particular sport in each issue, a forum to provide feedback on sports facilities, and an events calendar listing.

Our niche marketing efforts are essential to the overall success of our tourism program. We are proud of our past accomplishments and look forward to our continued collective successes.

As we say goodbye to 2003, I would like to thank all of you for your hard work and dedication to the tourism industry. I wish you all the happiest of holidays and I look forward to working with you for a productive and successful 2004.

Happy Holidays,



Illinois makes a special winter delivery

Travelers looking for ideas to enjoy Illinois this winter won't have to search beyond their e-mail inboxes to learn about the latest activities and getaways.

Just in time for winter, IBOT's successful eNewsletter once again makes its way today to more than 60,000 potential travelers.

The new issue highlights a wide spectrum of Illinois activities from holiday festivals and light displays to bargain-priced entertainment throughout the state. In addition, the eNewsletter touts some of Illinois' quaint bed and breakfasts

with intriguing state history behind them, and the new *Manet and the Sea* exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago.

International happenings

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism, International Division has coordinated a series of exciting familiarization trips this month. Most recently, nine German trade media and four trade representatives from United Airlines and Dertour, Germany's largest tour operator, enjoyed a one-day stay in Chicago. During the visit, the group toured Chicago's scenic highlights by bus and explored the Magnificent Mile.

INDUSTRY INSIDER: MAUREEN RIEDY

To help you get to know who's who in Illinois tourism, ITN profiles an industry leader each month. This month we introduce Maureen Riedy, the new president of the Lake County, Illinois Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Maureen Riedy assumed the position of president of the Lake County, Illinois Convention & Visitors Bureau (LCICVB) on December 1. A 20-year veteran of the tourism industry, Riedy previously served as executive vice president of the Greater Woodfield Convention & Visitors Bureau (GWCVB) – a bureau comprised of 13 communities in Chicago's northwest suburbs. The GWCVB was just two years old and had three employees when Riedy was hired to develop the sales division. Today, the bureau has a staff of 17 and represents 65 hotels with more than 12,000 rooms plus attractions such as Woodfield Mall, Arlington Park racetrack and Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament.

Riedy worked closely with GWCVB President Tom Rivera and managed the meetings and conventions market, group tour market and sports marketing for GWCVB where she received numerous awards from the Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism – most recently for the top destination guide in the publications category.

Additionally, Riedy spearheaded the bureau's research program with the National Laboratory for Tourism and eCommerce at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

For five years Riedy chaired the Illinois Council of Convention & Visitors Bureaus Sales Committee, which partners with IBOT on meeting and convention marketing initiatives. During Riedy's tenure, the committee launched the meetings section of IBOT's Web site and developed the Illinois aisle concept that is still used today at various national trade shows. She was also appointed to the former IBOT Tourism Marketing Partnership grant review advisory committee.

Riedy is active in Chicago Plus, a regional marketing consortium comprised of Chicago area CVBs, and served on the board of directors of the Northwest Suburban & Schaumburg Association of Commerce and Industry, a 500-member regional chamber of commerce. She is also in the final phase of completing coursework for the Executive Program in Destination Management (CDME), a prestigious certification awarded by the International Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus.

A graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Riedy also served on the National Board of Directors for the Wisconsin Alumni Association. She still follows the Wisconsin Badgers football team and joined college friends at two of the team's appearances in the Rose Bowl. Armed with a degree in communication arts, Riedy's first post-college job was as a disc

jockey. She also worked in hotel sales before joining the Greater Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau where she secured large conventions and tradeshow.

Riedy and her husband, Dave, have two children – a son in high school and a daughter in junior high.

Riedy succeeds LCICVB President Gail Svendsen who passed away in August. Gail headed the LCICVB for 18 years and was highly regarded as a leader in the state tourism industry.

The goal of the Board of Directors of LCICVB is to reach out to all the communities in the county to embrace tourism as an economic development tool. Riedy believes that Lake County is poised for explosive growth as a tourism destination, and intends to create a strategic marketing plan that would increase the scope of partners, provide additional funding sources, expand the bureau's sales and services, re-brand the destination, and ultimately infuse additional visitor dollars into Lake County.

To learn more about Lake County tourism or to add Maureen to your mailing list:

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NATIONAL NEWS

Women on the move

A Wyndham Hotels-sponsored survey found that 40 percent of all U.S. business travelers are women. Fifty-one percent of the women respondents said that they "often or always" feel that hotels treat them as valued customers, although only 31 percent could say the same for airlines' treatment. The survey, conducted by New York University's Tisch Center, found that women business travelers on average take at least four trips a year, earn \$75,000 annually and are members of both airline frequent flyer and hotel frequent guest programs. The survey found that most women business travelers use the Internet to research and book travel plans, but 42 percent said they never go online in hotels. Hotel must-haves for women included a mini-bar (71%), brand-name bath amenities (56%), and a spa (47%).

Source: *Travel Management Daily*

International on the mend

International travel to the U.S., while still in a period of contraction, continues to recover, based on August data. The Office of Travel and Tourism Industries at the U.S. Commerce Department said 3.9 million international tourists arrived in the U.S. during August 2003. Although this was down 2.5 percent from the same month last year, August had the smallest monthly decline since February 2003. Total year-to-date arrivals of 22.8 million were down 6.5 percent through August.

Gifts of spa treatments expected to be popular

Around a third of all Americans plan to add themselves to their gift list this year, according to a recent poll by Maritz Research, a marketing research firm. Some people, mostly women, are expected to splurge on a spa getaway where they can massage, steam and stretch away their seasonal stresses. And there are more spas to choose from these days. The number of spas in the U.S. has grown, on average, 20 percent a year from 1994 to 2002, to nearly 10,000 today, a recent survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers shows.

Source: *Travel Advance*

Chicago is a FUNominally fun city

Where does fun live? Apparently in Minneapolis, Minn.; Orange County and San Jose, Cali.; Atlanta, Ga.; and Chicago, Ill.

A city's level of fun was based on a survey recently conducted by *Money Magazine's* "Best Places to Live" expert Bert Sperling, and commissioned by the maker of award-winning board games, including Cranium and Cranium Cadoo, to determine the top 50 most fun cities in America.

The Most Fun City in America contest examined 56 cities and awarded points for how a given city stacks up against others in the study. Additional factors included average household expenditures on a variety of items, as well as unemployment and crime rates. Chicago was ranked America's fifth most fun city based on its myriad of amenities including: 30 dog parks, 271 golf courses, 32.6 miles of coastline, 137 museums,

amusement parks, five professional sports teams, 11 arboretums and so much more.

Source: *Cranium*



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The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.