



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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ILLINOIS BUREAU OF TOURISM INTRODUCES THE 2008 OFFBEAT ILLINOIS POSTER ADVERTISEMENTS

New series of Offbeat destinations now featured in Chicago bus shelters

CHICAGO - The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism (DCEO/IBOT) today announced its newest additions to the popular Offbeat Illinois advertising campaign. Attractions showcased in the ads include a museum devoted to legendary storybook characters, an unusual diving spot with underwater treasures and a pizza-shaped farm that grows ingredients found in pizza. Inspired by colorful travel posters from the 1920s, the Offbeat Illinois advertisements were first launched in 2005 to highlight quirky travel destinations unique to Illinois.

“The Offbeat Illinois poster campaign has created significant buzz around some of our state’s most distinctive attractions,” said Jan Kostner, deputy director of DCEO/IBOT. “We are pleased to introduce these posters to continue to spotlight some of the destinations that make travel throughout Illinois so memorable.”

The new posters can be found in Chicago bus shelters through May 31st and feature the following attractions:

- **The Johnny Gruelle Raggedy Ann & Andy Museum** in Arcola celebrates the history of Raggedy Ann & Andy as well as the life and times of their creator, Johnny Gruelle. Visitors to the museum can explore the evolution of the iconic storybook characters and their many adventures through an array of memorabilia. As the poster states, Raggedy Ann & Andy are “so cute, it’s scary.”
- **Mermet Springs** in Mermet captivates visitors with unique sunken treasures – like an airplane used in the movie “U.S. Marshals” – in its 8.5-acre quarry. As illustrated through the poster, travelers can dive deep (120 feet) to find a school bus, train, planes and much more. For those who are not seasoned divers, scuba diving lessons are offered from licensed instructors, and other activities such as snorkeling, kayaking and camping are sure to entertain visitors.
- The **R Pizza Farm** in Dow is the only farm in Illinois where pizza is grown. In addition to growing wholly organic products found in pizza, the farm also is grown in the shape of one. Each triangle (slice) represents a different ingredient, as shown in the poster, such as tomatoes, wheat, farm animals and other products. Each visitor receives a tour and a slice of delicious, farm-grown pizza.

Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism

The three posters will join IBOT's popular Offbeat Illinois merchandise offerings available for purchase at www.enjoyillinois.com/shopoffbeat.

For visitors looking to experience all of Illinois' offbeat destinations, the Illinois Bureau of Tourism offers additional information on one-of-a-kind attractions, events statewide and suggested 3-Day Getaways on the Bureau's Web site, www.enjoyillinois.com, and through its travel counselors at **1-800-2CONNECT**. Travelers can also order online or download the 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.

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 Hillary Dunn at hillary.dunn@edelman.com, 312-233-1329.

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.

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