



# ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

ILLINOIS TOURISM NEWS

June 2004

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

## HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ June 25-July 5: Grand Excursion 2004, Rock Island, Ill., to St. Paul, Minn.
- ▶ February 5-10, 2005: American Bus Association (ABA) annual conference, Chicago, Ill.
- ▶ Late summer: 2004 Illinois Tourism Road Show

### MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR



In 2001, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism released its five-year strategic plan covering our industry goals through 2006. As you know, since then we have been confronted with numerous challenges and opportunities. Now is the time to review the elements of the plan and make the appropriate adjustments as needed.

For this process to be successful, we will need constructive input from all our industry partners. Now is the time for creative ideas and active participation. To that end, a series of input sessions will be held throughout the state, and we encourage you all to lend your voices and be heard.

Four input sessions facilitated by Nichols Tourism Group (NTG) will be held around the state. NTG will provide relevant tourism research and examine the efforts underway among our Midwest competitors. After the input sessions, NTG will review the ideas discussed and incorporate them into a series of recommendations that will be

presented to the Illinois Tourism Strategic Plan Advisory Board.

Our goals for the update process are: We will evaluate what progress has been made in the strategic plan thus far; we will need to consider the new market environment, taking into account both economic and national security concerns. The next step will be to gather the industry's input and opinions. All this information will be taken into account as we seek the most productive ways to reprioritize our key initiatives.

To help focus the discussion, we will be looking at the strategic plan in the context of our mission and goals for Illinois tourism. To recap, our mission is to manage visitor industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents. This will happen via three methods: attract, develop and educate.

The keys to accomplishing the goal of attracting high-value visitors include tightly focusing on target marketing, positioning efforts based on areas of competitive advantage and increasing repeat visitor expenditure levels.

Development is dependent on providing new and stronger destination drivers. Potential

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# STATEWIDE NEWS

## 'Illinois: Mile After Magnificent Mile.' campaign launch

On May 17 and at 1,000 feet above Chicago's famed Magnificent Mile at the Hancock Observatory, Illinois tourism officials unveiled the Bureau's new campaign "Illinois. Mile After Magnificent Mile." The new integrated marketing communications campaign is designed to increase leisure and business travel throughout the state, and position Illinois as the "Land of Magnificent Three-Day Getaways."

Speakers included: DCEO Director Jack Lavin; IBOT Deputy Director Jan Kostner; J. Walter Thompson Senior Partner and Group Management Director Dan Dahlen; and Carbondale Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Debbie Moore – who all touted the campaign's creative and strategy.

The new campaign leverages the notoriety and popularity of Chicago, while also introducing visitors to other destinations throughout the state. In a deviation from traditional tourism advertising, dramatic black and white advertisements feature the state and promote the Three-Day Getaways and travel opportunities.

Visitors to [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com) are now able to browse and book 10 packages consisting of accommodations for two nights and at least two activities. Package themes vary from romantic getaways and outdoor adventures to family fun, and arts and history.

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

strategies would entail providing tools and information to both Illinois communities and tourism related businesses to help them compete and progress.

Ensuring the necessary human resources and physical infrastructure is essential in supporting this progress.

Education is, of course, another vital component. We need to educate our citizens, residents who travel, and community/government leaders about all that Illinois tourism offers them from economic, quality-of-life and leisure entertainment perspectives.

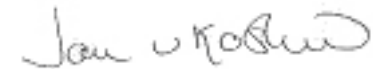
Looking to the future means incorporating these goals with the realities of a changing environment. Fear of terrorism, unpredictable shifts in the economy, proposed budget cuts, and the upcoming presidential election are

all factors that will affect our future. We should also take into account possible opportunities such as Governor Blagojevich's Opportunity Returns initiative.

Discussions will also include an overview of market performance concepts. We will analyze market share, geographic penetration, visitor segment growth, lodging performance and changes in competitive initiatives.

By June 30, we hope to have a preliminary draft ready for review. Our success in these challenging times depends on harnessing all of our enthusiasm and creativity toward shaping a winning future for Illinois tourism.

Best regards,



Visitors can also call 800-2CONNECT to book their Three-Day Getaway. Additionally, 13 non-bookable packages are listed on the Web site, offering visitors to Illinois travel ideas from throughout the state.

Thanks to Randy Stancik at the Hancock Observatory for hosting the launch event, and to our team at J. Walter Thompson for everything they did to roll out our new campaign.

### Industry input sessions

In order to seek industry input into the update of the five-year Illinois strategic plan, IBOT will be holding input sessions around the state the week of June 14. We encourage

participation by persons directly involved in the tourism industry as well as welcome participation from those indirectly involved. These sessions will be the industry's opportunity to provide its input into crafting the plan for the tourism industry in the coming years.

Following are the dates, times and locations for the input sessions. Please feel free to attend any of the sessions if the one in your area is not convenient.

#### Tuesday, June 15

8:00 - 10:00 a.m.: Chicago, Omni Hotel, Michigan Ave.

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.: Rockford, Burpee Museum of Natural History, Mahlburg Room

Wednesday, June 16

10:00 – Noon: Springfield,  
DCEO Theater

Thursday, June 17

10:00 – Noon: Collinsville,  
Gateway Center

If you have any questions about the input sessions, please contact Jan Kemmerling at Jan\_Kemmerling@commerce.state.il.us or at 217/785-6399.

### 2004 Illinois Tourism Road Show postponed

Plans for the annual Illinois Tourism Road Show have been put on hold. Postponing the annual media trip will enable IBOT officials to better address how Illinois' tourism industry will be funded and at what level when traveling the state.

With a new campaign and new numbers to tout, there is a wealth of exciting information to share with the industry, so IBOT will again take to the magnificent miles of Illinois, but later this summer.

Look for dates and additional information on the 2004 Illinois Tourism Road Show in upcoming issues of ITN.

### Summer Illinois Now!

Summer is approaching, which means it's time to start enjoying the sunny days and relishing the cool nights. Whether visitors are looking for last minute getaways, a day out with the kids or a special dining experience, *Illinois Now!* has the tools to make this summer memorable.

The new issue gives readers a look at Illinois' most inspired

### INDUSTRY INSIDER: CHRISTOPHER BOWERS



*To help you get to know who's who in Illinois tourism, ITN profiles an industry leader each month. This month, we introduce Christopher Bowers, Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau (CCTB).*

Christopher "Chris" Bowers assumed the title of Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau (CCTB) in March of 2004. In this staff leadership role, he is responsible for directing the strategy and operations of the not-for-profit organization charged with selling and

marketing Chicago for group meetings, and working with city and state agencies to promote the city as a destination for visitors of all types.

Bowers is a 30-year veteran of United Airlines, where he most recently served as Senior Vice President of Sales & Reservations. Among his accomplishments while at United, were lead roles in building the airline's Chicago hub, creating corporate sales initiatives, implementing and expanding the international Star Alliance system, and responding to industry challenges in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

He started literally at the ground level as an Air Freight Supervisor, working the 4 p.m. to midnight shift. He worked his way up through the ranks in sales, reservations, marketing and operations, ultimately serving as Vice President General Sales Manager, Senior Vice President International and

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artisans and designers, offers a guide to local signature diners and ice cream parlors, and provides a reminder of the ethnic and cultural treasures available at the state's museums, historic sites and festivals. Additional articles feature the top 25 summer fun ideas, the best outdoor stages and statewide sporting events. A complete listing of summer fairs and events is also included.

To obtain a free copy of *Illinois Now!* or for more information on traveling throughout Illinois this summer, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 800-2CONNECT or

visit [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com). Copies of the seasonal magazine are also available at statewide tourism information centers, convention and visitor bureaus, regional tourism development offices and state park lodges.

### New Web research tools

Illinois tourism research is now available by visiting the Travel Professionals section of [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com). IBOT has worked with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to provide this information via the Web to make our tourism

research more accessible to industry partners.

Information on the site includes economic impact, visitor volume estimates and profile information, and a topline summary of annual tourism facts and figures.

If you cannot find what you are looking for, please contact Jan Kemmerling on the IBOT staff at Jan\_Kemmerling@commerce.state.il.us, and she will be happy to let you know what we might have available to meet your needs.

### **NATJA fam wrap-up**

Illinois piqued the curiosity of nearly a dozen journalists when IBOT hosted two familiarization trips last month. The journeys were created specifically for the North American Travel Journalists Association (NATJA) as many of its members were in downtown Chicago for their annual conference.

In the days leading up to the conference, six journalists from across the country and Canada traveled to Springfield along Route 66 and visited Alton. To fully experience the "Mother Road," the group visited Bill Shea's Gas Station Museum and plenty of authentic diners and stops. They also took a sneak peek of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, and visited the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center.

After the conference closed, IBOT hosted another five journalists for an expedition throughout Northern Illinois. While exploring Rockford's Anderson Gardens, Starlight Theatre and the Burpee Museum

### **INDUSTRY INSIDER: CHRISTOPHER BOWERS** *(Continued)*

Senior Vice President North America.

Within the travel industry, Bowers has served as Chairman of the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) and also chaired TIA's International Pow Wow Convention when it was held in Chicago in 1998. In addition, he has been a member of the board of directors for online travel engine Orbitz.

On a local level, Bowers is a former board member of both the CCTB and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. He also is a trustee at The Field Museum.

Short of a few brief hiatuses, Bowers has lived in the Chicago area and Illinois his whole life. He was raised in suburban LaGrange and graduated from Monmouth College in Monmouth, Illinois with a degree in business administration.

Following graduation, he joined the United States Army and spent three years in Heidelberg, Germany in the Adjutant General Corps.

He returned to the Chicago area and spent his entire United States Army tenure – minus a brief assignment in Detroit – living in the Chicagoland area. He currently resides with his wife, Dinah, in suburban Inverness, and his hobbies range from reading and boating, to golfing and spending time with his family.

To find out more about the CCTB, contact Chris at:

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of Natural History, the journalists gathered useful information and many photographs. Galena was the group's second stop, complete with tours of historic Main Street, and visits to the Galena Cellars Winery, Eagle Ridge Resort and Chestnut Mountain.

Special thanks to Sharon Johnson and Alicia Erickson (Springfield CVB); Patty Kuhn (Route 66); Suzanne Lerch (Alton Area CVB); LaVonne Brown, Sue Crandall and Linda Dennis (Rockford CVB); Beverly VanDerZyl and John Mazar (Galena CVB); and Roger Carmack (Western Illinois RTDO/Great River Road).

### **Tourism industry update**

- Celeste Rogers has been named the new Abraham Lincoln Tourism Bureau of Logan County Executive Director, following the retirement of Thressia Usherwood.
- Eileen Galley has resigned as the director of the Chicago Plus Regional Tourism Development, effective May 19, 2004. Please address all correspondence to the interim director, Robyn Traub, at the same number and address – 60 W. Randolph Street, #204, Chicago, IL. 60601-3204. Or contact Robin at 312/795-1700.

# NATIONAL NEWS

## TIA: 2004 will be one of the strongest years in travel

The combination of a strengthening economy along with an increase in consumer confidence and spending is helping to make 2004 one of the strongest years in travel in "quite some time," the TIA said in its annual Travel Forecast. Overall traveler spending by domestic and international visitors is expected to rise by nearly 6 percent this year to \$585 billion. TIA expects to see spending continue to improve in 2005. It also says business travel should increase by 4.6 percent this year, and by 3.5 percent in 2005.

In a separate report, TIA said its quarterly Traveler Sentiment Index declined nearly 5 percent in the second quarter, to 97.4, despite a positive showing last quarter. The decline was primarily driven by concerns about the affordability of travel, TIA said.

Source: *Travel Advance*

## Summer travel trends

Just weeks away from the official start of summer, there are some signs that the travel industry is on the verge of the biggest travel period since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The Air Transport Association is projecting 65 million passengers will board a plane this summer, a 12-percent increase from last summer's 58 million. But it's not just vacationers. A recent survey by the National Business Travel Association of 220 business travel managers found that 54 percent said they expect the

number of business trips this year to match the number of trips taken in 2000, one of the strongest recent periods for the industry.

And other travel suppliers say they are benefiting from the increase in demand, including hotels and car rental firms. Many experienced business travelers are planning to travel less this summer because of the number of people flying with families on vacation.

Source: *Travel Advance*

## Family travel expected to show healthy gains this year

An estimated 93.2 million American adults took a family vacation in 2003, an increase of 8 percent from 2002, according to the 12th Family Vacation Study prepared for Meredith Magazines by TIA. Family travel accounts for 74 percent of all U.S. leisure travel. A projected 95.1 million Americans plan to take a family vacation in 2004. Among other findings of the survey: Concerns about financial and economic problems among respondents decreased to 25 percent in 2003, from 29 percent in 2002. Use of the Internet to book reservations has increased from 19 percent in 1999 to 59 percent last year.

Source: *Travel Advance*

## Historical sites and parks show decline despite tourism growth

While leisure travel in the U.S. reached a record high in 2003, the number of households reporting visits to national and state parks and other historic sites reached a 10-year low, according to an analysis conducted by travel research firm D.K. Shifflet & Associates, based in Falls Church, Va. Park visitation volume has

increased slightly over the past decade, but the proportion of households visiting parks is down significantly. National and state parks' share of leisure visitation is down by 29 percent since 1994.

Source: *Travel Advance*



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