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Enjoy a Spring Fling with *Illinois Now!*
Free magazine helps travelers plan springtime getaways

CHICAGO (February 18, 2004) – Get a head start on spring travel planning with the latest issue of *Illinois Now!* magazine. Currently available, the free 52-page spring issue features the best places to celebrate the bicentennial of Lewis and Clark’s voyage of discovery, advice on planning an unforgettable family reunion, cozy cabins and lodges that are a sure cure for spring fever, plus complete listings of spring festivals and events. The cover story, “Green Scene,” offers tips on ecotourism trips that include everything from pelican watching along the Mississippi River near picturesque Alton, to rock climbing in Southern Illinois’ breathtaking Shawnee National Forest.

The spring 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 downtown Chicago, plus tickets to a Broadway in Chicago play (package valued at \$800). Readers can also vie for a second prize: a Galena getaway package complete with a weekend stay at the Eagle Ridge Inn & Resort, a Grand Excursion lunch cruise and a \$100 shopping spree in historic Galena (package valued at \$800).

Visitors can time their trips with one of the many exciting happenings listed in the *Events* section, which includes everything from spring festivals to arts and crafts shows, arranged by region, for the months of March, April and May. Plus, the *Navigator* section highlights diverse cultural programs and exhibits throughout Illinois, such as the *Grand Excursion* celebration in towns along the Mississippi River, the 14th Annual Aurora Pow Wow and Roger Ebert’s *Overlooked Film Festival*, held in Champaign. The magazine’s foldout map of Illinois clearly outlines each region of the state and highlights destinations mentioned throughout the issue, making it easy and convenient for travelers to plan their trips.

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When it's time to get the relatives together for the ultimate family reunion, *Illinois Now's* "We Are Family" article offers insights on hotels, convention bureaus and even park districts that can help with planning and booking. Those in need of a remedy for spring fever will want to read "Cabin Fever," which offers ideas including "sweetheart cabins" outfitted for romantics at the White Pines Inn in Mt. Morris, and the Orvis-endorsed Harpole's Heartland Lodge in Nebo, where sunset hayrides, Old West cookouts and horseback riding are all part of the fun. Then get ready for the bicentennial celebration of Lewis and Clark's voyage of discovery that started right here in Illinois. *Illinois Now's* "Trail Blazing" article features the historic sites and attractions in the Southwest and Southern regions of the state that pay homage to these historic explorers.

Spring is a great time to stroll the streets of Illinois' many Main Street communities. For unique shopping excursions in small towns, travelers will want to read "Main Street, USA." This article highlights shopping sprees ranging from antiquing in St. Charles to exploring hip stores in the Bloomington-Normal area. Be sure to fuel up before shopping 'til you drop at one of the many eateries featured in "Beyond Bacon & Eggs." From dressed-up hotel brunches to cruising along Chicago's Lake Michigan waterfront aboard the Odyssey II, travelers will find some of the state's best eats in this article, plus great suggestions for Mother's Day and Easter brunch.

To obtain a free copy of *Illinois Now!* or for more information on traveling throughout Illinois this spring, 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. Also available is the newly updated complete Illinois Travel Guide.

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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