



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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2008 ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM MAKES HEADLINES WITH RECORD TOURISM GROWTH, NEW INITIATIVES

CHICAGO – Illinois' premier educational and networking forum for the travel industry, the 2008 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism, gathered more than 500 state tourism representatives, Feb. 13-15 at the Hilton Springfield. The conference, themed "Making News," celebrated Illinois as an industry leader that continues to make headlines. The conference was hosted by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism (DCEO/IBOT) and the Illinois Tourism Alliance (ITA).

In addition to educational programs and a vibrant roster of speakers, the conference featured the annual State of the State of Tourism Address from DCEO Director Jack Lavin and IBOT Deputy Director Jan Kostner. Lavin and Kostner praised the state's recent record-breaking tourism achievements and announced new initiatives. Highlights included:

- Illinois welcomed a record breaking 91 million domestic visitors in 2006, a 6.4 percent increase from the previous year and generated an economic impact for the state of more than \$28.3 billion.
- Overseas visitors increased spending by 9.8 percent in 2006, generating \$1.7 billion in economic impact.
- Traveler spending on lodging in 2006 increased by 14.4 percent from 2005, the highest increase among travel expenditures.
- A new Illinois Spring Break 2008 program featuring special Chicago hotel rates during March and April, as well as KidVentures – unique 3-Day Getaway itineraries created especially to excite kids and families about travel to Illinois.
- Spring/Summer television ads include new footage shot at 25 locations throughout the state, as well as new music and logo treatment.
- A new "Soul of Illinois" African American Illinois travel guide, launching this spring.
- IBOT will launch a new Hispanic Web site this spring, www.disfrutailinois.com, which will feature 3-Day getaways, top destinations and a kids-only section.
- Starting in June, new 30 second advertisement spots will be showcased on 900 movie screens throughout Chicago, Indianapolis, Milwaukee and St. Louis.

A full transcript of the 2008 State of the State of Tourism Address can be found at www.iltourismconference.com.

Tourism Marketing and Achievement Award Winners

The 2008 Governor's Conference on Tourism concluded with the Governor's Awards luncheon on Friday, Feb. 15. Emceed by Elizabeth Wooley, anchor of WICS-TV, Springfield, awards were presented at the luncheon to honor the organizations, businesses and people who have led the industry through innovative tourism initiatives.

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The 2008 awards were created by R.S. Owens, a Chicago-based manufacturer that produces statues for the Academy Awards® and Emmy® Awards, among others. The awards were presented in nine categories split in three divisions – Division A for organizations with operating budgets under \$250,000; Division B for groups with budgets ranging from \$250,001 to \$700,000; and Division C for groups with budgets more than \$700,000. The entries were judged by a panel of marketing professionals on clarity of message, creativity, originality and the project's overall success.

2008 Governor's Awards Recipients

Peer's Choice Award: Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau, "*Beyond Expectations...Bolingbrook*"

Best of Show: Chicago Office of Tourism, "*Niki in the Garden*" Exhibit Promotional Campaign

Print Advertising

Division A: N/A

Division B: Elgin Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Creating Memories*

Division C: Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, "*Lingonberry*"

Alternate Advertising

Division A: Galena Cellars Vineyard & Winery, *2007 Nouveau Celebration Poster*

Division B: City of Joliet Visitors Bureau, "*Joliet Kicks of Route 66*" Directional Signage

Division C: Aurora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, "*Your Getaway Destination*" Pull-Up Shade

General Brochures

Division A: Starved Rock Lodge and Convention Center, *General Destination Brochure*

Division B: City of Joliet Visitors Bureau, *Driving and Walking Tours on Route 66*

Division C: Lisle Convention and Visitors Bureau, "*Explore Chicago, Stay in Lisle*" Brochure

Visitor Guides

Division A: Nauvoo Tourism Office, *Beautiful Nauvoo Visitor Guide*

Division B: Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau, *All Around Alton Visitor Guide*

Division C: Bloomington-Normal Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Bloomington-Normal Visitor Guide*

Media Kits, Meeting Planning or Group Tour Guides

Division A: N/A

Division B: N/A

Division C: DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau, "*Magnificent Meetings West of Chicago!*" Meeting Planners Guide

Newsletters

Division A: Starved Rock Lodge and Conference Center, *Consumer Newsletter*

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Division B: Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Great Rivers Roadtrips Newsletter*

Division C: The Tourism Bureau of Southwestern Illinois, *"News From the Road" Newsletter*

Web Sites

Division A: Agriculture Tourism Partners of Illinois (ATPI), www.agfun.com

Division B: Elgin Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, www.northernfoxrivervalley.com

Division C: The Tourism Bureau of Southwestern Illinois, www.thetourismbureau.org

Audio/Visual (Radio)

Division A: McHenry County Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Fall Getaways Radio Advertisements*

Division B: Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Meeting of the Great Rivers Scenic Byway Podcast*

Division C: Aurora Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, *"Santa and the Elves Strike" Radio Advertisements*

Audio/Visual (Television Ads or DVDs)

Division A: Western Illinois Tourism Development Office, *Great River Road National Scenic Byway DVD*

Division B: N/A

Division C: Knights Action Park and Caribbean Water Adventure, *Television Spot Advertisements*

Integrated Marketing Campaigns

Division A: Streator Tourism, *"Planet Pluto Expo (P2E)" Campaign*

Division B: City of Joliet Visitors Bureau, *"Joliet Kicks Off on Route 66" Campaign*

Division C: Chicago Office of Tourism, *"Niki in the Garden Exhibit" Promotional Campaign*

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Media requiring additional information on the 2008 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism may contact Emma Douglas at emma.douglas@edelman.com or 312-240-2730, or Andrew Smith at Andrew.Smith@edelman.com or 312-522-1139.

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, formerly Visit Illinois, is a not-for-profit membership organization that serves as the primary umbrella for the Illinois travel and tourism industry. The group's 29-member 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.