



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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2009 ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM PLOTS THE ROAD AHEAD, MARKS ANOTHER STRONG YEAR AND AMBITIOUS FUTURE

CHICAGO – More than 400 tourism industry leaders from across Illinois converged at The Fairmont Chicago on March 4-6 for the 2009 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism to discuss the future of the state's tourism industry. This year's conference returned to Chicago with the theme The Road Ahead; hosted by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism (DCEO/IBOT) and the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (ICCVB). The conference highlighted last year's successes, while laying the groundwork for an important year ahead for the state's travel industry.

Attendees met to learn, discuss and utilize the innovative ideas driving the industry today, and had the opportunity to hear remarks from some of the most prominent thought leaders in the tourism industry. This year, IBOT Deputy Director Jan Kostner delivered the annual State of the State of Tourism Address, where she emphasized the importance of providing value, personal relevance and enhanced tourism offerings in order for Illinois to remain competitive within the tourism industry. Kostner's remarks were underscored with solid successes in 2007, including:

- In 2007, Illinois welcomed nearly 89 million domestic visitors, spending a total of more than \$29.9 billion, a 5.8 percent increase from 2006.
- The economic impact of tourism directly generated 305,460 jobs within Illinois in 2007, an increase of 3,940 new jobs and comprising 5.1 percent of total non-farm employment in the state.
- Travel-related spending accounted for over \$5.4 billion in federal, state and local tax revenues in 2007, a 4.1 percent increase over 2006. The additional taxes save an average Illinois household over \$1,100 in taxes each year.
- More than 1.1 million overseas visitors traveled to Illinois in 2007, ranking the state in a tie for sixth among most popular U.S. states for international travelers.
- Consumer inquiries for FY 08 were nearly 3.2 million, a 29 percent increase over FY 07 inquiries.
- Illinois will launch a brand new marketing campaign this month; "Perfect Match: There's a Getaway for That" is aimed at attracting travelers by showing them their perfect getaway awaiting them in Illinois. A quiz will appear on www.enjoyillinois.com, to match travelers' personal likes and dislikes with their perfect Illinois getaway.
- Illinois has made great strides in engaging consumers directly through the ground-breaking application of Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube. This presents a unique means by which consumers are increasingly researching, planning and taking their trips throughout the state.

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

Illinois Excellence in Tourism Award Winners

The 2009 Governor's Conference on Tourism concluded with the Governor's Awards luncheon on Friday, March 6. Emceed by Roz Varon, an Emmy award winning reporter of WLS-TV in Chicago, the awards honor innovative tourism marketing initiatives that promote outstanding destinations, attractions and events throughout the state of Illinois.

The awards, produced locally by Dolphin Creative Promotions in Skokie, Ill., were presented in 11 categories, with certain awards recognizing two budget categories – Division A with total marketing and operational budgets \$700,000 and above; and Division B with budgets under \$700,000. The entries were judged by a panel of marketing and tourism professionals on clarity of message, creativity, originality and the project's overall success.

2009 Governor's Awards Recipients

Best of Show: *John Hancock Observatory, Tourism Marketing Campaign*

Best Leisure Promotion

Division A: *Chicago Office of Tourism, "Chicago – A Great Urban Adventure"*

Division B: *Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, Adventure Guide*

Best Sales Promotion

Division A: *Chicago NorthShore Convention & Visitors Bureau, Group Getaways Guide*

Division B: *Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, "Destination: All Around Alton Tour Planning Guide & Touring News"*

Best Visitors Guide

Division A: *St. Charles Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Division B: *Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Runner-Up: *Heritage Corridor Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Best Tourism Marketing Campaign

Division A: *John Hancock Observatory*

Division B: *Champaign County and Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureaus in partnership with Chicago Meetings & More, Ag Tours Illinois*

Runner Up: *Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Best Event or Festival: *Chicago Office of Tourism, "Museum of Modern Ice: Chicago 2008"*

Best Creative Cooperative Partnership/Sponsorship: *Learn Great Foods, Food Books*

Best Tourism Website

Division A: *Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau, visitquadcities.com*

Division B: *Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway, illinoisriverroad.org*

Best Electronic Marketing

Division A: *Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Division B: *Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Best Social Media Marketing: *Lake County Convention & Visitors Bureau*

Best Community-wide Campaign
Division A: *John Hancock Observatory*
Division B: N/A

Best Media Relations Initiative: *Artropolis*

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Media requiring additional information on the 2009 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism may contact Zachary Morrison at zachary.morrison@edelman.com or 312-240-2848, or Emma Douglas at emma.douglas@edelman.com or 312-240-2730.

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 mission of ICCVB is to enable the members to be more effective and more efficient in attracting visitors to their communities by providing educational opportunities which raise the level of professionalism in the travel industry and provides a forum for networking and cooperative action between the members.