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

Autumn Adventures Await Travelers In Illinois

Popular fairs, festivals and seasonal attractions make for a memorable fall getaway

CHICAGO (July 2, 2003) – From early settlers and Civil War heroes to wineries and corn mazes, exploration and adventure have long been a part of the fall season in Illinois. Offering numerous pumpkin patches, themed corn labyrinths, wine festivals and historic battle re-enactments, Illinois is a colorful blend of history, heritage and harvest this fall.

Pumpkin Patches

As the nation's leading pumpkin-producing state, Illinois has everything from the world's pumpkin capital in Morton to quaint roadside patches.

The **Didier Farms Pumpkinfest**, September 27-October 31, in Prairie View, offers 20 acres for pumpkin hunting and fresh produce straight from the fields for sale at the farm stand. Pumpkin pickers are taken to and from the patches by hayride, while guests back on the farm enjoy entertaining activities such as exploring a five-acre corn maze, taking pony rides, lounging at the Pumpkin Patch Café and participating in barn activities. 847/634-3291, www.didierfarms.com (Chicagoland)

Other great times and places to pick and purchase pumpkins in Illinois include:

- **18th Annual St. Charles Scarecrow Festival**, October 10-12, in St. Charles, hosts a Scarecrow Contest, live entertainment, children's events and the Autumn on the Fox Art & Craft Show. The festival showcases more than 100 handmade scarecrows, which can be entered in five categories – traditional, whimsical, mechanical, children's and local businesses – for visitor voting. 800/777-4373, www.scarecrowfest.com (Chicagoland)
- **The Great Pumpkin Patch**, September 14-November 1, in Lyndon, has many attractions, including the children's LM&J short-line railroad that takes pumpkin seekers first through a forest and then up to a magical pumpkin patch. 815/778-4856 (Northern)

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Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

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- **Pumpkin Works 2003**, October 1-31, in Paris, offers nine mazes – including a six-acre “Jungle Maze” corn maze – a haunted house, hayrides, bonfires and other family activities. 217/275-3327, www.pumpkinworks.com (Central)
- **Galesburg Scarecrow Festival**, October 4 and 5, in Standish Park, features a scarecrow contest with five categories: historical, whimsical, children’s, local business and traditional. As an official stop on the Knox County Scenic Drive, visitors along the drive serve as judges by voting for the category winners among the hundreds of festive scarecrows. 800/916-3330, www.visitgalesburg.com (Western)
- **Great Southern Scarecrow Exhibition**, October 3 and 4, in Carbondale, features pumpkin-faced scarecrows, live music concerts, puppet displays and hands-on activities. 618/457-5100 (Southern)
- **The Great Godfrey Maze**, August 30-November 1, in Godfrey, is a maze carved into a seven-acre field featuring a new theme each year. This year’s theme celebrates the Lewis and Clark bicentennial. 618/466-1483, www.greatgodfreymaze.com (Southwest)

Harvest Celebrations

Travelers can experience the many colors, faces and tastes in Illinois at harvest and heritage festivals throughout the state. Wienerschnitzel and sauerbraten, apple strudel and barbeque fill visitors’ stomachs while the outdoor activities and fall foliage fill the streets and skies.

The 35th Annual Barry Apple Festival, October 3-5, celebrates everything apple in the quaint, historic town of Barry, which is sandwiched between Monroe City and Pittsfield. A parade winds through the city where local music bands and a crafts show entertain visitors. Apple pies, ice cream and strudels are all specialties. Old-time crafts, local bluegrass band performances and a car show complete the weekend. 217/285-2971 (Western)

Other not-to-miss Illinois harvest festivals include:

- **Chicago’s Berghoff Oktoberfest**, September 3-6, held near Adams Street, features live music, food and locally brewed specialty drinks. 312/427-3170, www.berghoff.com (Chicago)
- **11th Annual Long Grove Apple Fest**, October 3-5, hosts a bevy of apple-inspired treats. 847/634-0888, www.longgroveonline.com (Chicagoland)

- **Fall Fest on the Rock**, September 27 and 28, between Rock Falls and Sterling in Utica, features musical entertainment, antiques and collectibles, and a horseshoe tournament. 815/626-0025, www.rockfallsil.com (Northern)
- **Apple and Pork Festival**, September 27 and 28, in Clinton, offers DeWitt County Museum tours, apple and pork delicacies, antiques and live entertainment. 217/935-3364, www.clintonillinois.com/tourism_pages/ApplePork (Central)
- **Anna's Apple Festival**, September 27 and 28, in Anna, provides travelers with an old-fashioned rope swing, a 40-foot slide and apple butter-making demonstrations. 618/833-5533, www.boydorchards.com (Southern)

Wine Festivals

Illinois is home to 33 wineries, some of which host seasonal festivals, tastings and tours.

Southern Illinois' Shawnee Hills Wine Trail is known for its four award-winning wineries and rustic scenery. Two of the wineries, the Alto and Owl Creek vineyards, team up every fall with local vendors to host the **Fall Wine Festival**. This year the festival takes place October 11 and 12, and provides live music, seafood, steak, and some of the state's best wine, including a unique blueberry varietal. For more information, contact the Alto Vineyards at 618/893-4898, www.altovineyards.net, or the Owl Creek Vineyard at 618/893-2557, www.owlcreekvineyard.com (Southern)

Other Illinois wine festivals:

- **Nouveau Wine Festival**, November 21, at Galena Cellars in Galena, celebrates the release of this year's new vintage with special luncheons at area restaurants. The wine is delivered to the restaurants by horse-drawn wagons along Main Street. Visitors can stay overnight and enjoy an evening of dancing with a live band at the DeSoto House Hotel. 815/777-3330 (Northern)
- **Illinois Art and Wine Festival**, September 27 and 28, in Whittington, showcases 50 statewide artists and 30 wineries. 618/629-2220 (Southern)

Re-enactments

Fall's scenic beauty can be found throughout Illinois, but the changing of colors marks a change of more than just seasons at many of Illinois' historic locations. Illinoisans celebrate their heritage each fall with a series of re-enactments featuring mock Civil War battles with soldiers in full battle dress, pioneers in their prairie clothes, and medieval actors donning their costumes.

Just north of Salem, **Ingram's Pioneer Log Cabin Village** commemorates the Civil War with a series of living history weekends from September 20-October 12. Visitors watch as uniformed soldiers from "The North" and "The South" perform a mock battle using the same type of weaponry as used in the 1860s. As one of the largest private collections of authentic, pre-Civil War log structures in the United States, the campus hosts a grocery store, apothecary, cobbler's shop, church and post office, all open for tours. 618/547-3241, www.stepintohistory.com (Southern)

Other re-enactments and fairs include:

- **Camp Fuller Festival**, September 13, in Rockford, hosts a re-enactment held on the site of a Civil War camp that supported four Illinois regiments, and now celebrates the history with refreshments, period games and entertainment. 815/968-7958, www.rockfordnorthend.com (Northern)
- **The Candlelight Tour of New Salem**, October 25, in New Salem, features interpreters dressed in period clothing as they guide visitors through Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site after dark. 217/632-4000, www.lincolnnewsalem.com (Central)
- **6th Annual Labyrinth Medieval Fair**, October 10 and 11, in Barry, offers 15th-century fare, dancing and crafts. 217/335-2670, www.applebasketfarms.com (Western)
- **Camp River Dubois**, September 13 -November 27, in Hartford, features re-enactments of preparations for Lewis and Clark's expedition. 618/251-2680 Ext.15, www.hartfordillinois.net (Southwest)

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers free travel resources for additional information on fall adventures, attractions and festivals. All are available by calling **800-2CONNECT** to speak with an Illinois travel counselor or by visiting the bureau's Web site at **www.enjoyillinois.com**. The fall issue of *Illinois Now!*, a seasonal magazine devoted exclusively to travel in Illinois, will be available mid-September for fall travel planning. The magazine can be obtained by calling 800-2CONNECT or by visiting the bureau's Web site.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Statewide photography is available electronically or in slide format. Information on Illinois' haunted happenings will be distributed later this year as a separate release. For artwork, contact Jennifer Elving at 312/240-2813.

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