

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Amy Patti  
Edelman Public Relations  
312-240-3382

**Illinois Unveils Its Newest Motorcoach Tour Products For 2001**  
*New Tours, New Attractions, New Exhibits Across the State*

**Chicago** (January 4, 2001) – The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Bureau of Tourism and Team Illinois are introducing a host of new motorcoach tour products, attractions and exhibits throughout the state for 2001.

The new activities are sure to interest the more than 500,000 motorcoach travelers who visit the state each year. Whether it's exploring the life of Lincoln in Central Illinois, discovering African-American heritage in suburban Chicago, taking in dramatic art exhibits or eating lunch "on Mars," every corner of the state is starting the new year with a wealth of new activities.

**New Motorcoach Tours**

- The new **Looking for Lincoln** tour highlights Abraham Lincoln's life and the legend he left throughout Central Illinois. Spanning six counties and 11 communities, the tour offers a comprehensive look at Lincoln's life in Illinois before he took his place in national history. Groups start in Springfield where they see his law offices, family home and final resting-place. New Salem, Charleston, Lerna, Bloomington, Athens, Lincoln and Vandalia all house Lincoln artifacts that recount the personal and professional story of this great man. On the final leg of the tour, the towns of Mt. Pulaski, Beardstown and Decatur boast the few remaining courthouses where Lincoln practiced law, many of which are also included on the National Register of Historic Places. For more information, contact the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau at (800) 545-7300 or at [www.visit-springfieldillinois.com](http://www.visit-springfieldillinois.com) for more information on the *Looking for Lincoln* tour.
- Just outside Chicago in Aurora, the **HARAMBEE!** African-American heritage tour highlights local venues that pay tribute to African American culture. Attractions included on the tour are the Michael Jordan Golf Center, Walter Payton's Roundhouse Complex, the African-American Heritage Museum and the Eastern Art Arcade. At Michael Jordan's, visitors can practice their drive, short game or just play the miniature golf course. Walter Payton's Roundhouse features a museum dedicated to the legendary Chicago Bears' running back, indoor/outdoor fireplaces and room for the whole group to indulge in a tantalizing feast at the American Brewpub. The African-American Heritage Museum, one of the tour's most unique stops, features an outdoor sculpture garden highlighting local artist Charles Smith's work. One of the nation's largest importers of African art and masks, the Eastern Art Arcade offers a special group discount on store items such as masks, jewelry and clothing. For more information, on the HARAMBEE!

tour, contact the Aurora Area Convention and Tourism Council at (800) 477-4369 or [www.enjoyaurora.com](http://www.enjoyaurora.com).

### New Exhibits

- The Chicago Historical Society features the new exhibit, *Building Images: 70 Years of Hedrich Blessing Photography*, that chronicles architectural trends of the twentieth century in more than 400 of his photographs. For more information on this or any of the Chicago Historical Society exhibits, contact (312) 642-4600 or [www.chicagohs.org/chshome.html](http://www.chicagohs.org/chshome.html).
- Just down the street at the Museum of Contemporary Art is *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994*. Representing one of the continent's most politically charged times, this display features sculptures and photographs from every region of Africa. For more information, contact the Chicago Office of Tourism at (312) 744-2400 or [www.ci.chi.il.us/Tourism](http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Tourism).
- Visitors to **DisneyQuest** can go marauding at its newest attraction, "Pirates of the Caribbean: Battle for Buccaneer Gold." Inspired by the popular theme park attraction, this brand-new adventure allows groups to experience a realistic pirate voyage using cutting-edge sight, sound and motion technologies. For more information, contact DisneyQuest at (312) 755-8720 or [www.disney.go.com/disneyquest/chicago/home.html](http://www.disney.go.com/disneyquest/chicago/home.html).
- The **SciTech Interactive Science Center** in Aurora recently introduced its *Outdoor Science Park*. The park houses interactive science exhibits including a marble xylophone, a bicycle on a tightrope and the Giant Lever. For more information, contact the Aurora Area Convention & Tourism Council at (800) 477-4369 or [www.enjoyaurora.com](http://www.enjoyaurora.com).
- In Glencoe, the Chicago Botanic Garden features *WinterGreen Festival* through March 2001. A new event, this festival celebrates the beauty of winter with demonstrations, gardening classes and art exhibits. To showcase its numerous exhibits year-round, the Chicago Botanic Garden offers a variety of tour packages for the motorcoach industry. For more information, contact the Chicago Botanic Garden at (847) 266-5416 or at [www.chicago-botanic.org](http://www.chicago-botanic.org).
- Groups can head west of Chicago to Sterling to visit the **New River Model Railroad Museum**. This brand-new museum features Chesapeake & Ohio railroad cars precisely to scale and running diesel and steam locomotives on a double main line. The museum can accommodate 25 visitors at a time and provides horseshoes, hiking trails and snack machines for those participants waiting to take a tour. For more information, contact the Blackhawk Waterways Convention and Visitors Bureau at (815) 964-0128 or [www.blackhawkwaterwayscvb.org](http://www.blackhawkwaterwayscvb.org).

### New Attractions

- Just outside of Chicago in suburban Schaumburg, travelers can peer into the next millenium at the **Mars 2112 Café**. Located in the Woodfield Shopping Center, the nation's fifth largest shopping center, this unique café provides intergalactic dining in the red planet's atmosphere. Groups begin their journey with a virtual trip to Mars, are entertained with a stellar laser show and end their journey in the two-level, state-of-the-art

game room. For more information, contact the Greater Woodfield Convention and Visitors Bureau at (847) 490-1010 or [www.chicagonorthwest.com](http://www.chicagonorthwest.com).

- West of Chicago in the Quad Cities, the John Deere Foundation is creating a **John Deere Collectors Center** in Moline. Scheduled to open in early summer 2001, the Center will operate as a 1950s John Deere dealership where groups can ‘make a deal’ on a tractor and watch in-progress restorations of vintage equipment, view memorabilia and take part in interactive exhibits. For John Deere enthusiasts, the “Poppin’ Johnny” diner, Internet services equipped with online auctions and sales of antique parts will also be available for visitors. For more information, contact the Collectors Center at (800) 240-5265 or [www.johndeerecollectorsctr.com](http://www.johndeerecollectorsctr.com).
- In July 2001, be prepared to watch the top golf pros at the annual **John Deere Classic** as they take to the Tournament Players Course at Deere Run in Silvis. For more information about the John Deere Classic, contact the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau at (800) 747-7800 or [www.quadcities.com/cvb](http://www.quadcities.com/cvb).

### **Group Savings in the Windy City**

- An exclusive feature for the motorcoach industry, the **Ultimate Shopping Card** offers savings at some of Chicago’s premier shops and attractions. Available for use at Water Tower Place and 900 North Michigan Avenue Shops, travelers can save on purchases at stores such as Bloomingdale’s, Marshall Field’s and Lord & Taylor in addition to popular specialty stores. The card also gives travelers discounts at popular attractions including the Hancock Observatory, Sears Tower Skydeck and the Museum of Contemporary Art. For more information, contact Ultimate Shopping Excursions at (312) 915-3903 or [www.ultimateshoppingexcursions.com](http://www.ultimateshoppingexcursions.com).

Team Illinois, the motorcoach tour marketing organization for the state of Illinois, works to develop partnerships and encourage group travel to the state. For more information on Illinois group tour attractions, contact Team Illinois at (800) 524-0790 or visit the “Group Tours” section of the Illinois Web site, [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com).

###

*The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA), Bureau of Tourism works to enhance the economic development climate for the citizens of Illinois.*