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Illinois Hosts TEAMS 2002

World's Leading Sports Conference and Exposition to be Held in Chicago this Month

CHICAGO, October 15, 2002 – The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Bureau of Tourism and Sports Illinois welcomes TEAMS 2002 (Travel, Events and Management in Sports) to Chicago. Now in its sixth year, TEAMS 2002 will be held October 26-29, 2002, at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place. The Conference, a two-and-a-half day sports educational program, is the largest gathering of sports event organizers in the world.

More than 750 of the nation's leading sports marketing professionals are expected to attend this year's conference. Sports Illinois, a collaborative organization comprised of convention visitor bureaus (CVBs) and sports commissions from around the state, will have the opportunity to showcase the 1,200-plus Illinois athletic facilities, numerous tournaments and statewide attractions to key influencers in the sports industry. An Illinois aisle in the exposition area will include 18 interactive booths providing information and promotional giveaways to attendees. Tourism industry representatives will also be on-hand to promote Illinois as a premier sports destination.

"The State of Illinois is delighted to welcome the TEAMS 2002 Conference & Expo to Chicago, and we are honored to host a conference of this caliber," said DCCA Director Pam McDonough. "Our unified goal under the umbrella of Sports Illinois is to continue to promote Illinois as one of the nation's top sports destinations while increasing tourism, creating a significant economic impact and enhancing opportunities for all in sports."

State Travel Director Cathy Ritter will be addressing conference attendees the morning of October 28 at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place, and will be speaking on "Sports in the Land of Lincoln" and the importance of sports to Illinois' tourism industry.

To encourage sports tourism and attract sporting events, the State of Illinois has launched a new Web site, www.sportsillinois.com. The site provides sport event organizers with the ability to research, plan and schedule sporting events. This one-stop for information includes venue descriptions, location details, floor plans, photographs and contact information. In addition, event planners may also submit requests for proposals (RFPs) directly to Illinois CVB professionals via www.sportsillinois.com making it even easier to find the perfect Illinois venue.

"We selected Chicago as the host city for TEAMS 2002 based on the Illinois Bureau of Tourism's dedication to sports travel and overall commitment to providing top of the line athletic venues and attractions," said Tim Schneider, President & CEO, Schneider Publishing Company, Inc.

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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.

The mission of Sports Illinois is to promote Illinois as a sports destination by providing sporting organizations with premier facilities and services for their state, regional and national events. The organization's desire is to increase tourism and create a significant economic impact, an improved quality of life and enhanced opportunities for all in sports.