

ILLINOIS INSITES

August/September 2000

As summer winds down and fall approaches, now is the perfect time for an Illinois adventure. Fabulous destinations around the state await your arrival. To make sure your vacation is memorable, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism has compiled a list of wonderful sites and events to visit this season.

If you have any questions, require further information, or would like slides to accompany your stories, please call the Illinois News Bureau at 312/240-2605 or contact us via e-mail at jennifer_resnik@edelman.com.

Visitors requiring additional information should call Illinois' Travel Information Center at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit the Illinois Tourism Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com.

CHICAGO

Chicago Air & Water Show – August 19-20

- More than two million visitors are expected to attend the 42nd Annual Air and Water Show at the North Avenue Beach this year. Come see all the excitement as the Blue Angels, Navy Seals, U.S. Coast Guard and the Red Barron Steerman Squadron demonstrate their talents in the sky and lake. 312/744-3370

Chicago Jazz Festival – Aug. 31- September 3

- Get into the groove at the 22nd annual Chicago Jazz Festival. All ages are welcome to join in the fun at Grant Park, where this year's featured artists include the legendary Herbie Hancock and Diane Reeves. Make sure to bring the kids because this will be the first year that features a children's area where kids can make their own artistic creations. 312/744-3370

CHICAGOLAND

Lakeshore Arts Festival – August 5-6

- More than 125 juried artists will be at the picturesque shoreline park to display their fine arts and crafts at Dawes Park in Evanston. In addition to fine art in all media, the festival features food, music and fun for the whole family. Highlights each day include a live art auction and live jazz from Kelly Brand Nextet and the Bobby Broom Trio. 847/328-2100

Blueprints for the perfect getaway. Continue your fine-art adventure in nearby Oak Park. This town is known for its amazing architectural structures by Frank Lloyd Wright. In fact, Oak Park has the largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings in the world. Visit Wright's Home and Studio, which served as his workplace for the first 20 years of his career and contains a light-filled octagonal drafting room. To get a better sense of this amazing architect, travel to the Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie School of Architecture Historic District near downtown Oak Park. This area includes 13 Wright-designed buildings. Oak Park also has wonderful shopping in quaint boutiques and antique stores. Spend the afternoon strolling through the downtown area visiting the stores and taking in the assortment of architectural styles. Oak Park and its surrounding areas have many great hotels and B&Bs for a comfortable night's stay. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Festival of the Vine – September 8-10

- Enjoy fall in historic Geneva. This harvest-time festival will provide excitement for all ages at the Faire on the Green fine arts and crafts show, Flavor Fare food tent and wine tastings held at various shops throughout town. Live entertainment will fill the air with musical acts by regionally and nationally known artists. End the day with a horse-drawn carriage ride through town. 630/232-6060

Get a taste of Geneva. Enjoy the beginning of the fall season at the Fabyan Estate and Forest Preserve in Geneva. This 600-acre estate includes a restored villa, a Japanese garden and windmill. The Fox River Trail is the perfect place to observe the fall colors on the 32-mile bike ride on the trail along this scenic river. The Fox River Trail also boasts scenic parks, picnicking areas, playgrounds, restaurants and shops. Complete your weekend in Geneva at the shopping district. There are more than 100 distinctive shops, boutiques, antique stores, café's and bookstores within a 10-block area. Relax at the end of your day at a quaint B&B or hotel. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Monarch Butterfly Festival – September 17

- Lake Katherine Nature Preserve in Palos Heights will hold the "buggiest" event of the year. Come see the spectacular butterflies and enjoy the butterfly tent, butterfly costume parade, face painting, hay rides, scarecrow making and an arts and crafts fair. Bring the whole family to frolic at this colorful event. 708/361-1873

Come fly away. After the Butterfly Festival, explore the rest of Lake Katherine Nature Preserve. The preserve is more than 150 acres, including forests, prairies, an arboretum and a wetland restoration project. Hike the 3.5 miles of trails or relax and take in the beauty of Lake Katherine, Navajo Creek or a nearby waterfall. Later in the day, head to Palos Park where the whole family will enjoy the Center Children's Farm where children will learn what life is really like down on the farm. Continue your nature excursion right outside of Palos Park in Willow Springs. Take in the crisp fall weather on a bike ride or hike on the 11-mile I&M Canal Bicycle Trail. Willowbrook and the surrounding suburbs have overnight accommodations to fit any style or budget. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

NORTHERN

Harvest Fest Barn Raising Festival – August 5-6

- Franklin Grove will be filled with plenty of hard work this weekend. See how early settlers worked together to raise a barn in just two days at this old-fashioned barn raising demonstration. The barn at Chaplin Creek Historic Site was manually taken down last year and will now be reassembled. The barn raising is just part of the excitement going on at Franklin's Grove Summer Harvest Festival. 815/456-2083

Building the ideal getaway. After the festival, head to Dixon and see the Ronald Regan Boyhood Home and Visitors Center. From Dixon travel north to Castle Rock State Park in Oregon. Take in the beauty of the spectacular rock formations with deep ravines and sandstone buttes. Across the river is Lowden State Park where visitors can see the 48-foot-tall monolithic tribute to Native Americans. Spend the night camping at the state parks or enjoy the comforts of the indoors at a nearby hotel or B&B. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Cherry Valley Festival Days – August 25-27

- Baumann Park in Cherry Valley will be in full force this weekend. Be adventurous on one of the carnival rides or show your talent at the pie-eating contest. The activities continue with a treasure hunt, dance lessons, craft show, car show, dog show, bowling, bingo and fireworks after dark. 815/332-4893

Rest and relaxation in Rockford. The adventure continues in Rockford, the “Forest City,” where there are more than 6,000 acres for hiking, bicycling, camping, boating and fishing. Try out one of the eight championship golf courses or shop at a neighborhood antique mall. Head to the Riverfront Museum Park where you can explore the Discovery Center Museum and the Rockford Art Museum. For a taste of heritage, try the Erlander Home Swedish-American Museum in historic Haight Village. Built in 1871, the house is filled with traditional artifacts and Swedish décor. Complete your evening with a trip to the theatre. The Best Western Clock Tower Resort/Dinner Theatre or the Coronado Theatre are two popular places for a night of entertainment. Kick back and relax at one of the hotels, motels and B&Bs in the area. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Kankakee River Valley Regatta & River Festival – September 2-4

- Watch as 200 drivers compete for the National Championship of Boat Racing at speeds of up to 160 mph along the Kankakee River Valley. Racing isn’t all that’s happening though. The River Festival overflows with activities that include arts and crafts, a flea market, cardboard boat races, a bass tournament for kids fishing contest, carnival games, a petting zoo, musical groups on the big stage, skydivers and a huge Saturday night fireworks show. 800/74-RIVER

Sitting on the dock of the bay. Before the weather gets chilly, get in that last fishing trip at the Kankakee River State Park in Bourbonnais. This state park is ideal for anyone who loves the outdoors. Adventure seekers have flocked to this park since 1890 to enjoy hiking, biking horseback riding, canoeing, fishing, hunting and just plain relaxing. Spend the night under the stars at the campground and get ready for Reed’s Canoe Trips the next day. Visitors can paddle down one of the best canoeing rivers in the state, the Kankakee. Kankakee has many accommodations to meet the needs of all travelers. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Rock Falls and Sterling Mexican Fiesta Days – September 15-17

- Ole! Celebrate Mexican heritage. Take part in folk dancing or the soccer tournament. Make sure to catch the parade on Saturday, which will feature an array of cultural entertainment including Mexican dancing and music. Get ready for burritos, tacos and an assortment of tasty Mexican creations as street vendors sell traditional Mexican food. 815/622-0536

Living La Vida Loca. When the fiesta ends, head northwest to Fulton, located on the Mississippi River. Take a step back in time at the Heritage Canyon where you'll explore an authentic re-creation of Dutch Heritage. The 12-acre wooded area is complete with a swinging bridge leading to log cabins, an 1860s-style home, church, schoolhouse, blacksmith's shop and doctor's office. Next, get warmed up and ride, hike or jog along the 11-mile paved, Great River Bike Trail from Albany to Fulton. Enjoy this scenic route and observe the beginnings of the fall season. Rest up at Fulton's nearby motels or campgrounds. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

CENTRAL

National Hot Air Balloon Championships – August 4-13

- Heads up! The National Hot Air Balloon Championships will fly over Rantoul this August. In addition to balloon races, there will be live music, air shows, motorcycle shows, a go cart track and a carnival complete with a kid's interactive aviation station. 217/893-9955

Up, up and away. Rantoul is filled with numerous aviation activities. The Octave Chanute Aerospace Museum, formerly Chanute Air Force Base, was the third-oldest active military base in the United States when it closed in 1993. The museum has more than 30 aircrafts and missiles on display, including the world's only remaining XB-47. Visitors can also view the inside of a B-52 cockpit and test flight simulators. The Children's Discovery Room is complete with hands-on activities to help children and adults learn more about aviation. For a change of pace, head over to Hardy's Reindeer Ranch to see how Santa's helpers spend their summer vacation. Be sure to stop in for a real chuck wagon barbeque lunch, solve the "cornfusion" maze and mine for gold in the Gold Mine Sand Pit. Rantoul has numerous accommodations to fit any budget. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Illinois State Fair – August 11-20

- The toughest decision that you'll have to make in Springfield is where to start! Visitors from all around look forward to this 10-day celebration. This year's jam-packed lineup of events and activities is enough to keep anyone interested. Sample the best Illinois has to offer at the Taste of Illinois, experience the atmosphere of places like Hollywood, Key West, the Wild West and the Ethnic Village. The live entertainment shouldn't be missed either. The stellar lineup includes Christina Aguilera, REO Speedwagon, the Neville Brothers, Brooks & Dunn with Andy Griggs, and The Beach Boys with Johnny Rivers just to name a few. All this, plus rides and countless other activities make the Fair a great time for everyone! 217/782-6661

Cruise for Charity – September 8-9

- Springfield will be gridlocked with activities this weekend, all to benefit a great cause. More than 2,000 cars will be on display making this the largest street cruise in Central Illinois. The cruise, which benefits the Make-A-Wish Foundation, also features “kiddie kar” drag racing, a flame throwing pit, a muffler rapping contest, family entertainment, dancing, a raffle for a 1978 Corvette and even more surprises. The evening wraps up with a car cruise through the town’s convention center. 217/629-7077

The heart of it all. Springfield is truly an exciting place with something for everyone. Visit the home of Abraham Lincoln and see a glimpse of what life was like for our 16th President. The Illinois State Museum is a great place to learn about cultural history with a new state-of-the-art interactive computer exhibit and a hands-on learning center. History isn’t the only thing to learn about in Springfield. The Henson Robinson Zoo features 14-acres of wildlife adventure with nearly 300 animals, many of which are endangered species. Exhibits include a building for night-active animals, a tropical birdhouse, a barnyard petting area and more. Springfield has numerous hotels and motels that can accommodate any budget. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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The Great Pumpkin Patch – September 15 - October 31

- Boo! Halloween is just around the corner and Condill Farm near Arthur will transform into a mini Halloween theme park. Come see Wanda the Witch, the vampire and other Halloween excitement. Get ready to make jack-o-lanterns and pick your own pumpkins or squash from the patch. 217/543-2242

Country-time memories. See a different side of life by visiting the Amish community in Arthur and nearby Arcola. Start at the Illinois Amish Interpretive Center to learn more about Amish traditions and history. Then, at Rockome Gardens you can experience the Amish way of life first-hand by visiting an Amish home, taking a buggy ride, or having an authentic Amish meal. Finish the day by strolling through the 15 acres of flower and rock gardens. Next, take different turn and head to the outlet mall in Tuscola, a great place with more than 60 stores. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

WESTERN

Threshers Craft Show & Flea Market – August 4-6

- This weekend in Macomb, nearly 80 vendors, including a quilting and rug weaving demonstration will be on-hand. When you're done shopping, you can experience the life of an early settler. See how common household chores like sawing logs, churning butter and grinding corn were done. Then take a walk up past the old schoolhouse and see what the blacksmith is creating. Be sure to check out the antique tractor pull, kids pedal tractor pull and a variety of other tractor games. 217/847-2690

History comes to life in Macomb. If you're still curious about early settler life, the Western Museum in nearby Macomb will be sure to answer any remaining questions. Observe Native American dress, trapper paraphernalia and Civil War items. If you want to go even farther back in history, you can examine a dinosaur nest and eggs on display at Western Illinois University's Geology Museum. Macomb is also home to the Super Bowl Champions St. Louis Rams training camp. Here you can watch the two daily practice sessions and get autographs from your favorite NFL stars. Macomb has numerous accommodations for any budget. To plan your Illinois weekend getaway, call 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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World Free Fall Convention – August 4-12

- Watch more than 60,000 skydives in 10 days at the Quincy Airport. Jumps can be made at up to 23,000 feet allowing for two minutes of free-fall. Don't worry, you too can participate in a tandem jump! Divers on a more professional level will be judged on accuracy and group formations. In addition, get ready for a party schedule filled with great bands every night. 217/222-5867

Stars and Stripes. For American history buffs of all eras, Quincy is a great place to be. The All Wars Museum is located on the grounds of one of the nation's largest and oldest veterans' homes, and its exhibits span from the American Revolution to Desert Storm. The home of Dr. Richard Eells, a leading abolitionist, was an Underground Railroad site and tours of the passage are still given. Quinsippi island on the Mississippi River features a harbor, beach and cabins, all of which re-create Civil War scenes. Quincy has numerous hotels and motels to accommodate any budget. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Stearman Fly-In Days – September 4-10

- This annual event in Galesburg hosts the largest gathering of Stearman airplanes in the world. The event will include commercial exhibits, mini air show, flour bombing, precision aerobatics, wing walkers and aviation antics. 309/343-2485

Galesburg: Birthplace of a poet. In Galesburg, stop at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site and observe his birthplace. This cottage still has many family belongings and allows you to better understand the Sandburg family and their times. From there, visit a different part of history at the Galesburg Railroad Museum where you can experience railroading in the 1900s. The incredible collection of memorabilia includes a Pullman parlor car, a steam engine, postal and express agency car and caboose. After the museum, head over to the Seminary Street Historic Commercial District that boasts numerous restaurants, distinctive specialty shops, a historic antique mall and a winery. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Jordbruksdagarna (Agricultural Days) – September 23-24

- Come catch a glimpse of life in the 19th century. Historic Bishop Hill’s Agricultural Days features a traditional crop processing demonstrations, music, children’s games and their famous Colony Stew for a real taste of centuries past. To this day, the community of Bishop Hill is rich with Swedish heritage and traditions. 309/927-3345

Scenic escapes of Western Illinois. Johnson Sauk Trail State Park in Kewanee is just a short drive east from Bishop Hill. Marvel at the beauty of fall on the nearly 15 miles of scenic trails of various lengths for hikers of all ability. At its center, the park features a 58-acre lake that offers fishing and boating and two miles of shoreline to explore. If the lake is too crowded, try dropping your line at the 3-acre pond near the round barn, one of the park’s most unique features. When hunger strikes, you won’t have to look hard for a place to eat. The park features 10 picnic areas compete with tables and cooking stoves. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

SOUTHERN

Southern Illinois Sweet Corn and Watermelon Festival – August 14-19

- Visit Mt. Vernon this weekend and sample free sweet corn and watermelon on Saturday afternoon. The rest of the festival is filled with “sweet” activities. Get down to the music at the teen dance, veterans concert and jazz festival. Then get down and dirty at the dirt bike hill climb, go-cart races and stock car races. The festival would not be complete without the annual parade downtown on the square on Saturday. 618/242-3151

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A festival of heritage in Mt. Vernon. Continue the weekend in Mt. Vernon starting at the Jefferson County Historical Village. The village features an 1820s log jailhouse, the 1873 log Mount Olive Church, a blacksmith's shop, a general store featuring antique tools and a 1920s one-room schoolhouse. Art fanatics will enjoy the Mitchell Museum at Cederhurst, one of the finest art museums in the entire region. The museum also features a children's art gallery, sculpture park, nature trail and Braille trail. Your day would not be complete without a visit to the Jent Factory Outlets. In addition to great deals on clothing, the mall features the largest golf specialty store in the tri-state area. Overnight accommodations are not a problem. In fact, Mt. Vernon has the largest hospitality complex in Southern Illinois with more than 1,100 hotel and motel rooms and more than 60 restaurants. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Popeye Picnic – September 8-10

- Celebrate Popeye the sailor man at his "birthplace" in Chester. The annual picnic and carnival features a parade, antique car show, craft show and flea market. Eat some spinach and get ready for dancing and a fireworks display. The Popeye Museum will also be open for visitation. 618/826-2326

Adventure in the river cities. After the Popeye Picnic, head further south to Carbondale and Alto Pass. Carbondale is filled with rolling hills and sandstone bluffs. Take in the miles of beautiful lakes, and don't miss the Shawnee National Forest. Spend the afternoon at the West Walnut Street Historic District of historic homes, which include Victorian, Queen Anne and Italianate architectural styles. Continue in to Alto Pass, a town known for its great wine. Visit Alto Vineyards for a tour of the facility and of course a chance to taste the wonderful creations. There are numerous hotels, motels and campgrounds in the area for a good night's rest. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Days of Our Lives Fest – September 15-17

- If you constantly follow the lives of Bo, Hope, Marlena and Stephano, you'll definitely want to be at Days of Our Lives Fest. At this festival, just north of Mt. Vernon in Salem, which shares its name with the soap opera's fictional town, you can meet and greet actors from the award-winning program. In addition, there will be an auction of autographed show items, a trivia contest and NBC souvenirs. 618/548-0878

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Like sand through an hourglass... If you need to relax after all the excitement, Shawnee National Forest is one of the most beautiful places in Illinois. Fall is one of the recommended seasons to hike or backpack through any of the 135 miles of trails. Observe the breathtaking view from the Garden of the Gods, Stone Face or the Little Grand Canyon. You can go boating, canoeing or fishing on one of many lakes, ponds, creeks or streams that covers 2,700 acres and are home to 109 species of fish. Shawnee National Forest offers 13 developed campgrounds with an incredible view from all of them. To plan your weekend getaway, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

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The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA)/Bureau of Tourism, works to promote Illinois as a travel destination, thereby enhancing the state's economic development climate and improving the quality of life for the citizens of Illinois.

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