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BARACK OBAMA ADDED TO ILLINOIS “PRESIDENTIAL TRAILS” *State’s current history-making president-elect inspires tourism*

CHICAGO – Illinois is proud to be the state that four U.S. presidents have called home, and now the Illinois Bureau of Tourism has added a new Presidential Trail devoted to President-Elect Barack Obama. Travelers are invited to take a 3-Day Getaway on the Obama Trail and visit the places where Obama began his political career. Since the fall, IBOT has encouraged travelers to visit the states’ Presidential Trails that highlight Illinois’ rich culture and history through the experiences of three presidents – Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant and Ronald Reagan – who lived and made their mark in Illinois.

“Families who watched Obama’s road to the White House can come to Illinois and see where his political career began. It is an exciting journey into our state’s most recent history,” said Jan Kostner, deputy director of the Illinois Bureau of Tourism. “The trails are educational itineraries that call attention to the current events, rich cultural offerings and landmarks across the state.”

Hours of operation for some historic sites are subject to change. Please check www.enjoyillinois.com for the most up-to-date schedules.

OBAMA TRAIL

Barack Obama was elected the 44th President of the United States on Nov. 11, 2008. He has lived in Illinois since 1985. After years as a community leader in Chicago he ran for and held a position in the Illinois State Senate from 1997 – 2004. He was then elected to a position in the U.S. Senate representing Illinois from 2005 – 2009 before running for President.

The Obama Trail includes the following in both Springfield and Chicago:

- **The Old State Capitol**, Springfield: In 1961, the building was designated as a National Historic Landmark and in 1966 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Obama announced that he would be running for President on the steps of the Old State Capitol. He returned over a year later to announce that he had chosen Joe Biden as his Vice Presidential candidate.
- **The Illinois State Capitol**, Springfield: The “new” Illinois State Capitol currently houses the offices of the Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Comptroller, and Treasurer, as well as the House of Representatives and Senate Chambers. Travelers can watch Illinois politics in action from the balcony-level seating when the legislature is in session. This was the site of many speeches given by Obama where he held a position in the Illinois Senate.
- **Grant Park**, Chicago: Referred to as Chicago’s “front yard,” Grant Park is among the city’s most prominent and beautiful parks. Obama gave his victory speech to more than a million supporters at Chicago’s Grant Park. Two areas of the park were used—the southernmost part of the park on the softball diamonds at Hutchinson Field and a smaller event further north near the Petrillo Music Shell in Butler Field.

- **University of Chicago Law School**, Chicago: Take a self-guided audio tour of where Obama taught constitutional law from 1992 to 2004. His favorite classroom was Room V, also called the Harry A. Bigelow Lecture Hall.

For more information on the Obama Trail and additional Presidential Trails, please visit the Illinois Bureau of Tourism's official Web site. The bureau also offers free travel resources with additional information on magnificent 3-Day Getaways, all four Presidential Trails, wine trails, festivals, events and attractions through the Bureau's Web site, **www.enjoyillinois.com** or its travel counselors at **1-800-2CONNECT**.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Media materials and downloadable images are now available on the Illinois Bureau of Tourism online media center at **www.illinoismediacenter.com**. Additional photography, available electronically, may be obtained by contacting Zach Morrison at zachary.morrison@edelman.com, 312-552-1165.

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.