



# ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** Emma Douglas 312-240-2730  
emma.douglas@edelman.com

## **ALL-AMERICAN FAMILY FUN IN ILLINOIS THIS SUMMER**

*Travelers of all ages will find plenty to explore across the state*

Illinois is a year-round destination for family fun and dynamic discoveries. One in four household trips in the U.S. (26%) includes children under 18<sup>1</sup>, and the Land of Lincoln is packed with events and attractions perfect for every member of the family. Thrilling theme parks, legendary historic sites and some of the country's most interactive museum exhibits are just a few of the ways families can make memories together in Illinois.

### **Chicago**

Aiming to inspire the inventive genius in everyone, the **Museum of Science and Industry** provides inquiring minds of all ages with fascinating exhibits this summer. *Leonardo da Vinci: Man, Inventor, Genius* will provide exciting hands-on activities that explore the life and triumphs of one of history's most intriguing figures, April 14-Sept. 4. This summer, families will be introduced to the colorful world of frogs in *Frogs: A Chorus of Colors*, June 9-Jan. 7. This exhibit will feature more than 100 of these aquatic amphibians from 15 countries, and will captivate visitors with the sights and sounds of their distinct habitats. Additional must-see exhibits include a U-505 submarine, *The Great Train Story* and *Baby Chicks*.

For more information, contact the Museum of Science and Industry (773-684-1414, [www.msichicago.org](http://www.msichicago.org)).

Chicago's **Field Museum** offers families a rare look at some of the world's most fascinating discoveries and treasures. Whether it's dinosaurs, dynasties or DNA, The Field Museum encourages learning and exploration for all ages. Visitors will be amazed by the blockbuster exhibit *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs*, May 26-Jan. 1. Twice the size of the original 1977 exhibit, it will feature 50 major artifacts from the young king's tomb, including his royal diadem – a gold crown found on the king's mummified body that he likely wore while living.

For more information, contact The Field Museum (312-922-9410, [www.fieldmuseum.org](http://www.fieldmuseum.org)).

Lincoln Park is home to two of the city's great outdoor attractions. **Lincoln Park Zoo**, the nation's oldest free public zoo, and **The Notebaert Nature Museum** are open year-round for families looking for the serenity of the great outdoors in the bustle of the city. Visitors can observe the zoo's newest additions including sand cats and Titi and Goeldi's monkeys; while the nature museum provides interactive exhibits such as the Judy Istock Butterfly Haven and other exciting educational programs that foster environmental learning.

For more information, contact the Lincoln Park Zoo (312-742-2000, [www.lpzoo.com](http://www.lpzoo.com)) and The Notebaert Nature Museum (773-755-5100, [www.naturemuseum.org](http://www.naturemuseum.org)).

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<sup>1</sup> Travel Industry Association of America

One of Illinois' most-visited attractions, **Navy Pier** offers 50 acres of pure family fun and entertains more than eight million visitors each year. Its **Ferris wheel** is open year-round, dazzling evening visitors with 40 spokes illuminated by thousands of sparkling lights and unmatched city skyline views from atop its 40 gondolas. **The Chicago Children's Museum** provides an interactive oasis that encourages exploration by visitors of all ages and abilities. Children will enjoy traveling back in time in the *Dinosaur Expedition* exhibit; splashing around at *WaterWays*; and even scaling three floors of the *Kolver Family Climbing Schooner*. **Chicago Shakespeare Theatre** takes audiences back in time with a charming 510-seat courtyard-style theater that puts the audience inches from the action and features a variety of national and internationally touring productions year-round. The 440-seat Navy Pier **IMAX Theatre**, Chicago's largest flat movie screen, plays both feature films and special documentaries. And no visit to Navy Pier is complete without joining one of the many **Seadog Cruises**, which have thrilled more than one million visitors since 1996. Explore the city's shore on the Speedboat Lake Tour, or secure one of the best viewing points for the Navy Pier's fireworks display while aboard the Fireworks Tour.

For more information, contact Navy Pier (800-595-PIER, [www.navypier.com](http://www.navypier.com)).

**Broadway in Chicago** is gearing up for another standing ovation this summer. Families should hurry to get tickets to *Wicked* (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Oriental Theatre). Ending its successful run at the end of July, *Wicked* has entertained audiences from across the country by delving into the "real" story behind Glinda, the Good Witch and Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West. Other upcoming family-friendly productions include *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (now through July 2, Drury Lane Theatre), *Monty Python's Spamalot* (April 19-June 4, Cadillac Palace Theatre), *Dr. Dolittle* starring Tommy Tune (July 18-30, Cadillac Palace Theatre), *Annie* (Sept. 19-Oct. 1, LaSalle Bank Theatre), and many more.

For more information, contact Broadway in Chicago (312-977-1700, [www.broadwayinchicago.com](http://www.broadwayinchicago.com)).

Chicago is a world-class sports town, and fans can root for their favorite home teams at the city's premier sports arenas. The World Champion **Chicago White Sox** will defend their title this summer at U.S. Cellular Field, and ever-loyal **Chicago Cubs** fans can catch their favorite athletes at the newly renovated Wrigley Field.

For more information, contact the Chicago White Sox (866-769-4263, [www.whitesox.com](http://www.whitesox.com)) and the Chicago Cubs (773-404-CUBS, [www.cubs.com](http://www.cubs.com)).

### **Chicagoland**

Soccer fans from all over have the chance to check out the sport's top professional athletes at the **Chicago Fire's** new Bridgeview Stadium opening June 25. The stadium, a 28,000 capacity multipurpose sports and entertainment venue fifteen minutes southwest of Chicago, will feature a regular lineup of sports, live entertainment and special events.

For more information, contact the Chicago Fire (312-705-7200, [www.chicago-fire.com](http://www.chicago-fire.com)).

**Six Flags Great America** in Gurnee offers nearly seven miles of electrifying roller coaster tracks. It also hosts a number of special attractions, including Looney Tunes National Park, Camp Cartoon Network and exciting performances by the whole Looney Tunes gang. And a half-million-gallon wave pool, atomic tube slides and the world's largest interactive water playground are just the beginning of the fun at **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor**, opening for the season Memorial Day weekend. The year-old 13-acre, Caribbean-themed water park boasts 25 water slides, an adventure river and family raft rides. Families should also mark their calendars for Six Flags' exciting 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Fright Fest taking place Oct. 7-29.

For more information, contact Six Flags Great America (847-249-INFO, [www.sixflags.com](http://www.sixflags.com)).

Opportunities for hands-on learning are abundant at **The Morton Arboretum** in Lisle and the new **Kohl Children's Museum** in Glenview. With over a half-mile of snake-like twists and turns, the arboretum's Maze Garden provides a "living puzzle" and a new way of looking at plants and vegetation. The Children's Garden, the arboretum's newest attraction, is a series of 10 child-size garden areas that encourage children's exploration and growth. Kohl Children's Museum lets children play the role of adults at popular exhibits such as *Dominick's* grocery store, *Pet Vet* and *Potbelly Sandwich Works*.

For more information, contact The Morton Arboretum (630-968-0074, [www.mortonarb.org](http://www.mortonarb.org)) and the Kohl Children's Museum (847-832-6600, [www.kohlchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.kohlchildrensmuseum.org)).

### **Northern**

Utica's **Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Lodge and Indoor Water Park** is Illinois' first indoor water park resort. In addition to a wave pool, a lazy river and a rock grotto waterfall, one of Grizzly Jack's most popular attractions is its motion and sound adventure water slide—the first in America. Riders can select from a variety of adventures to encounter during their 330-foot descent, from animals and aquatic life, to a polar winter experience. New this summer, families can frolic in Grizzly Jack's outdoor pool and whirlpool. In addition, Grizzly Jack's Enchanted Forest offers more fun with a new indoor amusement park featuring carnival-style rides and midway games. At the end of the day, guests can take a break from the water and relax in the comfort of the Grand Bear Lodge, or gather around the stone fire pit for an evening of storytelling. Travelers who prefer a true home-away-from-home experience can rent a vacation villa equipped with a fully-appointed kitchen, laundry facility and DVD player.

For more information, contact Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Lodge and Indoor Water Park (866-399-3866, [www.grandbearlodge.com](http://www.grandbearlodge.com)).

Families can enjoy an adventurous vacation year-round at the **Chestnut Mountain Resort** in Galena. Offering fun and challenging trails during the ski season, warmer weather provides opportunities for mountain biking, miniature golfing, horseback riding and zooming 2,050 feet down the resort's popular Alpine Slide. And while in town, thrill-seekers can soar more than 2,000 feet above the ground in a hot air balloon with **Galena On the Fly**. Passengers will sail over the Mississippi River and Jo Daviess County for a bird's eye tour of scenic Galena.

For more information, contact Chestnut Mountain Resort (800-397-1320, [www.chestnutmtn.com](http://www.chestnutmtn.com)) and Galena On The Fly (877-GO-GALENA, [www.galena.org](http://www.galena.org)).

Dinosaur lovers will want to visit Rockford's **Burpee Museum of Natural History** to see *Jane: Diary of a Dinosaur*. Uncovered by a team of Burpee staff and volunteers in southeastern Montana in 2001, Jane is a 66 million-year-old juvenile Tyrannosaurus rex and the best preserved, most complete juvenile T. rex ever found. The whole family will appreciate this awesome discover while learning about Jane's life.

For more information, contact the Burpee Museum of Natural History (815-965-3433, [www.burpee.org](http://www.burpee.org)).

Rockford's newest attraction, **Volcano Falls Adventure Park**, provides entertainment and an adventure for everyone. Families can battle it out in the Laser Zone, compete on the miniature golf course and practice their skills in the batting and soccer cages.

For more information, contact Volcano Falls Adventure Park (815-282-2100, [www.volcanofalls.com](http://www.volcanofalls.com)).

### **Central**

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM) in Springfield has drawn more than a half-million visitors from throughout the world since its opening in April 2005. Mixing 21<sup>st</sup>-century technology with

19<sup>th</sup>-century history, the ALPLM sheds light on the life and legacy of one this country's most influential figures. Families should mark their calendars for the much-anticipated exhibit, **Mrs. President: From Martha to Laura**, May 13-Oct. 29, which examines the role of America's legendary first ladies throughout history. Gorgeous gowns, historical artifacts, White House furnishings and intimate letters will all be on display, illustrating the unique impact these women have had on society.

For more information, contact the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, (217-558-8844, [www.alplm.org](http://www.alplm.org)).

Reindeer in the summer? At **Hardy's Reindeer Ranch** in Rantoul, a herd of these magnificent animals treat visitors to a magical experience year-round. While the ranch is transformed into a winter wonderland during the holiday season, the warmer months are a delight too, as families can tour the ranch to meet these loveable creatures or try their luck in the corn maze.

For more information, contact Hardy's Reindeer Ranch, (217-893-3407, [www.reindeerranch.com](http://www.reindeerranch.com)).

From butter cows to pop stars, the **Illinois State Fair**, Aug. 11-20, has something for everyone, attracting nearly 750,000 fair-goers every year. The state fairgrounds in Springfield will come alive this summer when agricultural exhibits, classic fair food and a host of other attractions come together for one of the state's most anticipated events. The fair will be enhanced this year with evening fireworks shows for nine nights, a horseshoe sandwich eating contest and exciting wildlife additions to the Jungle Area including sharks, alligators and more!

For more information, contact the Illinois State Fair (217-782-6661, [www.illinoisstatefair.info](http://www.illinoisstatefair.info)).

The mother of all American roads, **Route 66**, winds its way through Central Illinois highlighting some of the state's one-of-a-kind attractions. Visitors should be sure to stop by Shea's Gas Station Museum in Springfield, where proprietor Bill Shea keeps his collection of gas station memorabilia and entertains guests with stories from over 50 years of working along the classic American road. Families can also cruise to the Cozy Dog Drive-In along the way, home to an Illinois favorite – the world-famous Cozy Dog invented in 1946. Additional attractions include the 28-foot-tall Gemini Giant, the Polka Dot Diner and the annual Mother Road Festival each fall.

For more information, contact Historic Route 66 (217-782-6661, [www.historic66.com](http://www.historic66.com)).

### **Western**

In 1848 John Deere opened the doors to his plow manufacturing plant in Moline, turning a simple dream into one of history's most influential achievements in agriculture. The **John Deere Collector's Center and Pavilion** is recognized internationally as one of the most comprehensive agricultural exhibits, serving as a crossroads where the past, present and future of the farming industry meet. The collector's center provides families the opportunity to check out vintage tractors and equipment, watch restorations in progress, and bring home a piece of history with John Deere memorabilia.

For more information, contact the John Deere Pavilion (309-765-1000, [www.deere.com](http://www.deere.com)) and the John Deere Collector's Center (309-748-7944, [www.deere.com](http://www.deere.com)).

The **Peoria RiverFront**, spanning 1.5 miles along the scenic Illinois River, is as exciting as it is beautiful. Active families can spend their time boating, playing sand volleyball and biking along the beach. Weekend evenings in the summer will be buzzing with sounds from the summer concert series; other festivals include Peoria's annual Steamboat Festival (June 16 and 17), Peoria Balloon Fest (July 14 and 15) and River City Soul Fest (Aug. 11 and 12).

For more information, contact the Peoria RiverFront (309-671-5555, [www.peoriariverfront.com](http://www.peoriariverfront.com)).

### **Southern**

Southern Illinois is known for its beautiful landscapes and abundant outdoor activities. The **Shawnee National Forest** in the heart of Southern Illinois is one of the country's most breathtaking forests. It is home to Giant City, Garden of the Gods and Cave-in-Rock state parks, all of which offer dramatic rock formations, moderate to difficult hiking trails and ideal bird watching. Nature lovers can experience lush forests and fauna, as well as cliffs, canyons and wildflowers. Following an active day visitors can relax in front of the stone fireplace at the Giant City Lodge. Built in the early 1930's, the lodge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For more information, contact the Department of Natural Resources (618-253-7114, [www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/shawnee](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/shawnee)).

Children of all ages are thrilled by the collection of Superman memorabilia at Metropolis' **Super Museum**. Super fans can peruse original costumes, movie props, rare toys, comic books and even a 15-foot bronze Superman statue. "The Home of Superman" will once again host visitors from across the country at the 28<sup>th</sup> annual Superman Celebration, June 8-11. Attendees can meet comic book artists and even some of the actors who have played Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen and the Man of Steel himself on TV or in films.

For more information, contact the Super Museum (618-524-5518, [www.supermuseum.com](http://www.supermuseum.com)).

### **Southwest**

Visitors from around the world have found themselves walking in circles at **The Great Godfrey Corn Maze** in Alton. For two months each fall, the gigantic maze is cut into a seven-acre cornfield, enticing visitors to meander their way through hundreds of twists and turns. For several weekends in October the maze is open on Friday and Saturday evenings, providing a "spooktacular" twist on the fall season.

For more information, contact Great Godfrey Maze (618-466-1483, [www.greatgodfreymaze.com](http://www.greatgodfreymaze.com)).

The well-known adventures of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark are brought to life at the **Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center** in Hartford. Families are treated to an in-depth look at the preparations and developments that took place in Illinois before the pair's winter voyage. A 55-foot replica of the keel boat used on the expedition is featured in the exhibit and a variety of reenactments take place year-round.

For more information, contact the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (618-251-5811, [www.state.il.us/hpa/hs/lewclark.htm](http://www.state.il.us/hpa/hs/lewclark.htm)).

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers free travel resources with additional information on family-friendly 3-Day Getaways, festivals, events and attractions. All are available by calling **1-800-2-CONNECT** to speak with an Illinois travel counselor or by visiting the Bureau's Web site at **[www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com)**.

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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](http://www.illinoismediacenter.com)**. Additional photography may be obtained by contacting Emma Douglas at [emma.douglas@edelman.com](mailto:emma.douglas@edelman.com), 312-240-2730, or Julie Connolly at [julie.connolly@edelman.com](mailto:julie.connolly@edelman.com), 312-233-1246.

*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.*