



# ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism

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## **ILLINOIS TOURISM PROFESSIONALS EXPLORE “THE NEW REALITY” OF TOURISM AT 23<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE, FEB. 17-19**

*Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and industry partners host more than 500 attendees at state’s leading tourism education and networking forum in Chicago*

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism (DCEO/IBOT) and the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitor Bureaus will host the **2010 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism** Feb. 17-19 at The Fairmont Chicago. This year’s theme, “The New Reality,” seeks to provide attendees with an understanding of where the tourism industry stands and how to successfully move ahead in the current economy.

More than 500 tourism professionals from across the state will gather to review 2009’s industry successes, discuss upcoming initiatives, and hear from an esteemed line-up of speakers on a variety of topics key to the industry’s future, including online citizenship, engagement, marketing trends, and leveraging the changing media landscape.

“The economic recession created unprecedented challenges for Illinois’ tourism industry,” said DCEO Director Warren Ribley. “Tourism professionals are being forced to cope with greater adversity, and this year’s Governor’s Conference will help them embrace the new reality, stronger and savvier than ever.”

### **Conference Highlights**

Director Ribley and IBOT Deputy Director Jan Kostner will present the annual State of the State of Tourism Address at a morning session on Thurs, Feb. 18. Ribley and Kostner will provide a comprehensive overview and key takeaways from Illinois’ past successes and highlight upcoming programs and relevant trends for 2010.

The conference will feature three educational tracks: *Technology, Marketing & Media*, and *Sales*. Speakers include:

- **Roger Dow**, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association, will discuss the travel industry’s perspective on working with the “new Washington” and what it means for the “Apollo” project to transform the travel industry’s marketing efforts; the evolution of the Discover America Partnership; and the introduction and impact of the Travel Promotion Act
- **Jim Carroll**, an internationally recognized futurist, trends and innovation expert, will energize attendees with his unique insight into the future

- **Henry Hartevelde**, vice president and principal analyst of Airline & Travel Research, at Forrester Research, Inc., will share how U.S. travelers feel about the economy as we enter 2010, how their views influence their travel intentions and how even the smallest hotel/destination can take advantage of the Web and social media to connect with travelers
- **Jim Brody**, international sales manager, Destination Marketing, TripAdvisor, Inc., will help attendees navigate the social media terrain and effectively utilize both TripAdvisor and other Web 2.0 sites to help successfully manage their brand
- Co-contributors of the popular blog, Travel 2.0, **Troy Thompson**, director of interactive marketing & web operations, Visit Denver, and **Mo Sherifdeen**, interactive marketing manager, Travel Oregon, will provide insights into the convergence of interactive technology and travel and how to integrate those projects with traditional media

A networking reception will be held Wednesday evening, Feb. 17 at The Fairmont Chicago as the official kick-off to the conference.

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

The 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism will conclude on Feb. 19 by recognizing Illinois tourism industry leaders at the Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards luncheon. The awards recognize those whose work helps propel innovation and forward-thinking within Illinois' travel industry.

#### **Greening the Conference**

New this year, the conference sponsors have collaborated with the Green Meetings Industry Council – Chicago Chapter to include "green" guest speakers, a special "green" exhibit area, and reduction in printed materials in favor of electronic registration and other online materials.

For a complete conference schedule and list of speakers or to register for the **2010 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism**, visit [www.ilgovconference.com](http://www.ilgovconference.com).

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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.*