

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ IBOT offices will be closed Thursday, February 12, in honor of Lincoln's Birthday and Monday, February 16, for Washington's Birthday.
- ▶ Save the date! The 2004 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held March 29-31 at the Hilton Chicago.
- ▶ Entries for the Governor's Awards program are due March 15. For more information or for an entry form, call the Northern Illinois Tourism Development Office at (815) 547-3740.
- ▶ Upcoming industry events:
 - April 24-28: International Pow Wow®, Los Angeles, Calif.
 - May 15-16: Lewis & Clark National Signature Event – Hartford, Ill.
 - June 25-July 5: Grand Excursion 2004 – Rock Island, Ill., to St. Paul, Minn.

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR



Jan Kostner

Since taking office a year ago, Governor Blagojevich has put a strong emphasis on economic development. This was first made apparent by changing the name of the Bureau's umbrella agency from Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). Our agency director, Jack Lavin, has made this a high priority and, in conjunction with the Governor's Office, has developed regional plans for economic development in Illinois.

Under this plan, titled "Opportunity Returns," the state is divided into 10 regions. To date, six of these plans have been officially announced, and while many areas of development are involved, I would like to address their particular impact on the tourism industry. Please note these are initial proposals and if a program is not included in this report, it does not mean that it won't be considered in the future.

First is the northern stateline region, which includes Rockford and its surrounding counties.

Since most travel to this region by car, proposals to improve the transportation infrastructure will be of particular benefit. The Route 20 Freeport Bypass proposal will expand the highway between Freeport and Galena from two to four lanes. Improvements will also be made in the Rockford area to Illinois Route 2 and the 173 Interchange. Such improvements will make travel to these areas easier and hopefully more enjoyable.

Second, the northwest region includes 10 counties from the Mississippi River stretching east to Starved Rock. Galena and the Quad Cities are among the many communities represented, and the major project in this region will be the redevelopment of the Savanna Army Depot, which closed in 2000. This land now will be divided into a wildlife refuge and recreational area with bike trails, hiking, hunting, fishing and boating.

The plan moves south to encompass the 19 southernmost counties in Illinois. Governor Blagojevich is supporting the creation of a tourism and hospitality training program that will promote Southern Illinois tourism. A coalition of area colleges and universities will incorporate nationally recognized educational curriculum to help meet these goals. Other commitments include financial support for upgrading the DuQuoin State Fairgrounds and promoting the Southern Illinois golf trail.

(Continued on Page 2)

STATEWIDE NEWS

Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism

"Make no little plans" for the 2004 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism, March 29-31, at the Hilton Chicago. This annual conference is the place to sharpen marketing skills, grow awareness of industry trends and get an outlook for the future of tourism.

This year's educational program focuses on the key elements necessary for succeeding in the business of tourism with a stellar lineup of nationally renowned speakers, covering a variety of topics. Keynote speakers will include futurist Ed Barlow, who will outline a dynamic approach to preparing for what is ahead; Peter Yesawich of Yesawich, Pepperdine, Brown & Russell, will be providing insights on the state of the tourism industry; and a motivational session by Scott Friedman, a renowned speaker, who will offer advice on mastering challenges, and relieving stress and burnout.

Early bird rates are still available, starting from \$325 for an individual registration and as low as \$250 per person for groups of three or more. For more information, call (888) 658-0749 or visit www.illinoistourism.org or www.visitillinois.net. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, call Patrick Snyder at (312) 658-1047. To participate in the Governor's Awards program, contact Bonnie Heimbach at (815) 547-3740 or nitdo@att.net.

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR *(Continued)*

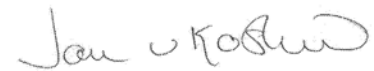
Next up is the north central region. Here we focus on 10 counties in Central Illinois that include the cities of Peoria and Bloomington/Normal. At the suggestion of the Peoria Convention and Visitors Bureau, the state will be funding an action plan to study the potential for tourism development along the Illinois River. This plan will facilitate cooperation between regional partners to take full advantage of the River's natural, cultural and historic appeal.

The areas around Metro East comprise the southwest region. With the approach of the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition, the state is committed to marketing the bicentennial celebration taking place this May in Hartford. We will also be assisting in the construction of the Lewis and Clark Memorial Tower at Camp River DuBois. Additionally, the state is planning to purchase land for a World Shooting Complex in Sparta. This will be a full service facility with everything from skeet stations and archery ranges to an expansive array of outdoor activities.

The most recent unveiling is that of the west central region. This includes counties along the Mississippi River from Quincy to Galesburg. Here we feature various proposals from staging a 10-day bike ride along the Mississippi River to promoting the new Galesburg Railroad Museum. Other efforts will include reviving the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, saving the Zoe Theater in Pittsfield, and acting on First Lady Patti Blagojevich's beautification initiative by planting flowers at major highway interchanges.

"Opportunity Returns" is a commitment from the Governor and our agency to see the potential for economic development in Illinois reach its full potential. This includes programs and proposals that will significantly benefit the tourism industry.

Best regards,



Spring *Illinois Now!*

Illinois is in full bloom as spring makes its long-awaited return, and *Illinois Now!* will help visitors make the most of it. Available in mid-February, the free 52-page magazine gives readers the scoop on the best places to celebrate the bicentennial of Lewis and Clark's voyage of discovery, advice on planning an unforgettable family reunion, and the details on cozy cabins and lodges that are a sure cure for spring fever. A complete listing of the top spring festivals and events is also included.

The cover story, "Green Scene," offers tips on ecotourism trips that include everything from pelican watching along the Mississippi River, to rock climbing in the Shawnee National Forest.

The spring issue of *Illinois Now!* also gives readers the chance to win a grand prize that includes a two-night stay for two at the Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago, plus tickets to a "Broadway in Chicago" play. Readers can also vie for the second prize – a Galena getaway package.

To obtain a free copy of *Illinois Now!* or more information on 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.

Illinois celebrates Black History Month with new travel guide

Did you know that Alton houses six of the 38 Underground Railroad stations in Illinois? Or that the McLean County Museum of History has an exhibit of military memorabilia related to Captain Julius Wither- spoon, an African-American who commanded Company G of the all Black 8th Illinois Volunteer Infantry during World War I? These and many more interesting facts can be found in the updated African-American *See What's Up in Illinois* travel guide.

Now available, the guide – a 16-page travel resource to attractions and events of significance to African-American culture and history – offers visitors general information about sites, events and restaurants throughout the state. The guide also includes an accommodations section that highlights properties from The Consumer Choice Guide distributed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and a local resource section to make traveling the state much easier.

For a free *See What's Up in Illinois* travel guide or for more information about traveling throughout Illinois, call an Illinois

INDUSTRY INSIDER: JORDAN ENGERMAN



To help you get to know who's who in Illinois tourism, ITN profiles an industry leader each month. This month, we introduce Jordan Engerman, IBOT's marketing manager.

Jordan Engerman brings more than 10 years of marketing and tourism experience to his position as marketing manager for the Bureau. Since joining IBOT in August, 2000, Engerman has been working closely with IBOT's advertising agency planning marketing and advertising initiatives designed to increase domestic travel to Illinois. During his tenure, he has been closely involved in developing the Bureau's seasonal tourism magazine, *Illinois Now!*, as well as producing various new marketing

programs including the statewide Summer Savings Coupon Book and a first-ever partnership with the Illinois Lottery for an Illinois Road Trip instant lottery ticket.

Additionally, Engerman oversaw major technical system enhancements and Web improvements to better manage IBOT's extensive information system and to make www.enjoyillinois.com even more user friendly.

Dedicated to Illinois tourism's long-term viability and success as a premier tourism destination, Engerman was also an active member of the advisory committee that helped develop a five-year strategic plan for the Illinois industry.

In his capacity at the Bureau, Engerman directs all strategic marketing efforts and manages the advertising for IBOT. He also oversees Bureau marketing efforts including publications, telemarketing, technology, tourist information centers, niche marketing and packaged leisure travel initiatives. In the past year,

(Continued on Page 4)

Travel Counselor at 800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

Follow the flames through Illinois this Valentine's Day

To add a little spark this Valentine's Day, IBOT is encouraging travelers to "follow the flames" to some of the state's most intricate and romantic fireside settings. From massive stone fireplaces to Italianate inglenooks, travelers can throw another log into the

fire at Illinois' historic state park lodges, renowned bed and breakfasts, convivial cottages, fine-dining establishments and cozy taverns.

Couples can consider Chicago's Pops for Champagne for popping the question or Lynfred Winery Bed and Breakfast in Roselle for a romantic weekend's stay. The Starved Rock State Park Lodge in Northern Illinois offers special romance packages and a giant stone fireplace, while The Oaks Bed and Breakfast in the central

region features private in-suite fireplaces. Quincy's Cooper Adams House, located in the city's historic district, is a great overnight getaway for quietude and romance. Visitors to the southern and southwest portions of the state shouldn't miss the recently renovated Rend Lake Resort in Whittington for candlelit dinners or the Beall Mansion in Alton with its award-winning service.

To read this and other IBOT press releases, visit the press section of our travel professionals site, www.illinois-tourism.org.

Updated travel guide now available

The 2004 Illinois Travel Guide is now available. Complete with 240-pages of updated contact information for Illinois events and attractions, the new edition also includes a comprehensive listing of all Illinois state historic sites. From accommodations and cultural attractions to shopping outlets and restaurants, the Illinois Travel Guide is one-stop shopping for Illinois travel information.

The new travel guide is available now. To obtain a free copy or for more information on traveling throughout Illinois this spring, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com. Copies of the travel guide are also available at tourism information centers, convention and visitors bureaus, regional tourism development offices and state park lodges throughout Illinois.

INDUSTRY INSIDER: JORDAN ENGERMAN *(Continued)*

Engerman has also been very involved with several procurements for the Bureau including the recent advertising and public relations searches.

Engerman came to IBOT from a five-year post as assistant product manager at the Illinois Lottery where he executed multi-pronged marketing programs for the *Big Game*, *Lotto*, *Little Lotto*, *Pick Three* and *Pick Four* products. Engerman was directly involved in all strategic planning and marketing programs for these five products. His duties included supervising the Lottery's advertising agency in the creation of all television radio, print and outdoor advertising campaigns, as well as helping to manage and coordinate the launch of the Lottery's direct marketing campaign.

In addition to these marketing duties, Engerman worked with the director of promotions to develop and execute the Lottery's promotional programs. For these, Engerman worked with a sales promotion agency to develop point-of-purchase displays and collateral materials, and supervised the public relations agency in the coordination of event launches and media relations.

Before joining the Lottery, Engerman worked at the Hotel Nikko Chicago for seven years. He worked in various management capacities during his time at the hotel, supporting the director of marketing, man-

aging day-to-day operations of the reservations office and front desk, and supervising general hotel operations.

Born and raised on the north side of Chicago, Engerman graduated with honors from Marquette University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. He also holds a Master's in Business Administration from Loyola University in Chicago. Engerman and his wife Gloriane reside in Glenview with their three children, Gabrielle, Justin and Olivia.

A die-hard sports enthusiast, Engerman hits the basketball court for hoops as frequently as possible, and remains a loyal Marquette Golden Eagles (formerly "Warriors") fan – even traveling to New York City recently for a victorious game against St. John's. Engerman, whose mother is well-known and respected actress Renee Matthews, shares his mother's love of theater, and is grateful to live in an area so rich with theaters and cultural institutions.

To learn more about IBOT's marketing efforts, contact Engerman at:
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@commerce.state.il.us or (312) 814-7171.

To add him to your mailing list, his address is:

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NATIONAL NEWS

Consumer confidence at highest level since July 2002

Consumer confidence in the economy rose in January to the highest level since July 2002 as Americans grew more optimistic about the prospects later this year, the Conference Board reported. The board said its index of consumer confidence rose to 96.8 in January from a revised 91.7 in December.

Source: *Travel Advance*

The whole package

A package vacation used to mean a rigidly regimented, often unimaginative itinerary with little free choice or free time. But harried Americans pressed for time to take – let alone plan – a vacation have come to realize there's an upside to letting someone else work out the laborious details, as long as they have substantial say over the what, where, when and how much. Innovative travel providers – from tour operators to resorts, online booking agencies and even cruise lines – are finding ways to customize trips so clients feel they're getting valuable assistance at a good price, but don't feel they're signing on for a cookie-cutter experience.

Source: *Travel Advance*

Trends in travel

A trend guru is predicting that travelers will be looking for their

roots this year, while the travel industry looks for new customers by catering to luxury air travelers, teaming up with well-known brands, and expanding spas to all manner of hotels. Adam Hanft, co-author of "Dictionary of the Future," predicts that Americans will use some of the vacation time this year to find their roots. He also sees a luxury air industry developing to cater to the needs of wealthier travelers for whom a first-class ticket is not quite good enough.

Source: *Travel Advance*

Crowded skies over Chicago raise safety concerns

An influx of flights is causing serious safety concerns and huge delays in the skies over Chicago. Airlines are now packing more flights into O'Hare International Airport than ever – the airport is now handling more flights than it did in 2000, its peak year. Midway Airport has grown rapidly, too. As a result, the skies have grown so crowded and complicated that travel delays are rampant, and air-traffic controllers say conditions are getting dangerous.

Source: *Travel Advance*

Continued growth in online travel booking

Travelers' use of the Internet to plan and book their trips continues to grow, albeit at a slower pace, according to the Travel Industry Association of America. More than 64 million online travelers – 30 percent of the U.S. adult population – used the Internet last year to get information on their destination or to check prices or schedules, according to the study. Of that group, 42.2 million actually

booked travel online during 2003. Airline tickets continued to be the most frequently purchased travel products online, followed by accommodations and rental cars.

Source: *Travel Advance*

ILLINOIS
RIGHT HERE. RIGHT NOW.SM

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Lieutenant Governor

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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.