



## **ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.**

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### **ILLINOIS OFFICE OF TOURISM ANNOUNCES 10 TOURISM INFORMATION CENTERS RE-OPENING IN TIME FOR PEAK TRAVEL SEASON**

CHICAGO – Illinois Office of Tourism Deputy Director Jan Kostner today announced that nine of the state's Tourism Information Centers (TICs) will be staffed again in time for the peak tourism season starting April 1 and a tenth location is expected to open later this month.

"Illinois' tourism information centers serve as a gateway to the state and play an important role in our efforts to encourage domestic and international visitors to stay longer and see more of Illinois," said Kostner. "By investing in the state's tourism industry, we are creating jobs, supporting long-term economic growth and making Illinois even more attractive for investment."

"Governor Quinn and I recognize the tourism industry's ability to serve as a catalyst for economic growth, which is why we have made it one of our priorities for the state's economic recovery and are continuing to devote resources to help this industry grow and thrive," Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Warren Ribley said.

Approximately 20 people have been hired to staff the facilities, which will be open Thursday through Monday of each week. Travel counselors assist visitors with travel information, provide brochures, and make hotel reservations as needed in order to generate more revenue during a visit/stay in Illinois. In many cases, travel counselors are able to increase the length of stay in Illinois and visitor expenditures by an additional \$45 on average.

TICs that will be reopened include: Prairie View North; Prairie View South; Cumberland Road; Silver Lake; Rend Lake North; Fort Massac; Homestead; Salt Kettle; and Union Station – Springfield, which will be open seven days a week with the help of volunteer assistance. Trail of Tears is expected to reopen later this month. These facilities were selected based on the volume of visitors/traffic that each facility received. The state would have brought in an additional \$45 million since July 1, 2010, when the centers went unstaffed. The TICs are funded through the Tourism Promotion Fund, which is funded by a portion of the state's hotel motel tax collection, which has increased nine percent in FY11.

In 2009, the Illinois travel industry brought in \$27 billion and directly accounted for 288,700 jobs. One in 10 jobs in Illinois is directly or indirectly supported by travel expenditures. Illinois welcomed over 82 million visitors in 2009 and travel spending in Illinois in 2009 generated nearly \$5.1 billion in federal, state and local taxes.

For more information on tourism opportunities available in Illinois visit [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com).

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*The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.*