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Illinois Celebrates Black History Month with New Travel Guide

Free guide showcases African American culture and history - the soulful side of Illinois

CHICAGO (February 2, 2004) – To celebrate Black History Month, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism (IBOT), released today the latest edition of *See What's Up in Illinois*, a 16-page travel guide to attractions and events of significance to African American culture and history.

“From gardens and shopping, to nightclubs and historical sites, Illinois offers numerous opportunities for visitors to explore our rich African American culture,” said Jan Kostner, deputy director of IBOT. “Black History Month is the perfect time to hit the road, and this guide is the perfect tool.”

The *See What's Up in Illinois* travel guide includes general information about sites, events and restaurants throughout the state of interest to African Americans. The guide also includes an accommodations section that highlights properties from The Consumer Choice Guide distributed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, as well as a local resource section to make traveling the state easier than ever. Among the many other features is a wealth of Illinois trivia, such as:

- Golconda is believed to be the first all African American settlement in Illinois
- The McLean County Museum of History has an exhibit of military memorabilia related to Captain Julius Witherspoon, an African American who commanded Company G of the all Black 8th Illinois Volunteer Infantry during WWI
- Alton houses six of the 38 Underground Railroad stations in Illinois.

The guide is a handy resource for all travelers, especially the growing minority travel market. According to a newly released study by the Travel Industry Association, minority travelers accounted for 18 percent of all person-trips taken in 2002, and they generated 19 percent of domestic travel expenditures. Domestic expenditures by minority travelers totaled about \$90 billion in 2002. African-American travel volume increased four percent (from 72.2 million to 75.2 million person-trips) between 2000 and 2002.

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To obtain a free copy of the *See What's Up in Illinois* travel guide or for more information about traveling throughout Illinois, call an Illinois Travel Counselor at **1-800-2CONNECT** or visit **www.enjoyillinois.com**. Bureau publications are also available at Illinois tourism information centers, convention and visitors bureaus, regional tourism development offices and state park lodges.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), 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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