



# ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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## **2011 ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE SHOWCASES WHY STATE'S INNOVATIVE TOURISM INDUSTRY IS A NATIONAL LEADER, MARKS SUCCESSFUL PAST YEAR**

ROSEMONT – Bringing together more than 400 of the tourism industry's leading professionals, the Donald E. Stephen Convention Center played host to the 2011 Illinois Governor's Conference of Tourism from March 16-18. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism (DCEO/IOT) and the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (ICCVB) together used this year's theme of "Evolution Through Innovation" as a banner for demonstrating how the thriving tourism industry continues to be a key economic driver for the state. Successes from 2010 converged with prominent national experts with local tourism leaders from all parts of Illinois to set the foundation for yet another vital year ahead for the state's travel industry.

With one of the best lineups of roundtables and presentations to date, attendees left armed with the latest information and key insights in enhancing travel to and around Illinois. State Travel Director Jan Kostner again delivered the annual State of the State of Tourism Address, focusing on the industry's five truths that covered everything from the importance of leisure travel to the state, collaboration between partners, and the increased importance of innovation in marketing. Illustrating how important the industry was to Illinois' economic recovery, Kostner released solid 2009 results, including:

- In 2009, Illinois welcomed more than 82 million domestic and international visitors, spending a total of more than \$27 billion.
- Leisure travelers spent on average \$106 per person, per day for a total of \$74 million daily in Illinois businesses.
- The economic impact of tourism directly generated 288,700 jobs within Illinois in 2009, with one in 10 jobs in Illinois directly or indirectly supported by travel expenditures.
- Travel-related spending accounted for more than \$5.1 billion in federal, state and local tax revenues in 2009. The additional taxes save an average Illinois household over \$1,000 in taxes each year.
- Twenty of Illinois' 102 counties received over \$100 million in domestic traveler expenditures in 2009.
- Nearly 1.7 million overseas visitors traveled to Illinois in 2009 and spent \$2 billion, ranking the state seventh among most popular U.S. states for international travelers.
- Also included were highlights from the state's forthcoming Spring/Summer 2011 advertising campaign, integrating a cross-medium strategy (TV, radio, Web and social media) with exciting creative highlighting statewide destinations and attractions.
- Working closely with *Midwest Living* and the Meredith Corporation, IOT will be offering consumers "The Magnificent Getaway Giveaway," a Facebook campaign allowing people a chance to interact with the strong Illinois brand and win amazing trips across the Land of Lincoln.

A full transcript of the 2011 State of the State of Tourism Address can be found at [www.ilgovconference.com](http://www.ilgovconference.com).

## **Illinois Excellence in Tourism Award Winners**

The 2011 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism again concluded by celebrating the groundbreaking work of industry innovators with the Governor's Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards. Emmy award-winning NBC5 Chicago co-anchor Zoraida Sambolin emceed the awards luncheon honoring those destinations, attractions, and events leading the way for the state's successes last year. Designed locally by Dolphin Creative Promotions of Skokie, Ill., awards are presented in 12 categories, four of which recognize 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.

### **2011 Governor's Awards Recipients**

**Best of Show:** *John Hancock Observatory, Skating in the Sky Brand and Best Web site*

**Best Leisure Collateral:** *Quincy Convention Bureau, Inside Guide*

**Best Sales Collateral:** *Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Barn Quilt Guidebook*

**Best Electronic Marketing:** *KeyLime Cove, New TV Commercial "Short Drive, Big Dreams"*

**Best Branding Initiative:** *John Hancock Observatory, Skating in the Sky brand*

**Best Social Media Marketing:** *Chicago Office of Tourism, Explore Chicago Foursquare Partnership*

**Best Media/Public Relations Initiative:** *John Hancock Observatory, Skating in the Sky Media Previews and Launch*

**Best Cooperative Partnership:** *John Hancock Observatory, Essex Inn and The Field Museum, Room with a View Plus a Dinosaur, Too Tour Operator Package*

#### **Best Web site**

**Division A:** *John Hancock Observatory, [www.hancockobservatory.com](http://www.hancockobservatory.com)*

**Division B:** *Alton Regional Convention & Tourism Bureau, [www.visitilton.com](http://www.visitilton.com)*

#### **Best Visitors Publication**

**Division A:** *Chicago Office of Tourism, "Explore Chicago: Eat, Play, Love our Neighborhoods"*

**Division B:** *Aurora Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Aurora Area Visitors Guide 2010*

#### **Best Event or Festival**

**Division A:** *Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority, Pepsi Tall Ships Chicago 2010*

**Division B:** *Champaign Country Convention & Visitors Bureau, 27th Mile Celebrate Victory Bash*

#### **Best Tourism Marketing Campaign**

**Division A:** *Chicago Office of Tourism, "Explore Chicago: Eat, Play, Love our Neighborhoods," Summer 2010*

**Division B:** *Champaign Country Convention & Visitors Bureau, New FIT Agricultural Tour Option in Illinois – a joint partnership*

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Media requiring additional information on the 2011 Illinois Governor's

Conference on Tourism may contact Brad Strauss at [brad.strauss@illinois.gov](mailto:brad.strauss@illinois.gov) or 312-814-3155.

*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.*

*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.*