



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

ILLINOIS TOURISM NEWS
September 2004

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ September 6: IBOT offices closed in honor of Labor Day.
- ▶ September 8: IBOT's fall advertising campaign launches.
- ▶ October 27-29: TIA's Marketing Outlook Forum, Phoenix/Scottsdale, Ariz. Visit www.tia.org for information or to register.
- ▶ February 5-10, 2005: American Bus Association Marketplace, Chicago, Ill. Visit www.buses.org for information or to register.
- ▶ 2005 Governor's Conference on Tourism: Information coming soon.

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR



The 2003 numbers are in and there is much room for optimism. Despite the many challenges last year, the latest reports from D.K. Shifflet & Associates and the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) indicate that Illinois tourism is on the rise.

A record-setting 84.9 million domestic visitors traveled to Illinois in 2003, exceeding the previous high of 84.7 million in 2001. The growth in visitors was led solely by the leisure travel segment (+7.6%) that outweighed a 9.3 percent decline in business travel.

Overall, U.S. leisure travel grew 5.7 percent and business travel remained flat. Of these 84.9 million visitors, 25.2 million travelers chose Illinois for business purposes, while 59.7 million visited for leisure.

Illinois' strong growth in leisure volume helped to increase the state's share of U.S. leisure travel in 2003. Illinois' market share grew from 2.4 percent of U.S. leisure travel to 2.5 percent, making Illinois the 10th ranked

state for leisure travel in the U.S.

Domestic and international visitors to Illinois spent nearly \$23 billion on transportation, lodging, food, entertainment, recreation and incidentals. Travel expenditures in 2003 exceeded 2002 by nearly \$800 million, generating an additional \$39 million in state and local tax revenues. Illinois maintained its ranking of 5th in the U.S. for travel-generated spending.

Travel to Illinois directly accounted for 298,670 Illinois jobs resulting in \$7.7 billion in payroll income. Overall, state and local tax revenues generated by travel expenditures increased by 2.4 percent from 2002 to \$1.7 billion in 2003.

Half of the leisure visitors that traveled to Illinois visited friends or relatives (51%). Special events are also a key reason for leisure travel to Illinois, accounting for 17 percent of all leisure travelers. The average travel party size is 2.3 persons, and Illinois visitors are likely to travel as a family (32%). Leisure visitors stay an average of about two days.

The average spending of leisure travelers to Illinois increased 5.6 percent from \$89 per person per day to \$94. The primary activities for leisure travelers were dining, shopping, sightseeing, entertainment, visiting a museum/art and nightlife.

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STATEWIDE NEWS

Illinois tourism funding restored

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism's budget for FY05 was fully restored to the FY04 level of \$47 million. The General Assembly has passed and the Governor has signed the budget.

The budget provides \$12.6 million in grants from the Local Tourism Fund to fund 40 convention and visitors bureaus located throughout the state.

An additional \$12.6 million is allocated for the statewide domestic advertising campaign and \$2.7 million for an international advertising program.

Grant funding of \$4.6 million will also be provided to the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau and Chicago Office of Tourism and downstate CVBs to market Illinois internationally.

The Tourism Attraction Grant Program will be funded at \$1.9 million to assist entities in developing or enhancing tourism attractions in Illinois.

The Tourism Marketing Partnership program will have \$1.75 million available to assist entities in marketing their tourism destinations, attractions and events.

The Tourism Private Sector Grant Program will be funded \$600,000 to help attract major new events to Illinois. In addition, funding will be provided to fund administrative expenses of five regional tourism development offices.

MESSAGE FROM THE STATE TRAVEL DIRECTOR *(Continued)*

Most visitors to Illinois arrive by auto (79%) and travel during June, July, August and also December. While the majority of visitors are from outside Illinois, residents comprise 37.1 percent of the leisure travelers. Indiana and Missouri send the highest share of out-of-state visitors to Illinois.

The growth in travel volume and market share in the leisure segment is a positive sign for the state. And while the majority of leisure visitors to Illinois rated the state excellent in satisfaction (58%) and value (52%), the share

of high ratings dropped 10 and 15 percentage points, respectively.

So while most of the numbers show we are heading in the right direction, some other indicators demonstrate that we still have work to do to keep visitors satisfied with their Illinois travel experience.

Best regards,



The restored tourism budget will also allow the Bureau to continue to staff 14 Tourist Information Centers located at key entry points in the state and to produce major tourism publications.

Introducing Illinois' Fall-O-WeenSM

Autumn is known for its brilliant colors and one-of-a-kind events. In fact, it has so many valuable offerings that IBOT deemed it special enough for its own name, Fall-O-Ween.

Complete with a "Pumpkin Plaza," not-so-scary scarecrow festivals, miles of corn mazes and so much more, Fall-O-Ween is that distinctive time of year when fall festivities and Halloween events await travelers in every region of the state.

Whether it's a celebration of crisp apples and colorful foliage or orange pumpkins and family hayrides, a cornucopia of fall festivals can be found in Illinois this Fall-O-Ween.

Every year, Fall-O-Ween will grow and expand to include new festivals, events and happenings. With the help of convention and visitors bureaus, associations and attractions throughout the state, travelers will soon begin to routinely recognize Fall-O-Ween as Illinois' own special travel season.

IBOT welcomes two new CVBs

IBOT is pleased to welcome the Henry County Tourism Council and Stephenson County Convention and Visitors Bureau. There are now a total of 40 certified CVBs in Illinois.

Denise McGowan is the director of the Henry County Tourism Council, which is located in Cambridge. Visitors can contact the CVB at (309) 937-1255 or www.visithenrycounty.com

Connie Sorn is the director of the Stephenson County CVB, which is located in Freeport. Visitors can contact the CVB at (815) 233-1357 or www.stephenson-county-il.org.

Fall into a Three-Day Getaway

IBOT's fall campaign will launch on Wednesday, September 8, and run for six weeks to tout the wealth of sites, events and activities available throughout Illinois this fall. Ads will include radio, print, magazine and online efforts, and will target both couples and families looking to plan an exciting fall getaway.

With a \$1 million investment in this seasonal outreach, the campaign will focus on high-value and proven markets including Chicago, Champaign, Springfield, Decatur, Peoria, Bloomington, Detroit, Grand Rapids and St. Louis.

Visitors will be encouraged to order their free Illinois Fall Travel Kit consisting of the Illinois Travel Guide, the fall issue of *Illinois Now!*, an Illinois Road Map and an Illinois State Park Guide. And as a handy companion, new this fall, visitors will also receive a Three-Day Getaway Guide complete with detailed information on magnificent fall getaway packages.

Making traveling Illinois both easy and memorable, IBOT will again be offering seasonal packages that tout the best of the season including bustling pumpkin patches, apple orchards prime for picking, scenic bike rides and horseback riding amid the lush fall colors.

Packages will also include timeless favorites such as blockbuster museum exhibits, couples massages, a soulful gospel brunch and historic tours, not to mention a brand-new indoor waterpark.

Consumers will be able to treat themselves to any one of 11

INDUSTRY INSIDER: WENDY PERKS FISHER



To help you get to know who's who in Illinois tourism, ITN profiles an industry leader each month. This month, we introduce Wendy Perks Fisher, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Visionary, vivacious and high energy are three qualities that aptly describe Wendy Perks Fisher, president and chief executive officer of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) since its inception in 1984.

The RACVB serves 280,000 people with an annual budget of \$2 million and a staff of 12 full-time employees. In 2003, visitors to the region spent \$230 million, helping to retain 2,900 jobs in the visitor

industry. Under her leadership, the RACVB has won numerous state and national awards and recognitions.

In July, Perks Fisher was elected chairperson of Visit Illinois, a statewide federation of key tourism organizations. As chairperson, she will ensure that the travel industry remains a vital part of Illinois' economic growth.

"This industry is a relatively new business in Illinois, about 20 years old, but it's on its way to becoming a permanent and prominent economic engine for our state, like Wisconsin, Florida and California," she said.

On a more local level, Perks Fisher talks about her love for the job. "What I love most is seeing the positive changes in my community, being able to facilitate growth and to create better spaces for children and families."

The many civic awards bestowed on her are a testament to her love for her community – the

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packages that can be booked via www.enjoyillinois.com or 1-800-2CONNECT, as well as indulge in 14 non-bookable packages full of ideas for travelers with a variety of interests. All packages consist of overnight accommodations and at least two paid attractions and/or events.

ITN online - just a click away

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism's monthly newsletter, Illinois Tourism News (ITN), will soon be just a click away. Beginning in November, the transition from fax to an e-mail format will pro-

vide a more cost-effective and convenient way for people to receive their monthly ITN via their e-mail in-box. The new online format will also make it easier to share information with tourism partners and constituents.

ITN will continue to provide the same information, news and resources each month. To continue receiving the ITN, please complete the form on page six and fax to IBOT at (312) 814-6175 or e-mail Marie Bolling at marie_bolling@commerce.state.il.us with your information.

Awesome autumn getaways in *Illinois Now!*

Get ready for awe-inspiring autumn getaways with the fall issue of *Illinois Now!* Now available, the seasonal magazine features suggestions for rejuvenating getaways that are good for the soul, cool college towns that teach a thing or two about having fun in the Land of Lincoln, fascinating historic towns that keep the past present, plus complete listings of fall festivals and events.

"Picks of the Season" including a crop of autumn outings that range from the Fall Color Festival at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, to exploring the many pumpkin patches and apple orchards around the state, to cruising along the Spoon River Valley Scenic Drive in Fulton County.

The fall issue of *Illinois Now!* also gives readers the chance to win a grand prize that includes a two-night stay in Chicago at the hip new Hotel 71, tickets to the inspiring *Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years* exhibit at The Field Museum, tickets to a Broadway in Chicago play and a Marshall Field's shopping spree. Readers can also vie for a second prize: a Rockford getaway package complete with a weekend stay at the Courtyard by Marriott, dinner for two at area restaurants and admission to the Burpee Museum of Natural History.

To obtain a free copy of *Illinois Now!* call 1-800-2CONNECT 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.

INDUSTRY INSIDER: WENDY PERKS FISHER (Continued)

YWCA Leadership Award for the Arts, Preservationist of the Year Award, Heart of Rockford Lifetime Leadership, Most Valuable Contribution Awards, and the NAACP Meritorious Commitment & Support Award are just a few of the dozens of recognitions earned. She serves as a board member of the Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce, Rockford Area Council of 100, Anderson Japanese Gardens, Rock Valley College Foundation, Rockford Park District Foundation, and the Friends of the Coronado, among others.

Professionally, Perks Fisher has received the Bruce Riley McDaniel Lifetime Achievement Award, has presented at numerous conferences, was a delegate to the White House Conference on Tourism, and is the past chair of the Illinois Council of Convention & Visitors Bureaus.

Born and raised in Rockford, Perks Fisher received her Bachelor of Arts in Literature from Colorado College and a Master of Arts in Theater from the University of Washington.

She worked for more than 20 years in arts education, first as a drama instructor, and implemented

a theater arts program for students K-12. Later she served as executive director and president of the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped in Washington, D.C., the associate director for the World Festival of Theater for Young Audiences, Louisiana's World Fair, and director of development for ASSITEJ/USA, The International Association of Theater for Children and Young People in New York. She has also taught at the college level.

Perks Fisher and her husband, Roger, are the proud parents of Lily, age 9, a Chinese-born child whom they adopted. In her spare time, Perks Fisher enjoys reading historical novels and cooking dishes concocted from fresh ingredients.

Naturally, she loves to travel and likes to stay in places that have kitchens, so she can whip up dishes after shopping at local markets. She appreciates sunrises, sunsets and bodies of water (which explains one unforgettable experience, walking around Wisconsin's Lake Geneva--28 miles--in 10 hours!).

New Web site targets overseas visitors

The Chicago and Illinois Tourist Office is pleased to announce a brand new Web site for potential visitors from the UK and Germany.

The official site, www.gochicago.com, includes colorful pages full of entertainment, shopping and dining information, as well as suggested itineraries and event listings.

In addition, Web travelers can choose to "go discover," "go shop," "go groove" or "go gaze" to find information and tips on everything from architecture to nightlife.

The Web site also includes a convenient downloadable version of the tourist office's new travel guide, a "city essentials" page, to make each trip as enjoyable as possible and tips on traveling beyond Chicago. Visit www.gochicago.com today!

NATIONAL NEWS

France retains No. 1 spot among world destinations

Tourism increased throughout the world last year, according to recently released statistics from the World Tourism Organization. The U.S. led those increases with a 3.6 percent increase in visitor numbers in 2003 over 2002. Overall international tourism receipts rose from \$474 billion in 2002 to an estimated \$514 billion last year, the WTO said. France retained its lead as the world's most visited country, welcoming 75 million visitors last year. Spain, the U.S. and Italy also retained their spots as second, third and fourth most visited destinations, according to WTO statistics. All three enjoyed increases.

Source: *Travel Advance*

Hotels.com names top 10 spots for Labor Day travel

As many Americans prepare for one last getaway this summer, Hotels.com has come up with its list of the top destinations for the Labor Day weekend. New York City topped the list, followed by Las Vegas, New Orleans, Chicago and San Francisco. Rounding out the top 10 picks were: Orlando, London, Miami, Paris and Los Angeles. The rankings were based on actual Hotels.com customer shopping preferences.

Source: *Travel Advance*

Indicators signal rise in travel

Air, road and rail travel have

surged to levels not seen since before September 11, 2001, during a summer in which Americans have renewed their love affair with traveling despite terror warnings and high gasoline prices. Indications of increased travel abound as hotel occupancy rates are climbing, ridership on trains is setting records and drivers have been taking to the highways. But nowhere has the rebound been more apparent than at airports. "It's busy everywhere," said Terry Trippler, president of travel Web site TerryTrippler.com. "This summer was the catalyst."

Source: *Travel Advance*

California, Florida, New York are top states for traveler spending

California ranked number one overall in terms of total spending by domestic and international travelers, earning more than \$68 billion in expenditures, according to the latest edition of "The Impact of Travel on State Economies," published by the Travel Industry Association (TIA). Florida, at \$54.4 billion, came in second, and New York was third, at \$34.4 billion in overall traveler expenditures. The rankings are based on 2002 data, the most recent year for which statistics were available for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Other top states include, in ranking order: Texas, Illinois, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Georgia, New Jersey and Virginia.

Source: *Travel Advance*

Online travel growth for all

Growth rates for the total travel industry will increase slightly each year, but the online share of that market will continue to rise, according to PhoCusWright's "Online Travel Overview: Market

Size and Forecasts 2004-2006." The research firm predicts that more than one-third of all U.S. travel will be booked online by leisure and unmanaged business travel sites in 2006, up from 15 percent in 2002 and 20 percent in 2003.

Source: *Travel Advance*



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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.

Sign up for Illinois Tourism News (ITN) Online

Beginning in November, ITN will be distributed via e-mail rather than fax. The e-mail newsletter will be conveniently delivered to your in-box each month, and be easier than ever for you to share with other tourism industry partners. There are two easy ways to make sure that you don't miss out: please complete the following form and either **fax to IBOT at (312) 814-6175** or **e-mail Marie Bolling at marie_bolling@commerce.state.il.us**.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to receive news that you should know straight from the Illinois Bureau of Tourism!

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