

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Spring into action with *Illinois Now!***  
*Free magazine helps travelers plan exciting spring getaways*

**CHICAGO (February 24, 2003)** - Spring is in the air, which means that spring fever isn't far behind. From rock climbing in southern Illinois to hot air ballooning over the rolling Galena countryside, the spring issue of *Illinois Now!* provides the insider's scoop on thrill-seeking adventures in the cover story, "Spring into Action."

Available now, the free 48-page publication also gives readers the chance to win a grand prize that includes a two-night stay for two at the historic Allerton Crowne Plaza in Chicago, plus tickets to *Miss Saigon*; with a second prize that features lodging at a Galena-area bed and breakfast, plus golfing at the acclaimed Eagle Ridge Inn & Resort.

Planning an Illinois trip is easy with the help of the magazine's *Events* section, which lists everything from spring festivals to arts and crafts shows by region during March, April and May. Plus, the *Navigator* section highlights some of the most unusual must-see exhibits and happenings around the state. The magazine's foldout map of Illinois includes locations mentioned throughout the issue, and clearly highlights each region of the state, making it easy to find your way around.

Travelers to Chicago will not want to miss the exciting new *Wild Reef* exhibit opening in April at the Shedd Aquarium. Highlighted in the article "Shark Attack," this exhibit allows visitors to get up close and personal with a variety of exotic sharks and tropical fish that are native to the Philippines' Apo Island. Readers will also want to check out "Making Tracks," a feature article that celebrates all things locomotive, from train-themed museum exhibits to attractions that welcome everyone aboard for a ride on an old-fashioned steam engine. And art lovers can plan the ultimate alfresco excursion with "Into Outdoor Art," an article that points readers in the direction of Illinois' great outdoor artworks, from Chicago's towering Picasso sculpture in Daley Plaza to the fascinating *Wall Dog* murals in Belvidere.

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Of course, dining is a must on any spring excursion. *Illinois Now!* tells readers where to find some of the tastiest dishes in the state. “Cultural Cuisine” explores the many ethnic dining options around Illinois, from Lebanese cuisine in Peoria to Swedish delights in Rockford.

To obtain a free copy of *Illinois Now!* or for more information about traveling throughout Illinois this spring, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at 800-2CONNECT or visit [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://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.

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**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Cover art is available electronically or in slide format. For artwork, contact Rebecca Olchawa at 312/729-1710.

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