

highlights

▶ Last chance to get the early bird rate for the 2003 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism. Call 1-866-GOV-2003 or visit www.illinois-tourism.org to register now!

▶ Catch spring fever! The spring edition of *Illinois Now!* is currently available. To get your free copy, call 1-800-2CONNECT or visit the brochure ordering page at www.enjoyillinois.com.

▶ Happy birthday Abe! State offices closed February 12 in honor of Lincoln's birthday.

▶ State offices closed February 17 for President's Day.

▶ Central region call center training session is scheduled for February 26 at the Illinois call center in Chicago.

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR



Cathy Ritter

Historically, the state of Illinois has gone to great lengths in its mainstream tourism marketing campaign to reflect the diversity of Illinois, and to send welcoming messages to people of all races and ethnic backgrounds. Our new governor already has signaled that this commitment will continue, ensuring that consumers will see a mix of cultures, faces and races every time they open any state of Illinois publications or see a state tourism television spot. In fact, there's an article in the current *Illinois Now!* about the ongoing Annie Malone exhibit at the DuSable Museum of African American History. And, in honor of Black History Month, there's also a mention of the Chicago Neighborhood Tour of historic Bronzeville. But we also recognize that a tourism campaign aimed at a general audience doesn't go far enough to entice an African-American audience. An extra effort is needed.

Research tells us that African-Americans do not believe that advertising is truly targeted to them unless the message includes

images of African-Americans and it appears in the media that is targeted to them. We've also learned that African-Americans in the Midwest have very little awareness of the kinds of travel opportunities that Illinois offers, outside of Chicago, which is a well-known and very popular destination.

Over the past couple of years, we at the Illinois Bureau of Tourism (IBOT) have thought long and hard about the message we wanted to send to African-Americans. Other states targeting this market generally focus on heritage or cultural travel opportunities or run ads in African-American publications, which indicate their state is a fun place to visit. We wanted to make sure our message set us apart from other states competing for this market, while sending a highly welcoming message. We also wanted to use the knowledge that word-of-mouth is a very powerful source of information in the African-American community.

The result has been a campaign that urges African-Americans to take action: to experience Illinois destinations and then to "Pass It On," helping create good word-of-mouth about all the great destinations that Illinois has to offer for quick, convenient getaways or for family fun.

(Continued on page 2)

STATEWIDE NEWS

A new view on a key department

Governor Rod Blagojevich announced his plans for fundamental changes at the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) – the department in which the Bureau of Tourism is located. The changes announced by the governor included his call for a revised mission for the department that is charged with economic development and job creation, as well as his appointment of a new director for the agency, and even a new name for DCCA.

Adding that “a new day for DCCA begins with a new name, one that better reflects its goals,” Governor Blagojevich said he will direct it to be renamed the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

To lead DCEO, Governor Blagojevich named Jack Lavin, who brings with him both public and private sector experience. As deputy state treasurer in the early 1990s, Lavin helped triple the amount of money the state invested in economic development. The programs he oversaw helped more than 25,000 families and businesses gain access to credit. Lavin has also posted impressive successes creating jobs in the private sector. As Chief Financial Officer for Rezko Enterprises – a firm that grew from eight restaurants when he began in 1995 to more than 120 five years later, as sales

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR *(Continued)*

Of course, the whole reason our state invests each year in promoting tourism is to generate economic activity. By continuing to invest in the “Pass It On” campaign, we hope to generate increased economic activity by motivating our growing African-American population to choose Illinois destinations for getaways instead of spending their travel dollars elsewhere.

We also intend to stimulate economic activity within the African-American community by investing state marketing dollars in African-American media, in local talent and with our African-American marketing agency, E. Morris Communications.

We intend to stimulate that activity even more in the coming year through additional efforts to increase interest in promoting destinations in the African-American community. We have taken that charge seriously over the past couple of years, developing a marketing campaign that is reaching out to African-American travelers not only in Illinois, but in Milwaukee and Detroit as well. And after exhausting the initial supply of our African-American travel guide, we’re now updating it, featuring

even more Illinois destinations of interest to African-Americans.

Apart from marketing support, IBOT also plays a role in helping support development or enhancement of tourism attractions through its grants programs. We provided \$200,000 to develop a video-series – which aired in Chicagoland the week of February 3 – on the incredible life and accomplishments of African-American entrepreneur Jean-Baptiste Pointe du Sable, who founded a trading post called Chicago. We are also providing a second full year of administrative support for the state’s first African-American heritage project, “Freedom Trails,” tracing the path of the Underground Railroad through the “Free State” of Illinois.

As other states have learned from these types of development activities, destinations that hold particular meaning for the African-American community also hold fascination for people of all races.

As we observe Black History Month this February, it’s important to consider how this market can enrich our own state’s tourism offerings and quality of life.

Cathy Rottler

increased from \$4.3 million to \$60 million – he helped create more than 1,800 jobs.

Illinois Tourism University

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism and Visit Illinois invite you to

become a part of “Illinois Tourism University’s Class of 2003” at the 16th annual Illinois Governor’s Conference on Tourism, March 3-5 in Springfield. The “course schedule” is packed with timely subjects everyone can benefit from, including database marketing, technology, customer service, niche marketing and branding. Nationally known

industry experts will deliver keynote addresses that explore the latest trends in travel research, consumer behavior and more.

The conference starts with Illinois tourism officials presenting the State of the State of Tourism Address on March 4, and continues with speakers including Arthur Frommer, editor in chief, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel* magazine; John Marks, TIA national chairman; Gary Sain, executive vice president and partner, Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown & Russell; and Delos Smith, senior business analyst, The Conference Board.

Students at the head of the class will be honored during the Governor's Conference Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, March 5 as we recognize outstanding tourism promotional efforts.

As always, the conference is the annual industry event to learn about and celebrate our dynamic industry. Our two socials provide you with the opportunity to get reacquainted with friends and colleagues from around the state. On Monday night, you can kickoff the conference at the Icebreaker pep rally, then dance the night away at Tuesday's Homecoming Dance.

Early bird rates have been extended through February 14 – don't miss this opportunity to receive these special rates! To register, visit www.illinoistourism.org.

If you are interested in becoming a conference sponsor and participating in the trade show, please contact Patrick Snyder of Visit Illinois at (312) 658-1047 or psnyder@visitillinois.net.

To donate an item for the Governor's Conference Silent Auction, please contact Marge Heissinger at (217) 525-7980 or citdo@visitcentralillinois.com.

If you are interested in entering your promotional efforts in the 2003 Governor's Awards program, please contact Bonnie Heimbach at (815) 547-3740 or nitdo@att.net.

We look forward to seeing you in Springfield!

Get the new guide

With beautiful photos, an easy-to-follow format, a new category of rental homes and listings of more than 700 new Web sites and e-mail addresses, the new Illinois Travel Guide makes traveling Illinois more enticing than ever.

Available in late February, the Illinois Travel Guide includes a "best of" section highlighting Lincoln's Illinois, Lewis & Clark, Road Trips, and Architecture, among other Illinois favorites. In the past, the guide has been distributed every two years; however, to ensure all information remains current, another update and distribution is planned for spring 2004.

Thaw out with *Illinois Now!*

It's not too early to think spring in Illinois. Currently available, the spring issue of *Illinois Now!* highlights activities perfect for combating winter restlessness, including some of Illinois' best locations for outdoor adventure sports and outdoor art venues.

In addition, the issue showcases the new "Wild Reef" shark exhibit,

a 750,000-gallon tank with 30 different types of tropical predators, at Chicago's Shedd Aquarium. Also included in the spring issue is a chance to win a "Super Spring Getaway" in Chicago, including a weekend stay for two at the Allerton Crowne Plaza hotel on Chicago's Magnificent Mile, two tickets to Miss Saigon at the Oriental Theatre, dinner for two and a shopping spree.

To obtain a free copy of *Illinois Now!* or for more information about traveling throughout Illinois this spring, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Copies of the seasonal magazine are also available at tourism information centers, convention and visitors bureaus, regional tourism development offices and state park lodges throughout Illinois.

Bienvenido a Illinois

Or, "Welcome to Illinois!" IBOT continues to communicate with the Hispanic traveler this year with a diverse communications plan. Along with the Chicago market, other areas with a high density of Hispanics are also being targeted. This year's advertising campaign will run in the Chicago, Detroit and Milwaukee markets, and will be accompanied with a targeted public relations effort.

New print banner advertisements and press releases are being tailored to promote the updated Spanish language Web site, www.aquiyahora.net, and Hispanic events from the new "calendar of events" page are also on the Web site.

Where Chicago partnership

IBOT recently partnered with *Where Chicago* to introduce a new monthly column profiling lively towns within a short drive (or a train ride) from the city limits of Chicago. Launched in November, the "Chicago Day Trip" column profiles unique seasonal activities and events from one Chicago suburb each month. Towns featured in previous issues include Long Grove, St. Charles, Evanston, and recently, Geneva.

"Write on" Illinois

This December, the Illinois Trade Office welcomed five German journalists to Chicago and Chicagoland as part of a familiarization trip conducted in conjunction with German Tour Operator FTi. The group enjoyed two days in Chicago sampling the best of the city and the season, including visits to the John Hancock Center, Marshall Field's and the Daley Center's Christkindlmarket. In addition, a full day in the Chicagoland area included stops at the Long Grove Historic Village, Long Grove Confectionary, Tempel Farms and Gurnee Mills. Media coverage from this trip will be seen by more than 600,000 readers in publications such as *Augsburger Allgemeine*, *Mittelbayerische Zeitung* and *Passauer Neue Presse*.

Illinois Travel Counselors Attend Training Sessions

Last month, the Bureau of Tourism and call center provider USA-800 welcomed regional tourism development office (RTDO) and convention and visitor bureau (CVB) representatives from the Northern region to our Chicago

center for the first in a series of training sessions. Continuing throughout the spring, the goal of the sessions is to educate the counselors about the most updated Illinois travel information to share with toll-free callers.

Another New Face

IBOT welcomes Brad Strauss who will serve as the Web marketing coordinator in the Chicago office.

Brad is a graduate of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, where he also served on the City Council.

In his new position, he will be responsible for developing and updating enjoyillinois.com and its database. Brad will also coordinate the travel packages program. Prior to joining the Bureau, Brad was Congressman Rod Blagojevich's outreach director. Brad's e-mail: bstrauss@commerce.state.il.us.

Industry Insider: Bonnie Heimbach



To help you get to know who's who in Illinois tourism, ITN profiles an industry leader each month. This month we introduce Bonnie Heimbach, executive director of the Northern Illinois Tourism Development Office (NITDO).

For the past nine years, Bonnie Heimbach has served as the director for the Northern Illinois Tourism Development Office--an organization that has been working with IBOT since 1976. Since she joined the NITDO in 1984, Bonnie has witnessed the change from a membership-driven organization to a strong industry partner focusing on development, marketing and enhancement of the entire Northern Illinois region.

Bonnie is actively involved in many tourism organizations, participating in the Illinois Council of Convention & Visitors Bureaus; serving as a board member of Visit

Illinois (currently serving as co-chair for the Governor's Conference awards program and chair of the Visit Illinois scholarship committee); treasurer for the Illinois Special Events Network (state affiliate of the International Festivals and Events Association); and a member of the educational committee of Grand Excursion 2004 (a four-state initiative focusing on the Mississippi River region from Illinois to Minnesota).

Bonnie also serves on boards of directors for local organizations such as the Challenger Learning Center for Science & Technology in Woodstock, Belvidere Main Street Center, Belvidere Area Chamber of Commerce, and as a member of a regional development initiative covering five counties in Northern Illinois/Southern Wisconsin called the Rock River Valley Partners. She also was a member of the Advisory Board that worked with Nichols/Gilstrap on Illinois' Strategic Plan.

Bonnie serves as project director for the Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition, the management agency for the Lincoln Highway National Scenic Byway and designated Heritage Tourism Demonstration Project.

(Continued on page 5)

Weekend getaway packages sought for *Illinois Now!*

Looking to get additional exposure for your property or attraction? We can help if you can! IBOT sponsors a contest in each quarterly issue of *Illinois Now!* magazine and you can take part. Readers are automatically entered to win one of several prizes after they complete and mail in the magazine's reader survey.

Previous prizes have ranged from digital cameras to Chicago weekend getaways with luxurious hotel accommodations, world-class dining and shopping and tickets to theatrical productions.

IBOT currently has commitments with the Greater North Michigan Avenue Association and the Greater State Street Council in Chicago to rotate the first prize. IBOT has also secured second prizes from Galena/Jo Daviess County and Starved Rock/I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor for the spring and summer 2003 issues respectively. To best promote the entire state and its range of experiences and travel opportunities, IBOT is currently seeking packages ranging in value from \$500 to \$800 for the fall 2003, winter 2003-04 and spring 2004 issues.

For more information, contact the Bureau of Tourism's publication manager, Dan Korman, at (312) 814-2353 or dkorman@commerce.state.il.us.

Illinois on the Fly

Although Illinois is known for hosting bald eagles in the winter months, the Land of Lincoln is host to more than 420 species of birds throughout the year.

INDUSTRY INSIDER PROFILE (Continued)

One recent accomplishment that was directly attributed to Bonnie (and staff) was the completion of a 30-minute television documentary on the Lincoln Highway. And, working through KRT Productions, Bonnie assisted IBOT with the creation of an hour-long documentary on Lewis & Clark and a 30-minute show on Illinois' Route 66. She is currently assisting with an hour-long documentary for Grand Excursion 2004.

Bonnie came to the tourism industry after working for three years for the Rockford Area CVB, and prior to that with *On The Waterfront*, the state's largest street music festival. She and her husband have both served as volunteers, and in 2003, Bonnie completes her 18th year as a management-level volunteer.

Free time is devoted to her husband, John (an architect who

has been known to get involved in her tourism endeavors such as the Challenger Learning Center in Woodstock), and children Matthew (age 7) and Meaghan (age 4). School events, scouting, church, swimming, dance classes, gymnastics, and gardening round out her average week. A voracious reader, you'll often times find her engrossed in at least two or three books at any one time!

To find out more about the Northern Illinois Tourism Development Office, contact Bonnie at nitdo@att.net or (815) 547-3740.

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

Northern Illinois Tourism
Development Office
200 So. State Street
Belvidere, IL 61008

From the almost-extinct majestic peregrine falcon to the tropical white pelican, Illinois offers plenty of wildlife spotting opportunities across the state.

Following is a sampling of the birds that will make their home in Illinois this spring:

The long-legged great blue heron can be spotted feeding and nesting this season in southern Illinois' swamplands, and can be seen from the viewing tower at Belknap's Cache River State Natural Area.

White pelicans are a new addition to our state, due to the recent expansion of their migratory patterns into Illinois. These white,

web-footed birds can be seen this spring at Utica's Starved Rock State Park and Grafton's Pere Marquette State Park, and in Alton near the Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway.

Peregrine falcons live in Chicago's high-rise buildings, which mimic cliffs where this species naturally lives. Peregrine falcons - which are the official birds of Chicago - live in Chicago year-round but the spring is a great time to view them.

In late-March through early April, the worm-eating warbler can be seen at the Trail of Tears State Forest in southern Illinois, among other locations throughout the state.

NATIONAL NEWS

Top trends for 2003

Full-service restaurants and travel agencies are among the businesses likely to benefit from the consumer trends expected to dominate the new year, says *American Demographics* in an article highlighting 10 ways in which American consumers are changing.

Source: *American Demographics*. Dec./Jan. issue

Single travel

Single households generated 152 million trips in the U.S. in 2001, according to a new study by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA). By definition, single households are comprised of persons who are single that may live alone or with a roommate. They do not necessarily take trips alone. Single traveling households account for 32 percent of all U.S. households and they generate 27 percent of all domestic trips.

Source: *TIA.org*

Lewis and Clark

The U.S. kicked off a commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the epic 1804-1806 journey of Merriwether Lewis and William Clark with ceremonies at Monticello, the Virginia home of President Thomas Jefferson, who commissioned the trek as part of his vision of a nation that stretched from "sea to shining sea." The ceremonies set off more than three years of events.

Urged on by post September 11 patriotism, as many as 35 million visitors are expected to trace all or part of the route on foot, in SUVs, bicycles, canoes, motorcycles, paddle-wheel boats, even covered wagons.

Source: *Travel Advance*

Decline of business

TIA is predicting that 2002 will mark the fourth straight year of decline in business travel volume. Leisure travel will fare much better, as TIA predicts an increase in this segment.

Although business travel is forecasted to increase slightly in the fourth quarter of 2002, compared to the same period in 2001, this is not surprising considering the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. However, TIA is forecasting that business travel volume for 2002 will be 4.3 percent lower than 2001.

TIA forecasts that leisure travel volume for 2002 will increase 2 percent over 2001. Total travel volume – including both business and leisure travel – is forecasted to increase (less than 1%) for 2002.

The 2002 forecast, originally released last October, is consistent with actual travel performance through the first three quarters of 2002, as measured by TIA's ongoing monthly TravelScope® survey.

Source: *TIA.org*

Be our guest?

There may be some disagreement about whether service in the U.S. hotel industry overall is improving or getting worse. But experts agree that service is the No. 1 reason guests like or dislike hotels

and that good service has certain features.

"The key is treating every guest as if they're the only guest," says Linda Hirneise, partner and executive director of hotel practice at J.D. Power and Associates. Another key is "taking ownership of a problem," says Peter Ostrowski, vice president of NFO Plog Research. Ownership involves following through and keeping guests informed.

Source: *Travel Advance*



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