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Contact: Rebecca Olchawa
Edelman Public Relations
312/729-1710

Wonderful Winter Weekends in *Illinois NOW!*
New free seasonal magazine reveals post-holiday travel ideas statewide

CHICAGO (December 27, 2001) – From eagle watching to snow sculpting competitions, there are many winter travel experiences to take advantage of in *Illinois NOW!* Currently available, the winter issue of *Illinois NOW!* features hundreds of ideas for traveling in Illinois during January and February and includes a chance for readers to win a luxurious weekend for two at the Four Seasons Hotel Chicago. To obtain a free copy of *Illinois NOW!*, call 800-2CONNECT or visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

The 40-page magazine includes a winter calendar of fairs and festivals and several travel features. Among the feature stories are “Comfort Zones,” with recommendations for romantic weekend getaways including special deals and packages; “Hot Tickets,” a guide to discovering Chicago theater, music, museums and more; “Sweet Dreams,” a visit to Illinois’ sugar-coated candy factories and “Eagle Eyes,” a bird’s-eye view of where to find majestic bald eagles. Illinois is home to the largest United States’ population of wintering bald eagles outside of Alaska and offers several locations to view them in the wild.

“From eagles soaring above state parks to Chicago’s lively cultural scene, *Illinois NOW!* will inspire you to explore our state this season,” said Pam McDonough, director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs.

Illinois NOW! also includes a chance for readers to win a Chicago weekend getaway for two at the Four Seasons Hotel. This grand prize includes deluxe accommodations; dinner at Seasons, the hotel’s award-winning restaurant; and a \$500 shopping spree to the 900 North Michigan Shops, featuring Bloomingdale’s and more than 70 other fine stores. The second-place prize is a hand-held GPS atlas valued at \$400, and *Illinois NOW!* single-use cameras will be awarded to 300 third-place prize winners. To enter, readers must complete and mail in the survey in the winter issue.

Illinois NOW!'s user-friendly format includes contact numbers and Web addresses for featured activities, events and destinations. Its contents are color-coded by region (Chicago and Chicagoland, Northern, Central, Western, Southern and Southwestern), making it easy for readers to navigate the pages and ultimately, the state. Every issue offers several regular features including:

- Navigator – A guide to unique and not-to-be-missed opportunities for culture and fun. The winter issue features Chicago's Winter Delights, Chinese New Year, Rockford's annual Snow Sculpting Competition and Illinois' art galleries and artisan shops.
- Events – A list of seasonal happenings by region with special sidebars highlighting lights displays, walking tours and celebrations in honor of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Winter events include Antioch's Ice Fishing and Winter Festival, Southwest Arts & Crafts Show in Wheaton, Groundhog Days in Woodstock, World's Toughest Rodeo in Rockford, Midwest Elvis Presley Impersonators Competition in Springfield, Bald Eagle Days in Rock Island, The Galesburg Historical Society Chocolate Festival, Midwestern Herb Show in Mt. Vernon, Fete du Bon Vieux Temps (Festival of the Good Old Days) in Cahokia and much more.
- Illinois Icon – An amusing look at a special place or attraction found only in Illinois. For good luck in the new year, you'll want to get your hands on this Illinois Icon ... literally!

To obtain a free copy of *Illinois NOW!* or for more information on the best places to visit in Illinois this winter, consumers can call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 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 the state.

Spring and Summer issues of *Illinois NOW!* will be available beginning in February and May, respectively. *Illinois NOW!* is published by Redwood Custom Communications for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Bureau of Tourism.

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*The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA),
Bureau of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant
economic and quality of life benefits for Illinois residents.*