

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### The AB “*must Cs*” of Illinois Fun

**CHICAGO** (April 16, 2003) – From architectural tours to zoos, there are many ways to enjoy Illinois and spend quality time with family, friends and loved ones. With so many options, exploring Illinois is as easy as ABC.

**A**musement Parks – There’s nothing like the thrill of a coaster! Starting May 3, visitors to Six Flags Great America in Gurnee can hop on the new thrill ride “Superman – Ultimate Flight” and experience airborne sensations mimicking the superhero’s flight through the sky. For more information, call 847/249-4636 or visit [www.sixflags.com/parks/greatamerica](http://www.sixflags.com/parks/greatamerica).

**B**uildings – For modern architecture and impressive buildings, Chicago is hard to beat. Residents and visitors alike can take advantage of the sites on the Chicago Architectural Foundation’s 90-minute narrated boat tours along the Chicago River. Tours begin May 4. For more information, call 312/922-3432 or visit [www.architecture.org/river.html](http://www.architecture.org/river.html).

**C**amping – From Anderson Lake to Woodford County, Illinois offers 80 diverse camping areas with hundreds of individual campsites at state parks and along rivers. Whether campers need a parking space or have a horse that needs a stable, there is something for everyone. For more information, call 217/782-6752 or visit the Illinois Department of Natural Resources’ Web site at <http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/parks>.

**D**ining – From five-star restaurants to corner cafes, Chicago offers something for every palate. Choosing is half the fun with nearly 100 types of cuisine and more than 1,900 restaurants in Chicago and the Chicagoland area. Visitors can also enjoy the season and dine outdoors on everything from steaming enchiladas to juicy filet mignon. For a listing of Chicago and Chicagoland restaurants, visit [www.metromix.com](http://www.metromix.com).

**E**ducation – Students of all ages can get to know Sue, the world’s largest and most complete Tyrannosaurus Rex, at The Field Museum (312/922-9410; [www.fnmh.org](http://www.fnmh.org)). Just down the street, the Adler Planetarium is now the only planetarium in the world to offer patrons the new “Digistar 3 technology” for its new show, “New Horizons,” which opened April 4 (312/322-0524; [www.adlerplanetarium.org](http://www.adlerplanetarium.org)). Additional educational attractions around the state include: the Burpee Museum of Natural History and the Discovery Center Museum in Rockford

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(815/965-3433; [www.burpee.org](http://www.burpee.org)); the John Deere Pavilion in Moline (309/765-1000; [www.johndeerepavilion.com](http://www.johndeerepavilion.com)); and the DuPage Children's Museum in Naperville (630/637-8000; [www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org](http://www.dupagechildrensmuseum.org)).

**F**estivals and exhibits – The Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum kicked off its new “Magic: The Science of Illusion” exhibit on April 5, which features performances, lessons in illusion and magical experiments (773/755-5100; [www.chias.org](http://www.chias.org)). Roger Ebert's Overlooked Film Festival, takes place in Champaign from April 23-27 and showcases 2002 films that were, in his opinion, overlooked (217/356-9053; [www.ewerfest.com](http://www.ewerfest.com)). The Long Grove Chocolate Fest, May 2-4, offers some of the Midwest's sweetest delicacies, from dipping stations to tasty truffles (847/634-0888; [www.longgroveonline.com/chocolate](http://www.longgroveonline.com/chocolate)). The Fulton Dutch Days Festival, also taking place May 2-4, celebrates Fulton's Dutch heritage with presentations, windmill tours, a parade, dancing and a traditional Dutch dinner (815/589-4545; [www.cityoffulton.us](http://www.cityoffulton.us)).

**G**ardens –The Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford opens May 1, offering new educational and instructional classes (815/229-9390; [www.andersongardens.org](http://www.andersongardens.org)). Another venue in prime season is the Chicago Botanical Gardens, which offers guided tours through more than 26 gardens and horticulture vignettes (847/835-6949; [www.chicago-botanic.org](http://www.chicago-botanic.org)). For even more blooms, visit the Rockome Garden outside Arcola (217/268-4106; [www.rockome.com](http://www.rockome.com)) and the Morton Arboretum in Lisle (630/968-0074; [www.mortonarb.org](http://www.mortonarb.org)).

**H**istoric Presidential Sites – Illinois may be the Land of Lincoln, but two other former presidents left their legacies here as well. Galena pays homage to Ulysses S. Grant by preserving his family home and maintaining Grant Park, overlooking the Galena River. Dixon honors Ronald Reagan by serving as one stop on his presidential trail that connects 11 Illinois communities playing a role in his life. Springfield is home to numerous Lincoln landmarks including Lincoln's tomb and Lincoln's Home, both National Historic Site, the Old State Capitol, and the soon-to-be-opened (spring 2003) Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (2004). For more information, call 800/2CONNECT to speak with an Illinois travel counselor or visit [www.alincoln-library.com/Apps/default.asp](http://www.alincoln-library.com/Apps/default.asp).

**I**llinois Railway Museum – Railroad aficionados can get close to more than 250 cars and locomotives, including a complete Burlington Zephyr Streamliner, at America's largest railway museum right here in Illinois. This operating railroad museum offers 56 acres of running room for visitors to watch and ride the historic trains. For more information, call 815/923-4000 or visit [www.irm.org](http://www.irm.org).

**J**azz – Since prohibition, Chicago has been a pivotal cornerstone for the jazz movement. Chicago's clubs, festivals and fairs offer some of the best jazz in the world. Relax at The Green Mill, the oldest jazz club in America, or at any of the other 48 jazz clubs in Chicago. Outside Chicago, the Vintage Music and Humor Festival takes place April 22-24 in Mt. Morris (815/946-3817). Also this spring, Rock Island's Hornucopia festival takes place May 16 and 17, offering jazz, blues, ska and swing (309/788-6311).

**K**ayaking – Kayakers can keep their heads above water this spring by kayaking on the I&M Canal and/or the Mississippi River. Both spots offer opportunities for visitors to rent kayaks and other equipment such as paddles, life preservers and helmets. For more information, call 800/2CONNECT to speak with an Illinois travel counselor or visit [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com).

**L**akes – Home of the great Lake Michigan, Illinois is also the habitat for 3,000 other inland lakes in which to boat, fish and play. As the weather warms up, some of the best lakes on which to cool off include Carlinville Lake in Carlinville; Clinton Lake State Recreation Area in Dewitt; Crystal Lake Park in Urbana; and Rend Lake in Southern Illinois.

**M**usic – Offering everything from bluegrass to Broadway, the spring season showcases the rich musical experiences available in Illinois. “Tick, Tick...Boom,” the newest performance at the Shubert Theatre in Chicago, May 13-25, takes attendees on a playwright’s journey that inspired the creation of the Broadway blockbuster musical “Rent.” For more information, call 800/2CONNECT to speak with an Illinois travel counselor or visit [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com).

**N**ature Centers – Visitors can get back to nature at one of Illinois’ hundreds of nature centers. Hikers can explore everything from natural environments of woodlands, prairies, wetlands, and paths or take onsite instructional lessons in habitat preservation. For those who prefer biking, the Illinois Heritage Trail takes bikers to 120 state parks along the way. A directory of centers can be found at the Department of Natural Resources’ Web site by visiting [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us).

**O**ak Park – Tours of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Home & Studio are offered year-round every weekend and three times every weekday. Professionally guided or self-guided walking tours of Oak Park’s Wright Historic District, home to 25 structures designed by Wright, are also available daily. For more information, call 708/848-1976 or visit [www.oprf.com/flw](http://www.oprf.com/flw).

**P**rofessional Baseball – Take friends, family or co-workers to the ball game during the 2003 season in Chicago. Sports fans can hit the upper-deck seats for a great tan and great view of America’s favorite pastime, right here in Illinois. Tickets to most games are available by calling the Sox’ ticket office (312/674-1000) or by visiting [www.chisox.com](http://www.chisox.com); and the Cubs’ ticket office by calling (800/THE-CUBS), or by visiting [www.cubs.com](http://www.cubs.com).

**Q**UILTS, Crafts and More – Recognized throughout the state as an artisan haven, the Southern Illinois region is conducive to both creation and recreation. Offering some of the state’s finest treasures, many Illinois artisans have homes and workshops in the region. Just north, in central Illinois, the Arthur/Arcola area offers visitors an abundance of fine-crafted quilts to word-working products made by the local Amish community. For more information, call 800/2CONNECT to speak with an Illinois travel counselor or visit [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com).

**R**oute 66 – The famed Mother Road journey begins at Lou Mitchell’s Diner in Chicago and travelers can get their kicks as they cruise down the road past the Gemini Giant in Wilmington, the Dixie Truckers Home in McLean, and Bill Shea’s historic gas station and the Cozy Dog Drive Inn in Springfield, to mention a few. For more information, call 866/378-7866 or visit <http://illinoisroute66.com>.

**S**hopping – Whether shoppers are drawn to the lights on Michigan Avenue (312/642-3570; [www.themagnificentmile.com](http://www.themagnificentmile.com)) or lured by the great values at Gurnee Mills (847/263-7500; [www.gurneemills.com](http://www.gurneemills.com)), Illinois has stores galore. Hardcore shoppers can also find what’s new this season in downtown Chicago or at Woodfield Mall (847/330-1537; [www.gowoodfieldmall.com](http://www.gowoodfieldmall.com)), and bargain-hunters can find great buys at the Huntley Prime Outlets (888/545-7222;

www.primeoutlets.com), 90 minutes outside Chicago, and the Tuscola Factory Stores (217/253-6911; www.egeeshop.com/US\_Factory\_Outlets/IL/ Tuscola\_Factory\_Stores), 20 minutes outside Champaign.

**T**ee Time – Illinois offers more than 700 courses on which golfers can perfect their swing. Visit Cog Hill in Lemont to see pros tee-off at the 100<sup>th</sup> annual PGA Advil Western Open. LPGA fans can head to Springfield for the State Farm Rail Classic or to Aurora for the Kellogg-Keebler Classic at Stonebridge Country Club. Golf-enthusiasts won't want to miss the U.S. Open at Olympia Fields Country Club, June 9-15 (708/283-8408; www.olympiafieldscc.com). For more information on these and other golf courses, visit [www.golfil.com](http://www.golfil.com).

**U**nderwater Adventures – The newly opened (April 15) “Wild Reef – Sharks at the Shedd” exhibit at the John G. Shedd Aquarium features a diver's-eye view of a coral reef in the Philippines. The underwater exhibit will be home to more than 30 sharks from North America and more than 500 species of reef fish. The 75,000-gallon tank will combine 26 aquatic habitats and feature live coral. For more information, call 312/939-2435 or visit [www.sheddnet.org](http://www.sheddnet.org).

**V**olleyball – North Avenue Beach, one of Chicago's premier spring and summer hot spots, offers easily accessible sand courts for the ultimate warm-weather sport: beach volleyball. Beach-goers can enjoy a pick-up game or watch as world-class competitors participate in tournament play. Castways Cafe opens shop in May with live music every weekend and a beachside menu.

**W**aterparks – Beginning May 12, tons of water fun can be found at Knight's Caribbean Water Adventure in Springfield. The adventure park offers bumper and pedal boats, water slides, lazy rivers, and a wave pool (217/546-8881; [www.knightsactionpark.com/water\\_park](http://www.knightsactionpark.com/water_park)). Magic Waters Waterpark outside Rockford in Cherry Valley opens May 28, and is currently offering discounted season pass tickets until opening day. The “Splashblaster” at Magic Waters flips riders every which way and promises thrills all season long (815/332-3260; [www.magicwaterswaterpark.com](http://www.magicwaterswaterpark.com)).

**X**treame Sports – Extreme skydiving, bungee jumping or rock climbing can all be found in Illinois. Visitors are welcome at 12 statewide clubs taking all levels of skydiver's to new heights. Rock climbers can get their thrills at any one of the 120 state parks throughout Illinois. Thrill-seekers can find indoor activities in Bloomington at the Upper Limits Rock Gym – the tallest indoor climbing facility in the world (309/829-8255 – [www.upperlimits.com/bloomington](http://www.upperlimits.com/bloomington)) or check out The Silo, Inc. Rock Climbing Gym in Rochester, a 100-ft. feat, not easily conquered (217/498-0922; [www.daretoclimb.com](http://www.daretoclimb.com)).

**Y**achting – Taking a professional sailing class or tagging along on a chartered sport-fishing tour are easy to find with yachting clubs throughout Chicago and its north suburbs. Observers can opt to stay on land and watch the 97<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Yacht Club's Race to Mackinac on July 12. The Chicago shoreline is the best place to bid bon voyage to expert yachtsmen as they compete in the oldest freshwater yacht race in the world. For more information, call 312/861-7777 or visit [www.chicagoyachtclub.com/racetomackinac](http://www.chicagoyachtclub.com/racetomackinac).

**Z**oos – Babies are booming at the Brookfield Zoo, home to a baby orangutan and infant diamondback rattlesnakes. *The Fragile Kingdom* exhibit, featuring otters, squirrels and binturongs, is also expecting new arrivals this spring. Located 14 miles outside downtown Chicago, the Brookfield Zoo also has special dolphin and rhino exhibits, as well as a new home for their hippopotami (708/485-0263; [www.brookfieldzoo.org](http://www.brookfieldzoo.org).) Other “not to be missed” zoos in Illinois include: the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago (312/742-2000; [www.lpzoo.com](http://www.lpzoo.com)); Henson Robinson Zoo in Springfield (217/753-6217; [www.hensonrobinsonzoo.org](http://www.hensonrobinsonzoo.org)); Miller Park Zoo in Bloomington (309/434-2250; [www.cityhall.ci.bloomington.il.us](http://www.cityhall.ci.bloomington.il.us)); Scovill Zoo in Decatur (217/421-7435); and Niabi Zoo in Coal Valley (309/799-5107; [www.niabizoo.com](http://www.niabizoo.com)).

For more information about Illinois events and activities, or to plan an Illinois travel adventure, visit the Illinois Bureau of Tourism’s Web site at **[www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com)** or call **800/2CONNECT** to speak with an Illinois travel counselor. *Illinois Now!*, the state’s seasonal travel magazine, and the new 2003 Illinois Travel Guide, both offering a variety of spring and summer travel ideas, and are also available free by calling 800/2CONNECT and/or by visiting [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com).

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Spring and summer photography is available electronically or in slide format. For artwork, contact Jennifer Elving at 312/240-2813.

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*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.*