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THIS FALL, ILLINOIS IS ABLAZE WITH FIERY COLORS AND BUSHEL OF FAMILY FUN

Chicago – As the warm summer breezes turn cooler and autumn settles in, Illinois' landscape comes alive with the vibrant shades of fall. Hues of crimson and amber stretch for miles along countless highways, creating the perfect backdrop for the fairs and festivals which line town streets from late September to early November. Hikes, river cruises, balloon rides and scenic drives offer a wide range of opportunities to capture the brilliance of fall in Illinois.

Changing Colors Along the Hills of Northern Illinois

Dramatic fall colors highlight the beauty of Northern Illinois' rugged hillside communities. **Galena's Annual Country Fair** kicks-off the fall season on October 7-8 with more than 100 artists displaying their work, live entertainment and a variety of food. In Elizabeth, just a short drive from Galena, **Arnold's Pumpkin Patch** hosts its **Farm Festival**, a rustic outdoor festival every weekend in October. Located in the heart of Jo Daviess County, Arnold's features a pumpkin patch, petting zoo, hayrides, giant corn and hay bale maze, pony rides, kid's carnival, live music, food and crafts.

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While in the car, travel past the legendary Johnny Appleseed trees lining the highways of Stephenson County. Driving along Highway 20, explore several roadside stands and antique shops against a background of stunning vistas, rustic barns, peaceful valleys and white-steepled churches.

Rockford, Illinois' "Forest City" offers a spectacular array of fall colors in the more than 160 area parks. The **Klehm Arboretum & Botanical Center** offers guided tours of 150 acres where hikers can see rare and unusual trees, shrubs and flowers. On October 14-15, visitors can celebrate **Autumn at the Arboretum** with music, food, wagon rides and other children's activities. To see the landscape from a different view, take a riverboat cruise along the I&M Canal or stroll through the gardens and lagoon on the path adjacent to the Rock River at the Sinnissippi Gardens.

Northern Illinois is the ideal location for travelers to find that perfect pumpkin. **The Great Pumpkin Patch** in Lyndon, **Selmi's Pumpkin World & Fall Festival** in Rock Falls, **Fiorello's Pumpkin Patch Fall Festival** in Caledonia, and **Vana's Pumpkin Land** in Kankakee all open in October and invite visitors to explore their pumpkin patches, haunted houses, hay rides, mazes, fresh cider, seasonal crafts and of course, thousands of pumpkins.

Scenic Drives and River Cruises Wind Through Western Illinois

Whether driving along one of the scenic highways throughout the state, exploring the Great River Road or drifting down the Mississippi River, Western Illinois offers some

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of the best settings to view awesome fall colors.

The Spoon River Valley Scenic Drive and the **Knox County Scenic Drive** in Fulton County features more than 200 miles of Western Illinois' best scenery and various Midwest fall festivals.

The 18 villages in Fulton County enthusiastically celebrate the arrival of fair-goers on October 7-8 and 14-15. Visitors can watch as a Civil War reenactment unfolds on the banks of the Spoon River in London Mills or stop for a famous chicken and noodle dinner and homemade ice cream at the Red Brick School in Smithfield. The county is also home to numerous flea markets and fairs where bargain hunters can find a variety of antiques and collectibles. In nearby Monmouth, travelers can compete in the corn-husking contest October 7-8. Throughout the weekend, view antique farm, antiques, a corn maze, and unique corn collectibles.

Starting in Galesburg, **Knox County Drive** visitors can venture off the path to discover some of the area's most celebrated attractions. October 7-8 and 14-15, relive days gone by through demonstrations on butter making and woodcarving. The Knox County Fairgrounds in Dahinda, the newest addition to the Drive, offers visitors a chance to see how our ancestors lived at the pioneer life display, enjoy Native American and old time entertainment, numerous crafts, antiques, collectibles and delicious local specialties.

Motorists can also explore Western Illinois along the **Pike County Fall Color Drive** from October 21-22. This year, Pike County will feature its woodcarvers throughout the 12 participating towns. Travelers can indulge in the seasonal activities by solving one or all three corn mazes, go apple picking, attend the quilting show and hunt

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for arts and crafts while admiring the brilliant colors of fall.

Western Illinois is breathtaking from close up or at a distance. **The Great River Road** spans 550 miles along the Mississippi River and offers astounding views of the countryside from East Dubuque to Cairo. Visitors can step back and view the panorama on board the Celebration Belle paddle-wheel riverboat or the Channel Cat Water Taxi out of the Quad Cities. Throughout fall, Celebration River Cruises hosts four-hour or day-long Fall Foliage Cruise out of Moline on several weekends.

The Spirit of Peoria Riverboat also offers an amazing panoramic view of Peoria and the surrounding communities. Throughout the season, storytellers, songs, crafts and food from the region will be on board to complete the experience. In nearby Brimfield, the Jubilee College State Historic Site is celebrating its **20th Autumn Harvestfest** from September 9-10. Visitors can step back in time to see early 19th century reenactments including a mock court martial and theater, participate in new hands-on activities for all ages and find hidden trinkets in the treasure hunt.

A Harvest of Festivals and Colors in Central Illinois

In the richly forested hillsides of Central Illinois, visitors can find an array of festivals that celebrate the season's most time-honored traditions. Morton, "The Pumpkin Capital of the World" hosts their **Annual Pumpkin Festival** from September 13-16. Visitors can see the giant festival parade, carnival rides, foot races, crafts and soap box derby. Unique pumpkin creations like pancakes, ice cream and fudge are always available to sample.

Shelbyville Scarecrow Daze kicks off the town's Fall Color Tour, bringing the

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season's best activities together from October 6-8. Visitors can enjoy straw mazes, a scavenger hunt and other entertainment as well as unique Shelbyville attractions including a coal mine museum, surrey rides and the Thompson Mill Covered Bridge.

Lincoln's New Salem provides the perfect backdrop for **Harvest Feast** where visitors can try corn-shucking and learn how to make apple butter from November 4-5. A 19th century militia will be on hand to demonstrate weaponry of their time along with a complete reenactment. In nearby Springfield on September 7-8, the transformation to fall colors sets the scene for the **Indian Summer Festival** at Lincoln Memorial Garden. Here visitors can enjoy food, seasonal crafts and entertainment.

A Host of Fiery Colors in Southern Illinois

From the Alton area down the Mississippi River, the Southwestern Illinois countryside is set ablaze with the dazzling colors of fall. Every weekend in October Grafton's **Octoberfest at the Piasa Winery** gives visitors the chance to sip domestic and imported wine while overlooking the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. One of the highlights of the season is the **Rendezvous on the River** from October 21-22. Visitors will be entertained with a pre-1840's French and Indian encampment along with period crafts and food. Also in Grafton, travelers can board a trolley for a panoramic view of the fall landscape along the bluffs of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway from mid-September through the end of November. For nature lovers, at Mark Twain's Refuge Area, visitors can experience the migration of white pelicans as they gather here from late September to early October.

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Celebrate the **Fall Equinox** September 24 at the Cahokia Mounds World Heritage Site in Collinsville. Here visitors can learn how the ancient culture used sun calendars to determine the changing of seasons. Also onsite, Native American Kahok dancers interpret the past with colorful performances.

Every autumn the communities throughout Union County come together to celebrate the spirit of the season. On October 14-15, visitors are invited to join in the **Harvest Fest Pumpkin Town USA** at Choate Center with tours of historic homes, farms and wineries.

Bluff Road's breathtaking views of changing leaves set against limestone cliffs makes this one of Southwestern Illinois' most beautiful drive. Travelers can join the celebration on October 8 at **Maestown's Oktoberfest**, featuring 70 crafters and authentic German food including turtle soup, bratwurst and homemade apple butter, all cooked in outdoor kettles. Continuing through Southwestern Illinois, visitors can view the colorful landscape at the **French Settlement of Prairie Du Rocher**, a former outpost of the French Government.

Eckert's Farm in Millstadt is a local favorite for the season. By offering activities like pumpkin picking, scarecrow making, a petting corral and a 70-foot underground mine shaft, **Eckert's Appl-icious Fun Fest** is fun for the whole family. From September 30-October 1, visitors can find country food shops providing local specialties like BBQ dishes, roasted corn, apple desserts and funnel cakes.

The Ohio River Scenic Byway winds from New Haven south along the Ohio

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River before it reaches the Mississippi at Cairo. Along this route, travelers can see some of the most awe-inspiring views in Southern Illinois at Cave-In Rock State Park, Garden of the Gods and Fort Defiance State Park.

Enveloping the southernmost region of Illinois, **Shawnee National Forest** covers more than a quarter-of-a-million acres of majestic landscape that reaches its fiery peak in mid-October. Ranging from the Mississippi to the Ohio River, nature lovers have their choice of countless stunning locations for camping, hiking or rock climbing.

Visitors to Fort Massac State Park near Metropolis should prepare for battle at the 18th century mock military battle during the **Fort Massac's Annual Encampment** from October 21-22. Participants in period costumes engage in battle, perform a weapons salute and post colors to the beat of an authentic drum corps. Visitors can catch a glimpse into the life of 18th century craftpersons, merchants and blanket traders while sampling food from the era.

Fall Blows into the Windy City

Fall lends a splash of seasonal color to Illinois' "Emerald City." The 29 miles of lakefront parks and tree-lined neighborhoods along Chicago's famous skyline become a rainbow of fall hues as the sun sets on summer.

The **St. Charles Scarecrow Festival** on October 13-15 provides families with musical entertainment, more than 200 arts and crafts vendors, carnival rides and free children's activities. Fair-goers will have a chance for to build their own scarecrow as well as vote on their favorite. The scarecrows, built by local residents and businesses,

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will compete for a total of \$2,000 in prize money in five categories.

The **Wood Dale Harvest Festival** on September 10 celebrates the season in a turn-of-the-century fashion. Visitors can meet Abraham Lincoln, enter the log rolling contest and learn how to spin wool. **Glenwood's Autumn Days** lets visitors roll up their sleeves for a feast of ribs plus other delicious treats along with family entertainment and crafts on September 16. On September 7-9, **Oktoberfest in Lions Park** celebrates German heritage complete with bratwurst, sauerkraut, carnival rides and other authentic refreshments.

Historic Long Grove harvests their flavors of fall September 29-October 1 at their annual **Apple Festival**. After a scenic carriage ride through Long Grove, visitors can sample almost every kind of apple recipe including pies, ice cream, drinks, salsas and jams. Just north of Long Grove, Wauconda Orchards gives visitors a chance to go home with their own bushel of apples as well as sample cider, take a hayride and solve the corn maze.

To Plan Your Fall Colors Getaway

Every region of Illinois is overflowing with color and seasonal celebrations. With an array of attractions, campgrounds and Bed & Breakfasts in these communities, Illinois promises memorable autumn getaways for everyone. For detailed information on these and hundreds of other events, attractions, accommodations and routes throughout Illinois, call an Illinois travel counselor at 1-800-2CONNECT (TTY: 1-800-406-6418) or visit the Illinois Web site at www.enjoyillinois.com.

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Captions for the Enclosed Slides

Pumpkin Festival – Sycamore, IL

Celebrate the colors of fall with family fun at the Pumpkin Festival in Sycamore.

St. Charles Scarecrow Festival – St. Charles, IL

Enjoy seeing the hundreds of scarecrows that helped to make the Scarecrow Festival one of the Top 100 Events in North American for 2000.

Illinois Roadside – Aurora, IL

Aurora's landscape comes alive with the colors of fall.

Illinois Landscape – Middle Fork River, IL

Middle Fork River, located in Kickapoo State Park's Middle Fork State Wildlife area, winds through a mixture of forests and prairies making it the perfect place to see vibrant fall colors.