



# ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism  
Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor • Jack Lavin, Director

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## **TRAVEL INDUSTRY LEADERS TO “MAKE NEWS” AT 2008 ILLINOIS GOVERNOR’S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM**

*Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and industry partners to host state’s premier tourism education and networking forum Feb. 13-15 in Springfield*

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism (DCEO/IBOT) and the Illinois Tourism Alliance will host the **2008 Illinois Governor’s Conference on Tourism** Wed., Feb. 13 – Fri., Feb 15 at the Hilton Hotel in Springfield. The conference will be attended by more than 600 tourism industry professionals from around the state in a celebration of Illinois’ vibrant travel industry. This year’s theme, “Making News,” celebrates Illinois as an industry leader that continues to make headlines and keep travelers buzzing.

“The travel industry has had a record breaking year, contributing nearly \$28 billion to Illinois’ economy and welcoming almost 92 million visitors in 2006,” said Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich. “Our travel industry’s ability to make news is undoubtedly a catalyst for this success and this annual conference offers industry professionals the tools to continue attracting visitors from around the world.”

### **Conference Highlights**

DCEO Director Jack Lavin and IBOT Deputy Director Jan Kostner will present the annual **State of the State of Tourism Address on Thursday, Feb. 14**. Lavin and Kostner will announce the latest statewide tourism news and its economic impact. They will discuss the industry’s changing landscape and its vital role in statewide economic development.

New this year, the Illinois Governor’s Conference on Tourism will highlight four educational tracks that will help attendees make the most of their conference experience. The tracks are Marketing and Media, Sales, Niche and Specialty Marketing, and Technology. Each track will offer a variety of renowned industry speakers who will provide attendees with innovative information they need to make headlines for their destinations. Highlights include:

- **John Cosgrove, Alliance of National Heritage Areas executive director (Feb. 13)**, will lead a new, half-day heritage tourism and development workshop;
- **Marti Barletta, founder and president of The TrendSight Group (Feb. 14)**, an international authority on marketing to women, will provide insight for marketing to the “bullseye” group of women boomers;
- **Brian Mullis, Sustainable Travel International president (Feb. 14)**, will explore the importance of green travel and sustainable tourism and how attendees can integrate sustainable business practices into their operations;

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- **Daniel Levine, founder and executive director of the Avant-Guide Media (Feb. 14)**, one of the industry's leading travel marketing and travel trends experts, will discuss where the travel industry is headed and how Illinois' travel professionals can develop programs and marketing strategies to lure the international traveler; and
- **Sam Glenn (Feb. 15), motivational speaker and chalk artist**, will explore ways attendees can "kick start" their enthusiasm and attitude in the workplace.

An icebreaker reception will be held on Wed., Feb. 13, at the Illinois State Museum, providing participants with a great opportunity to explore the exhibits and catch up with old and new friends. On the second evening of the conference, attendees can enjoy a selection of Springfield's dining and entertainment options, providing a worthwhile chance to network and explore the state's capital city. To cap off the day, a special **Valentine's Day Sweet Dreams Reception**, held at the Hilton Springfield, will feature live music and late night refreshments.

#### **Governor's Awards Luncheon**

On **Feb. 15**, the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Governor's Conference on Tourism will conclude by recognizing Illinois' tourism industry leaders with the **Governor's Awards Luncheon**. The awards will honor the institutions and people who have led the industry through progressive and pioneering tourism marketing practices.

For a complete conference schedule and list of speakers or to register for the **2008 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism**, visit [www.iltourismconference.com](http://www.iltourismconference.com) or [www.visitillinois.net](http://www.visitillinois.net), or call **312-658-1047**.

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*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.*

*The Illinois Tourism Alliance is a not-for-profit membership organization that serves as the primary umbrella for the Illinois travel and tourism industry. The group's board of directors oversees efforts to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within Illinois with core services focusing on legislative support, education and professional development.*

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