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Play, Discover, Explore and Indulge in *Illinois NOW!*
New, free magazine divulges travel secrets and Illinois' treasures

CHICAGO (September 5, 2001) – Now is the best time to grab the premier issue of *Illinois NOW!*, a new seasonal magazine devoted to travel throughout Illinois. Featuring timely information about the most enjoyable and intriguing things to do and see, *Illinois NOW!* offers hundreds of travel ideas both on- and off-the-beaten-path. Each issue is free and offers a sweepstakes with travel-related giveaways.

“To help people plan their Illinois getaways with ease, *Illinois NOW!* provides tips, trips and treasures that encourage travelers to explore everything Illinois has to offer,” said Pam McDonough, director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA).

Produced by DCCA’s Bureau of Tourism, *Illinois NOW!* replaces two existing publications, the Fairs & Festivals Guide and the Weekend Adventure Guide.

The 44-page debut issue highlights travel opportunities during September through November, a time of spectacular colors and innumerable fairs and festivals. Featured stories include “Fall for It,” exploring six diverse scenic drives; “Grape Escapes,” showcasing the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail; “A Fan’s Paradise,” featuring great Chicago sports weekends; and “Find a Cornfield & Get Lost,” offering a guide to a new fall experience -- corn mazes.

Also featured is the *Illinois NOW! Fall Getaway Sweepstakes*, giving readers the chance to win a deluxe weekend for two at the new Le Meridien Hotel in Chicago. This grand prize includes two nights in a city-view room, dinner at Cerise and a \$500 gift certificate to The Shops at North Bridge. The second-place prize is a three-piece luggage set valued at \$500, and *Illinois NOW!* disposable cameras will be awarded to 500 third-place prize winners. To enter, readers must complete and mail the entry form.

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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 events, such as Byron's annual Turkey Testicle Festival and Northwest Illinois' Trail of Terror.
- Events – A list of seasonal happenings by region with special sidebars highlighting select categories including music, family, arts and more.
- Illinois Icon – An amusing look at a special place or attraction found only in Illinois.

Illinois NOW! is published by Redwood Custom Communications on behalf of DCCA's Bureau of Tourism with Editor-in-Chief Matthew Church and Editor Margaret Doyle overseeing the magazine. Church, former launch editor of *Browser* and *Active* magazines, joined *Illinois NOW!* as launch editor after 15 years of magazine editing and writing experience. Among his many credits are editor-in-chief of *enRoute* magazine and *London* magazine. Doyle, a Chicago native, joined *Illinois NOW!* in May 2001 after 12 years as editor of *WHERE Chicago*, an entertainment magazine for travelers. She oversees a staff of freelance writers and photographers, most of whom live or have lived in Illinois and have first-hand experience traveling the state.

To obtain a free copy of *Illinois NOW!*, 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 across the state.

Winter, Spring and Summer issues of *Illinois NOW!* will be available beginning in November, February and May, respectively.

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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.