



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 30, 2007

CONTACT: Andrew Ross 312/814.8193
Mica Matsoff 312/814.8199

SEVEN WONDERS OF ILLINOIS UNVEILED

Top destinations around the state chosen by consumers

CHICAGO – After thousands of votes were cast during the month of March, the wait is finally over. Today, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism (DCEO/IBOT) revealed the official Seven Wonders of Illinois on its Web site www.enjoyillinois.com. The winning Seven Wonders are:

- **Wrigley Field, Chicago** – One of baseball's oldest and most beloved stadiums in the nation is best known for its charming ivy-covered walls and its die-hard Chicago Cubs fans.
- **Baha'i House of Worship, Wilmette (Chicagoland)** – One of only seven Baha'i temples in the world, the Baha'i House is an architectural marvel featuring a nine-sided dome surrounded by beautiful fountains and gardens.
- **Starved Rock State Park, Utica (Northern)** – Offering visitors a destination rich in history and natural beauty with lush forests, Starved Rock State Park features 18 magnificent canyons, spectacular ancient rock formations and numerous sparkling waterfalls in a breathtaking setting along the Illinois River.
- **Allerton Park and Retreat Center, Monticello (Central)** – This National Natural Landmark invites guests to explore a sprawling 1,500-acre estate with picturesque gardens, unique sculptures, winding trails, nature areas and a stunning mansion.
- **Black Hawk State Historic Site, Rock Island (Western)** – This historic site pays homage to the Sauk and Mesquakie (Fox) Indian tribes who occupied the area as far back as 12,000 years ago. The site features a tree-lined park with walking paths along the scenic Rock River.
- **Rend Lake, Benton (Southern)** – Rend Lake is the state's second largest reservoir, and one of the premier vacation spots in Illinois offering travelers boating, water skiing, swimming, shopping, nature trails, golf, fishing and hunting.
- **Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway, Alton (Southwest)** – The 33-mile stretch of highway where the Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri rivers meet to flow to the ocean, offers onlookers majestic views, natural wildlife, river attractions and quaint villages.

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

"The Seven Wonders of Illinois program was not only an exciting contest for our communities to rally around their favorite destinations, but it's going to continue spreading the word about all our unique offerings across the state. These innovative tourism programs are bringing visitors from near and far, expanding our economy and helping create more good jobs," Gov. Blagojevich said.

Visitors to the Bureau's Web site, www.enjoyillinois.com, can now learn about each of Illinois' official Seven Wonders through a dedicated microsite that hosts a feature page for each of the wonders and downloadable videos. The videos offer a two- to three-minute narrative of each attraction, its history, offerings and related fun-facts. Visitors can also book a Seven Wonders of Illinois 3-Day Getaway featuring both the final wonders and many of the nominees. Those who take a 3-Day Getaway will also receive a free \$25 Shell gift card.

"We are so pleased with the success of the Seven Wonders of Illinois program," said Jan Kostner, deputy director of DCEO/IBOT. "This multi-media campaign encouraged consumers to tell us about their favorite attractions, and the response we received showed us how passionate travelers are about Illinois' most distinctive destinations."

The Seven Wonders of Illinois program was launched at the 2007 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism in Chicago in February, when DCEO/IBOT Deputy Director Jan Kostner invited consumers to nominate their favorite Illinois attractions on the Bureau's Web site. The Bureau received more than 3,700 nominations during February, from which 84 destinations were chosen to compete—12 from each of Illinois' seven regions. During March, visitors to www.enjoyillinois.com were invited to vote on their favorite attractions throughout the state. Each week the field was narrowed down, based on votes, until only the final seven remained.

To get travelers started on their journeys to discover the Seven Wonders of Illinois, 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**. Travelers can also order the all-new Illinois Travel Guide, the most comprehensive guide to travel in the Land of Lincoln. Guides are available at Tourist Information Centers, local convention and visitors bureaus, and regional tourism development offices statewide.

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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, available electronically, may be obtained by contacting Emma Douglas at emma.douglas@edelman.com, 312-240-2730 or Stephanie Aenchbacher at stephanie.aenchbacher@edelman.com, 312-240-2688.

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.