



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ILLINOIS TOURISM ON THE RISE

CHICAGO – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today announced that consumer spending on travel and tourism in Illinois was nearly \$23 billion in 2003. New data released by the Travel Industry Association of America show travel-related expenditures in the state increased 3.6 percent from \$22 billion in expenditures in 2002.

“Our Illinois Bureau of Tourism is doing a great job telling Illinois’ story to the world. People who come to Illinois are discovering what a tremendous place this is for a family vacation or just a short weekend getaway. And the resources we invest in spreading this message are returned to our state many times over in the tax revenue it brings in and new jobs it creates. This tourism renaissance is great news for Illinois,” Governor Blagojevich said.

Travel to Illinois directly accounted for 298,670 Illinois jobs that generated \$7.7 billion in payroll income. Overall, state and local tax revenues generated by travel expenditures increased by 2.4 percent from 2002 to \$1.7 billion in 2003.

A record-setting 84.9 million domestic visitors traveled to Illinois in 2003, exceeding the previous high of 84.7 million in 2001. The growth in visitors was led solely by the leisure travel segment (+7.6 percent), outweighing a 9.3 percent decline in business travel. Overall, U.S. leisure travel grew 5.7 percent and business travel remained flat.

Illinois’ strong growth in leisure volume helped to increase the state’s share of U.S. leisure travel in 2003. Illinois’ market share grew from 2.4 percent of U.S. leisure travel to 2.5 percent in 2003 making it the 10th ranked state for leisure travel in the U.S.

The average spending of leisure travelers to Illinois increased 5.6 percent from \$89 per person per day to \$94. The primary activities for leisure travelers were dining, shopping, sightseeing, entertainment, visiting a museum/art exhibit and nightlife.

“Illinois’ tourism industry continues to be a significant tool for statewide economic development,” Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Jack Lavin said. “The tourism industry continues to rebound from challenges experienced in the past several years, and we are committed to building upon the successes that we have achieved.”

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers free travel resources with information on statewide **Three-Day Getaways**, festivals, events and attractions. All are available by calling **800-2CONNECT** to speak with an Illinois travel counselor or by visiting **enjoyillinois.com**.

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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Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism