



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 14, 2007

CONTACT: Stephanie Aenchbacher, 312-240-2688
stephanie.aenchbacher@edelman.com

TAKE TO ILLINOIS' OPEN ROADS THIS SEASON FOR COOL SUMMER ADVENTURES

CHICAGO – Summertime offers travelers the freedom to hit the road. With nearly one-third of the U.S. population living within a 500-mile radius of Illinois*, it's easy for travelers to find the adventure they seek in the Land of Lincoln.

CHICAGO

One of the defining traits of Chicago summers is the abundance of free **Lakefront Festivals**. With the famed skyline as a backdrop, Chicago's lakefront buzzes with activity during the **24th Annual Chicago Blues Festival** (June 7-10), presenting six stages of live rhythm and blues; the **27th Annual Taste of Chicago** (June 29-July 8), offering the savory flavors of more than 70 Chicago restaurants; the **8th Annual Chicago Outdoor Film Festival** (July 17-Aug. 28), showcasing classic movies under the stars each Tuesday in Butler Field; the **49th Annual Air & Water Show** (Aug. 18-19), presenting the spectacular maneuvers of the military's finest aircrafts and boats and the **29th Annual Chicago Jazz Festival** (Aug. 30-Sept. 2), featuring the smooth sounds of internationally-renowned jazz artists.

For more information, contact the Mayor's Office of Special Events (312-744-3315, www.cityofchicago.org/specialevents).

The city of Chicago presents the **Art of Play: Summer in Chicago 2007** (June 1-Sept. 30) – featuring more than 150 interactive events, performances, demonstrations, tours and exhibits that feature toys and games. Highlights include "Niki in the Garden," a spectacular exhibition of acclaimed artist Niki de Saint Phalle's imaginative sculptures displayed on the grounds of the Garfield Park Conservatory; "Tinker Time," where kids and adults can make their own toys at the Chicago Children's Museum; the "Recycling Sailboat Regatta," a competition for homemade toy boats to race each other at Gompers Park Lagoon; and the "Games Pharaohs Played" event at the Oriental Institute Museum showcasing Egyptian games from 3,000 years ago.

For more information, contact the Chicago Office of Tourism (1-877-CHICAGO, www.877CHICAGO.com).

This season, Millennium Park is alive with the sound of music! The **2007 Grant Park Music Festival** (June 13-Aug. 18) is the nation's only remaining free, outdoor classical music series. The series offers a wide variety of music, from the melodic sounds of pianists and classic choirs to inspiring vocalists and moving symphonies – all performed in Millennium Park's state-of-the-art Jay Pritzker Pavilion. This season includes many

*According to the Travel Industry Association

-more-

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

highlights such as The Decemberists, an up and coming indie rock band, who will collaborate with the Grant Park Orchestra on Wed. July 18 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of one of Chicago's and the country's most renowned independent concert venues, the Metro.

For more information, contact the Grant Park Music Festival (312-742-7638, www.grantparkmusicfestival.com).

CHICAGOLAND

All summer long visitors can play the odds at **Arlington Park Racetrack** in Arlington Heights. Guests can experience thoroughbreds thundering around the track from the heights of the grandstands, or settle in to one of the many luxury suites or restaurants overlooking the track. The whole family will enjoy the exquisite beauty and showmanship of an unforgettable horse-racing experience.

For more information, contact Arlington Park (847-385-7500, www.arlingtonpark.com).

Music lovers can relax and enjoy beautiful music with friends and family at the **Ravinia Festival**, June 4-Sept. 17, in Highland Park. Ravinia is known for presenting world-class music and performances with musical acts ranging from Aretha Franklin to The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the 2007 concert series is no exception. Highlights from this season's line-up include performances by the Steve Miller Band, the Indigo Girls, B.B. King and Joan Osborne. Ravinia attendees can listen to performances in the open-air, covered pavilion or picnic on the lawn under the stars. If guests are more interested in eating indoors, they can check out the new Park View Restaurant offering a fine dining experience with spectacular views of the park.

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

Strawberries take center stage at the **25th Annual Long Grove Strawberry Festival** in Long Grove, June 22-24. One of Long Grove's signature events, the Strawberry Festival draws close to 50,000 visitors annually and offers guests everything "strawberry" including chocolate dipping stations, fruit smoothies, ice creams, baked goods and, of course, fresh berries. In addition to the delectable treats, the festival features a classic car show and the 2nd Annual Strawberry Jam Kids' Expo, complete with face painters and balloon artists.

For more information, contact Historic Long Grove (847-634-0888, www.longgroveonline.com).

Beautiful hot air balloons dot the skies throughout the **Eyes to the Skies Festival** in Lisle, June 30-July 4. The Chicagoland area's only hot air balloon festival began more than 25 years ago and has grown from hosting five traditional balloons to include a multitude of distinctively designed balloons like the Energizer Bunny[®] and a giant moving truck. Guests can not only admire these amazing balloons from afar, but can take a hot air balloon ride for themselves. Other activities include carnival rides, nightly fireworks, an antique car show, musical entertainment and an exotic animal petting zoo.

For more information, contact the Eyes to the Skies Festival (630-963-4281, www.eyestotheskiesfestival.com).

NORTHERN

During the **6th Annual Great Galena Balloon Race**, June 15-17, visitors to Galena's Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa will view a sky filled with colorful and vibrant balloons. This year, in addition to the balloon glow on Friday night, there will be the first Ale Fest featuring more than 100 of the finest craft beer styles. With three balloon races, live music, face painting, a car show, dog agility demonstrations, balloon rides and more, families are sure to enjoy this annual event.

For more information, contact Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa (800-892-2269, www.eagleridgeresortonline.com).

The **43rd Annual Dixon Petunia Festival**, July 3-8, celebrates the blooming petunias that envelop Dixon all summer long. For five days guests will have the opportunity to enjoy live country music, a parade, carnival attractions, fireworks and food. A few of the highlights that will keep visitors cool include the Rock River Raft Race, during which homemade rafts and teams of three will race each other down the river, and an old-fashioned water fight with the Blackhawk Firefighters Association.

For more information, contact the Dixon Petunia Festival (877-776-9820, www.petuniasfestival.org).

Sycamore shows off its history during the **Turning Back Time Classic Car Show**, July 27-29. Attendees to the car show can view the designs and explore the history of more than 800 classic cars that line the streets. Visitors can also enjoy historic downtown Sycamore shopping and restaurants.

For more information, contact the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce (815-895-3456, www.sycamorechamber.com).

Rockford hosts Illinois' largest music festival, **On the Waterfront**, Aug. 31-Sept. 3. Music lovers will not want to miss this event presenting more than 246 hours of tunes on seven stages, including top-billed performers, Pat Benatar and Cheap Trick. Visitors can also choose from more than 30 special events taking place throughout the festival, such as hands-on activities for children, a marketplace stocked with treasures and a nightly fireworks spectacular.

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

CENTRAL

At the **18th Original Raggedy Ann & Andy Festival** in Arcola, June 9-10, visitors can introduce their kids to the fun-loving characters created by Johnny Gruelle, an Arcola native. While there, families will enjoy the children's craft tent, pony rides, Raggedy-designed street puzzles, Arcola Jaycee's kiddie tractor pull, and, for true Raggedy Ann and Andy fans, a look-alike contest!

For more information, contact the Arcola Chamber of Commerce (www.arcolachamber.com) or the Raggedy Ann & Andy Museum (217-268-4908, www.raggedyann-museum.org).

Explore Illinois from Marshall to East St. Louis during the **National Road Festival**, June 15-17. Travelers can visit any of the 17 participating communities along the Historic National Road – all celebrating the first federally supported trans-Appalachian highway. The festival offers musical performances, hayrides, antique tractor parades, flea and antique markets, and more. Travelers can even take an airplane ride to get a birds-eye view of this famous highway.

For more information, contact the National Road Association (888-268-0042, www.nationalroad.org).

The Bard's greatest works are reborn during the **Illinois Shakespeare Festival** in Normal, June 27-Aug. 12. The Illinois State University Department of Theatre and the College of Fine Arts and the Illinois State University Foundation have collaborated to present Shakespearean productions in an open-air, Elizabethan-style theater for the past 29 years. Known as one of the top Shakespeare Festivals in the Midwest, guests will enjoy 40 performances, post-performance discussions, evening concerts, a museum exhibit, an educational video series and various workshops to help actors perfect their craft.

For more information, contact the Illinois State University Box Office (309-438-2535, www.thefestival.org).

A 400-pound butter cow, Cozy Dogs, country music and wine tasting are a few highlights of the **2007 Illinois State Fair** in Springfield, Aug. 10-19. Each year, travelers from across the Midwest visit Springfield to celebrate the state's rich agricultural industry and enjoy carnival rides, live music, livestock, rodeo and cooking competitions.

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

WESTERN

Thanksgiving isn't the only time turkeys get top billing! The **Tremont Turkey Festival** celebrates these birds, June 8-10. Guests can feast on turkey dogs, turkey drumsticks and turkey hot wings, as well as compete in a strawberry shortcake eating contest, antique tractor pull, parade and carnival.

For more information, contact the Tremont Turkey Festival (309-925-5017, www.turkeyfestival.com).

The **Steamboat Festival** in Peoria allows guests to celebrate the mighty steam-powered ships, June 15-17. Peoria's riverfront bursts with activity as visitors revel at the riverboat races, listen to the many bands, participate in sporting events and enjoy carnival rides during this lively weekend.

For more information, contact the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (800-747-0302, www.peoria.org).

This year marks the **30th Annual Galesburg Railroad Days**, June 23-24, where the town pays homage to the railroads that helped build the nation. Visitors can immerse themselves in the history of the railroad at the Galesburg Railroad Museum and then see the trains up close during a Railyard Bus Tour. Families will also enjoy the petting zoo, carnival and music provided by the accompanying street fair. There is even a power-lifting competition for men and women who possess the strength of steam engines!

For more information, contact the Galesburg Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (309-343-2485, www.visitgalesburg.com) or the Galesburg Railroad Days Web site (www.galesburgrailroaddays.org).

SOUTHERN

Superman is the only superhero in Illinois with his own statue. Each year, his hometown of Metropolis celebrates the "Man of Steel" during the **Metropolis Superman Celebration**, June 7-10. Guests can indulge in a weekend full of carnival rides, a Super Car Show and a visit to the Superman Museum.

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

Guests of Owl Creek Vineyard in Cobden have the opportunity to get their feet wet during the **4th Annual Great Grape Stomp**, June 17-18. They will not only taste the delicious varietals from Owl Creek, but get involved in a good old-fashioned grape stomp. Located along the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail, the Owl Creek Vineyard is a family-run vineyard and winery and one of the oldest wineries in the area. In just more than 10 years, it has earned 85 medals of distinction for its wines in international, regional and state wine competitions.

For more information, contact Owl Creek Vineyard (618-893-2557, www.owlcreekvineyard.com).

Travelers can pick their own fresh fruit this summer at **Rendleman Orchards Farm Market** in Alto Pass, opening for the season July 1. Visitors can choose from delicious selections of peaches, nectarines, apples and vegetables ripe for the picking. After a day in the orchard, guests can stop into the market and quench their thirst with a fresh peach smoothie or peach cider. While there, visitors can also stock up on a variety of jams, jellies, salsas, spreads, dips and more.

For more information, contact Rendleman Orchards (618-893-2771, www.rendlemanorchards.com).

SOUTHWESTERN

Carlyle Lake, the largest man-made lake in Illinois, offers an abundance of recreational opportunities for families and friends. Throughout the summer the lake is bustling with magnificent sailboats, swimmers and sunbathers enjoying the waters. Visitors to the lake can also camp and hike along the shores while taking in the breathtaking views and wildlife.

For more information, contact the Tourism Bureau of Southwestern Illinois (618-397-1488, www.thetourismbureau.org).

Go back in time and witness one of the Midwest's largest reenactment gatherings, the **37th Annual Rendezvous** at Fort de Chartres on June 3. Located in Prairie de Rocher, visitors will be in awe of the massive stone walls of the fort that surround hundreds of participants portraying fur trappers, craftspeople, soldiers, musicians and traders from the 1750s. Guests can listen to the sounds of bagpipes and fife-and-drum corps while dining on buffalo burgers, homemade root beer and kettle corn.

For more information, contact Fort de Chartres (618-284-7230, www.ftdechartres.com) or the Tourism Bureau of Southwestern Illinois (618-397-1488, www.thetourismbureau.org).

For three days Centralia blooms with color during **Balloon Fest**, Aug. 17-19. More than 40 hot air balloons will launch during the festival from Foundation Park. Guests can dance to the live musical entertainment, shop for the perfect knick-knack at the craft fair, "ooh" and "ah" during a fireworks show, and of course, satisfy their hunger with plenty of delicious food.

For more information, contact the Greater Centralia Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Office (888-533-2600, www.seecentralia.com) or the Tourism Bureau of Southwestern Illinois (618-397-1488, www.thetourismbureau.org).

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers additional information about one-of-a-kind attractions, events statewide and suggested 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. This summer, travelers can book 3-Day Getaways to the official Seven Wonders of Illinois! Announced on April 30, the Seven Wonders of Illinois are Wrigley Field in Chicago, the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette (Chicagoland), Starved Rock State Park in Utica (Northern), Black Hawk State Historic Site in Rock Island (Western), Allerton Park and Retreat Center in Monticello (Central), Rend Lake in Benton (Southern) and the Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway in Alton (Southwest).

Additionally, visitors to who book 3-Day Getaways to Illinois this summer have the chance to share their experiences and enter to win one of four \$2,500 Shell gift cards for a year's worth of free gas. Full contest rules are available on enjoyillinois.com. All visitors who book 3-Day Getaways online will receive a \$25 Shell gift card after their trip is taken.

#

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.