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Contact: Jennifer Elving
312/240-2813
jennifer.elving@edelman.com

Explore Winter Wonders With *Illinois Now!*
Free magazine helps travelers plan cool winter getaways

CHICAGO (November 17, 2003) – The latest edition of *Illinois Now!* magazine proves that winter doesn't put a chill on the many things to see and experience throughout the state. Available now, the free 52-page publication gives readers information on where to find the brightest holiday lights displays, coziest romantic restaurants and most historically fascinating bed-and-breakfast spots, plus complete listings of the top winter fests and events. The cover story, "Illinois on a Shoestring," provides budget-savvy sightseeing tips, from half-price theater tickets and free museum days, to affordable lodging and dining.

The winter issue of *Illinois Now!* also gives readers the chance to win a grand prize that includes a two-night stay for two at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago's Loop district, plus a \$200 gift basket from Marshall Field's on State Street. Readers can also vie for the second prize valued at \$600 – a St. Charles getaway complete with a weekend stay at the Pheasant Run Resort & Spa, theater tickets, dinner for two and more.

Readers can get in the spirit of the season with "Holiday Highlights," which directs them to some of the best holiday lights displays in the state, from the **East Peoria Festival of Lights** to a dramatic re-creation of the Christmas story (using electro-art sculptures) at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville. "A Place in Time" explores the history behind some of Illinois' bed and breakfasts that have hosted legendary guests such as Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Al Capone and even George Harrison. Along with hosting famous guests, Illinois has been an inspiration for many famous writers. "Literary Illinois" follows the paths of these legendary authors, from Ernest Hemingway's birthplace in Oak Park to Carl Sandburg's final resting place in Galesburg.

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Governor Rod R. Blagojevich
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism

Illinois Now! makes planning a trip easy, with the magazine's *Events* section acting as a handy guide to must-do happenings around the state. The section lists everything from winter holiday festivals to arts and crafts shows, arranged by region, for the months of December, January and February. Plus, the *Navigator* section highlights some of Illinois' most exciting exhibits and events, such as *Manet and the Sea* at The Art Institute of Chicago and the **Tribute to The King Impersonators Competition** (in honor of Elvis Presley) in Springfield. The magazine's foldout map of Illinois outlines each region of the state and showcases destinations mentioned throughout the issue, making it a snap for travelers to plan their trip.

Shoppers will want to read "Top of the Shops," which takes them on a virtual shopping spree through Chicago's many diverse neighborhoods, from the fashionable boutiques of Lincoln Park to the remedy shops of Chinatown. And when it's time for an intimate dinner for two, "Romance on the Menu" provides suggestions for rendezvous spots ranging from Le Titi de Paris' little French-inspired cottage in Arlington Heights to Tom's Place in DeSoto, a hidden gem with world-class cuisine prepared by a Danish chef.

To obtain a free copy of *Illinois Now!* or more information on traveling throughout Illinois this winter, 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 Illinois.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Cover art is available electronically or in slide format. For artwork, contact Jennifer Elving at 312/240-2813.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.

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