



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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AROUND-THE-CLOCK SUMMER FUN IN ILLINOIS

Sizzling daytime diversions and cool nighttime treats take center stage this season

Throughout the summer Illinois hosts hundreds of local, regional and statewide events that offer visitors supreme summer satisfaction day and night. After taking in the warm sunshine at Illinois' myriad festivals and fairs, visitors will be rewarded by the cool, refreshing evening breeze at the many outdoor athletic, cultural and musical offerings throughout the season.

The following daytime events are sure to create summer memories to last a lifetime:

Chicago

Visitors can experience Chicago's glittering lakefront and rivers at **Tall Ships Chicago 2006**, which sails into the city Aug. 3-9. Tall Ships will feature more than 20 colorful, wind-powered vessels and the rare opportunity to step on board to get a glimpse of sailing life in the 1800s. The event is back by popular demand after drawing more than 2 million people in 2003, the last time it was in Chicago.

This summer, the nation's oldest and largest free admission **Air & Water Show**, Aug. 19 and 20, features the Blue Angels, the AeroShell Aerobatic Team and military aircraft demonstrations. Weather permitting, North Avenue Beach visitors can witness Jet Ski competitions and small personal watercraft displays taking place on Saturday.

For more information on Chicago events, contact the Mayor's Office of Special Events (312-744-3315, [www.cityofchicago.org/special events](http://www.cityofchicago.org/special%20events)).

Chicagoland

Rated by the American Bus Association as one of country's Top 100 Events, the **26th Annual Eyes to the Skies Festival** in Lisle is one of the most spectacular sights of summer—and it gets better every year! The event, July 1-4, will feature 20 colorful hot air balloons launched twice daily, nationally known musical entertainment, "balloon glows" at dusk, a children's art fair, activity and game area, an exotic animals experience, a carnival, nightly fireworks and a patio garden with entertainment.

For more information, contact the Lisle Convention and Visitors Bureau (800-733-9811, www.lislecvb.com).

Northern

Midwest Emergency Services personnel will have the chance to showcase their skills at Galena's **1st Annual 911 Festival**, Aug. 4 and 5. Regional police, fire and EMS squads will be pitted against each other in the Emergency Services Olympics, competing in a variety of contests. Visitors can

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Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

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participate in a four-person “Best Shot” golf competition at scenic Eagle Ridge Inn & Resort and enjoy the Emergency Services Parade featuring vintage vehicles and equipment, marching bands and bagpipes. Following the parade, revelers can continue the festivities at the “Dancing In the Streets” event where swing musicians Hudson & the Hoodoo Cats will perform in downtown Galena.

For more information, contact the Galena/Jo Daviess County Convention & Visitors Bureau (877-GO-GALENA, www.galena.org).

Central

Visitors can do it all at the **Illinois State Fair**, Aug. 11-20, at the state fairgrounds in Springfield. From numerous agricultural exhibits and classic festival food stands to butter cows and nationally recognized pop stars, it’s hard to name something fair-goers won’t see. The hot summer of 2006 simply won’t be complete without spending a day or two at the grounds where nearly 750,000 people passed through the turnstiles last year.

For more information, contact the Illinois State Fair (217-782-6661, www.illinoisstatefair.info).

Western

Galesburg salutes the railroad’s contribution to Western Illinois during the annual **Galesburg Railroad Days** celebration June 24 and 25. A festival can’t-miss is the 11th annual Galesburg Railroad Days Model Train & Railroadiana Show, the largest event of its kind in the Midwest. Thirty model railroad layouts and exhibits and more than 60 dealers from 12 states will be at the show, which also features railroad-related items, books, antiques, apparel, art, collectibles, models and modeling supplies, photos and videos.

For more information, contact the Galesburg Convention and Visitors Bureau (309-343-2485, www.galesburgrailroaddays.org).

Southern

For four days every summer Metropolis—“The Home of Superman”—hosts a star-studded fete for the hero at the **Superman Celebration**. This year’s party, June 8-11, is the 28th year that Superfans, beckoned by a 15-foot bronze statue of Superman in the center of town, will travel from all over the country to participate. Also on hand every year are Superman comic book artists, plus actors who have played Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen or the Man of Steel himself either on TV or in films. In addition to this powerful lineup, Metropolis is also the home of the Superman Museum, which is a shrine to the pop culture superstar.

For more information, contact the Metropolis Area Chamber of Commerce (800-949-5740, www.metropolischamber.com).

Southwest

On July 9, Collinsville will host the **World’s Largest Catsup Bottle Summerfest**. This quirky festival celebrates the 57th birthday of the World’s Largest Catsup Bottle, which is actually a 170-foot catsup bottle-shaped water tower first erected by Brooks Foods Factory. Visitors of all ages will love the “can-you-guess?” condiment contest, hula hoop competitions, stunning vintage cars and various artists, musicians and theater performances.

For more information, contact the World’s Largest Catsup Bottle International Fan Club (618-345-5598, www.catsupbottle.com)

Nighttime is the right time to take advantage of Illinois' remarkable summer events:

Chicago

Packing two city blocks in Grant Park with food booths, the **26th Annual Taste of Chicago**, June 30-July 9, offers diverse restaurant samplings and a chance to learn about them at the Chef's Cooking Corner. This year, the daring will be delighted with oxtails, jerk tofu and oyster shooters, while the more traditional diner will be glad to see Chicago classics such as pizza, hot dogs, ribs and cheesecake. On July 1 and 2, the festival entertains attendees with the Chicago Country Music Festival, also in Grant Park, and a fireworks extravaganza July 3.

Chicago's starry night sky will be complemented by the 35 illuminated boats of the **49th Annual Venetian Night**, held July 29. The first Venetian Night took place in 1958 and was modeled after the boat parades in Venice, Italy. The Chicago tradition continues as this year's dazzling procession takes place at Chicago's Monroe Harbor where extravagantly decorated vessels, costumed crews and a fireworks display set to music will light up Lake Michigan. The event kicks off with a free concert by the Grant Park Orchestra at Millennium Park's Jay Pritzker Pavilion, the perfect place for a nighttime picnic.

For more information on Chicago events, contact the Mayor's Office of Special Events (312-744-3315, [www.cityofchicago.org/special events](http://www.cityofchicago.org/special%20events)).

Chicagoland

Ravinia Festival in Highland Park kicks off its summer of world-class music in June, offering visitors either a stage view from the pavilion or plenty of room on the lawn for an evening picnic. One of this summer's highlights will be "Gypsy," Aug. 11-13, starring Patti Lupone, fresh from her New York run in "Sweeney Todd." For those looking for family fun, Ravinia has created a family area on the north lawn that is open during Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances. Before the show, children can learn about music at an "instrument petting zoo," listen to stories about famous composers, make crafts and receive free program books.

For more information, contact Ravinia Festival (847-266-5100, www.ravinia.org).

Northern

Memorial Day weekend rocks in Rockford, Illinois' second largest city. For **On the Waterfront** Aug. 29-31, a 30-block area in Rockford will host eight live performances. More than 150 artists make it Illinois' largest music festival, which also features two carnivals, 50 food booths serving international culinary specialties, a world marketplace offering eclectic merchandise, and special events including a benefit run and street performances. Last year's event featured country mega-star Keith Urban and more "stars and guitars" are expected to light up the night in 2006.

For more information, contact On The Waterfront (815-964-4388, www.onthewaterfront.com).

Central

Just as Shakespeare's plays captured the imagination of Elizabethan England, the **Illinois Shakespeare Festival** achieves the same feat today in Bloomington. Since its inception in 1978, the festival has presented memorable plays beneath a canopy of trees and a nighttime sky. This year's summer plays include "A Comedy of Errors," "Pericles" and "Julius Caesar." Theater-goers will also enjoy an improved and modernized theater recently completed at the beautiful Ewing Manor.

For more information, contact the Illinois Shakespeare Festival (309-438-8110, www.thefestival.org).

Western

Held at Jacksonville's Prairieland Museum & Park July 7-9, the **Prairieland Bluegrass Music Festival** will showcase classic Bluegrass artists. Local and national performers such as Katie Penn Band, The Martin Family, The Chapmans and Acoustic Avenue will take the stage. In addition to checking out exciting stage shows, audiences can catch some impromptu "jam" sessions and visit instrument vendors.

For more information, contact Prairieland Bluegrass Festival (217-243-3159, www.bluegrassmidwest.com)

Southern

The **2006 Southern Illinois Music Festival**, June 16-July 2, stages 45 performances of opera, musical theater, ballet and jazz at Southern Illinois University (SIU). With the world-class Chicago Chamber Orchestra as resident ensemble and renowned soloists, the festival has something for all music fans. Building upon the 40-year tradition of SIU's summer music camps, the festival also offers educational opportunities for students in band, piano and string chamber music, jazz and improvisation, musical theater and composition.

For more information, contact Southern Illinois University (618-536-8742, www.siu.edu/~music/sifest).

Considered the biggest party in Southwest Illinois, **Alton Block Parties** will be back this summer. Held the last Saturday of the month from May through September, the evening parties feature countless kid's activities, live bands and an abundance of food and drink. To add even more fun, downtown Alton will take on a different personality for each block party with themes such as the Jimmy Buffet Parrothead Party.

For more information, contact the Alton Convention and Visitors Bureau (800-ALTON-IL, www.visitalton.com).

To get travelers started on their summer trip planning, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers additional information on one-of-a-kind attractions, events, accommodations and bookable 3-Day Getaways through the Bureau's Web site, **www.enjoyillinois.com** or its travel counselors at **1-800-2CONNECT**.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Media materials and downloadable images are available on the Illinois Bureau of Tourism online media center at **www.illinoismediacenter.com**. Additional photography 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.