



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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WILD CHICAGO'S ILLINOIS ROAD TRIP HIGHLIGHTS UNIQUE DESTINATIONS ACROSS ILLINOIS

New series presented by WTTW11 and the Illinois Bureau of Tourism will premiere April 21

Funded by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism, original WTTW11 *Wild Chicago* host and creator Ben Hollis will again don his trademark pith helmet for a wide-ranging journey beyond the urban jungle and into the wilds of Illinois. The seven episode series will run on Fridays at 8:30 p.m. starting with the April 21 premiere. In the spontaneous, free-wheeling spirit of PBS affiliate WTTW11's original *Wild Chicago* series, *Wild Chicago's Illinois Road Trip* will discover the surprising and offbeat locales that make the Land of Lincoln such a diverse travel destination for residents and visitors alike.

"Illinois is home to many world-renowned tourist attractions, and *Wild Chicago's Illinois Road Trip* will uncover some of our state's hidden gems," said Jan Kostner, deputy director, Illinois Bureau of Tourism. "This partnership with WTTW11 is a tremendous opportunity to showcase the endless ways travelers can explore every corner of Illinois."

The series of seven lively half-hour programs will be offered to public television stations across the state. From the Interstate to Main Street, Ben and his *Road Trip* crew will comb the prairie and peek between the cornstalks to find Illinois' unexpected destinations and fascinating people, including:

- Benton's **Hard Day's Night Bed and Breakfast**, where Ben will meet Louise Harrison, sister of Beatle George Harrison, and give viewers a glimpse of exclusive, never-before-aired home movie footage from a trip George made to Benton in 1963
- **Jane the Juvenile T.Rex**, one of the best preserved and most complete juvenile *T. rex* specimens in the world, at the Burpee Museum of Natural History in Rockford
- **Cahokia Mounds**, which shelter the remains of an ancient city where a Mississippian Native American culture once flourished from 700 to 1400 A.D. before mysteriously disappearing
- **Wildlife Prairie State Park** outside of Peoria, where adventurous visitors can explore or even spend the night in a caboose or silo amongst the wolves, bison, bears, cougars and more
- Springfield's **Shea's Route 66 Gas Station Museum**, where Ben talks "Mother Road" legends and lore with Route 66 fixture Bill Shea
- Chicago's **Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Oriental Theatre**, where Ben will take a behind-the-scenes tour of hit Broadway musical *Wicked*

"Taping *Wild Chicago* across the state over the past several months has been an incredible journey," said Ben Hollis. "I'm eager to share my unique experiences with WTTW11 viewers."

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism makes it easy for travelers to visit the sites featured on *Wild Chicago's Illinois Road Trip*. Bookable 3-Day Getaways across Illinois can be found on the Bureau's Web site, **www.enjoyillinois.com**, with ideas for any type of trip, including family-friendly, outdoor adventure and romantic options.

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Governor Rod R. Blagojevich
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism

EDITOR'S NOTE: Media materials and downloadable images are now available on the Illinois Bureau of Tourism online media center at www.illinoismediacenter.com. Additional photography, available electronically or in slide format, may be obtained by contacting Julie Connolly at julie.connolly@edelman.com, 312-233-1246, or Katie Markese at katie.markese@edelman.com, 312-297-7561.

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.