

EDUCATION & RESOURCES...THIS SECTION OF OUR WEBSITE IS CHOCK FULL OF INFO



Just for you, our partners, we have a special section on our website, right there on the [Home Page](#). Look for the button labeled Education & Resources and you'll be surprised at what content is available.

We've posted the materials from our Social Media workshops held last fall with great resources for starting your Social Media efforts on Facebook, Twitter and learning about the applications available for you. We have the hand-outs for ALL (or at least most) of the sessions at the ISEN State Convention held last November in Tinley Park. So whether you're planning a gala, street festival, working with volunteers, or any other aspect, the PowerPoint presentations and/or hand-outs can be viewed and downloaded. For those who were unable to attend, click on the website and review the materials. This may not be as helpful as being there, but certainly worth the chance to learn something new.

Also included are the Economic Impact Stats by County for 2008. Look at your county or a neighboring county. And if you are one of our legislative partners, you can pull the specific counties in your district.

As been our practice, we continually research new websites that may be of interest to our regional partners. Here are some sites for websites for you to check out:

GET SMART AT TRI-STATE TOURISM, MARCH 11TH

The Tri-State Tourism Council 4th Annual Spring Conference will be held March 11th at Chestnut Mountain Lodge in rural Galena. This year's theme is "Get S.M.A.R.T. with Tri-State Tourism" with SMART standing for **S**uccessful **M**arketing **A**chieves **R**esults for **T**ourism. The conference will feature a great lineup of speakers and the workshop sessions will highlight topics such as effective use of digital social media, using Google Adwords, customer service, taking a new look at your old business and other subjects pertinent to tourism related businesses.

New this year will be a pre-conference networking opportunity the night before that will include dinner and a wine tasting featuring Jo-Daviess County wineries. Special room rates at Chestnut Mountain Lodge that night are \$74.00/single & \$79.00/double. This one day conference also includes vendor displays, a silent auction and an after-hours networking social. Tri-State Tourism members may register for \$75.00 and the non-member fee is \$85.00. This fee includes breakfast, lunch, snacks and all workshop materials. To register go to www.tristatetourism.com.

PLEASE NOTE- WE'RE CANCELLING THE FESTIVAL & SPECIAL EVENT WORKSHOP



We regret to announce that the Northern Illinois Festival & Special Event Workshop, set for March 17th, is being cancelled...and this was a terribly hard decision to make. We know that the content of this workshop is timely and the information would be invaluable in these difficult times ahead, BUT with things being what they are we had to make the decision. So, we put this idea back on the shelf and hope to bring back this event at another time.

And, perhaps the "Luck of the Irish" which had been our workshop theme, will still find you on St. Patrick's Day. Remember we will continue to post materials and resources as they become available, so keep checking our [Education & Resources](#) section of the website. (Hint, we still have and will leave up for your reference, the speaker materials from the ISEN State Convention, November 2009). For those who had registered, we will be returning your checks. For those vendors, the same will apply, your materials and fees returned.

Again, on behalf of ISEN and NITDO, we do appreciate your ongoing support of our educational workshops, and we will be addressing new topics and ventures in the future. Who knows, we may actually get into webinars? And, we'll make sure that you are the first to know when the next session is planned and announced. Thanks again & enjoy your St. Patrick's Celebration.

THANKS AND GRATITUDE.....



At the end of February, partners of the Illinois Wine Industry gathered in Springfield for the annual Illinois Grape Growers & Vintners Association (IGGVA) conference. In addition to the educational sessions taking place for two days, the conference concluded on Saturday, February 26th with an elegant banquet prepared by the Crowne

Illinois Tourism:

www.enjoyillinois.com

Northern Illinois Tourism:

www.visitnorthernillinois.com

Chicago Tourism:

www.explorechicago.org

Lincoln Bicentennial:

www.lincoln200.net

Travel Industry of America:

www.tia.org

Illinois Council of Convention & Visitors Bureaus:

www.iccvb.org

Illinois Wine Industry:

www.illinoiswine.com

Northern Illinois Wine Trail:

www.northernillinoiswinetrail.com

National Scenic Byways:

www.byways.org

Illinois Byways:

www.illinoisbyways.org

Illinois Agri-Tourism (ATPI):

www.agfun.com

Traveling Green:

www.travelgreen.org

Illinois Film Locations:

www.onscreenillinois.com

Lincoln Bicentennial Commission:

www.alpm.org

US Travel Association:

www.ustravel.org

Power of Travel – info & stats:

www.poweroftravel.org

Discover America:

www.discoveramerica.com

Tour Illinois:

www.tourismillinois.org

Meet In Illinois:

www.meetinillinois.com

Sports Illinois:

www.sportsillinois.com

Illinois African-American Travel:

www.soufulillinois.com

Illinois Hispanic Travel:

www.disfrutailinois.com

University of Illinois Extension**Agritourism:**

web.extension.uiuc.edu/agritourism/

Small Farms Conference

conferences.uiuc.edu/smallfarms

Illinois Association of Museums**Conference**

ChildrensDiscoveryMuseum.net/IAM

NITDO BOOSTING IMAGE LIBRARY

We need help and input from our tourism partners! We have been working hard at building our image library and we are always on the lookout for new shots of all that happens in our area. We are always looking for images from ALL seasons

Plaza's Executive Chef; the four-course gourmet meal was expertly paired with winning wines from the Illinois State Fair 2009 Wine Competition. During this event, IGGVA honored the individuals whose major achievements and contributions have established them as industry leaders in the promotion of Illinois' wine industry.

I was nominated and was selected as IGGVA's **2009 Friend of the Industry**, and I was humbled and honored beyond belief with this award. It was been a pleasure to work with the wineries and winery partners along the **Northern Illinois Wine Trail**, and this part of my job has become so much fun (it's hard to consider it work). I feel lucky to work with such talented and dedicated individuals, and love that I am able to share in a small way with their efforts. On behalf of me, and the NITDO office, we truly appreciate the honor bestowed by the IGGVA. So cheers...and it had better be some Illinois wine you're toasting with! To the IGGVA, my deepest thanks and gratitude!

**GREAT NEWS....PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNS TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT INTO LAW ENACTMENT OF HISTORIC TRAVEL LEGISLATION WILL BOOST INBOUND TRAVEL TO ILLINOIS AND STIMULATE LOCAL ECONOMIES**

Travel Professionals nationwide welcomed news that President Obama has signed the **Travel Promotion Act** into law on March 4, 2010. The new legislation will create economic growth and thousands of new American jobs by welcoming millions more international travelers to the United States.



"This is a historic victory for the US economy and the one in eight American workers whose jobs depend on travel," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association. The United States is equipping itself to compete in the international travel market as so many other countries are successfully doing today by promoting our diverse destinations and travel policies abroad, all under a collective national brand. Travel promotion legislation will benefit every state across America and support the 300,000+ travel-dependent workers in Illinois.

The Travel Promotion Act establishes a public-private partnership to promote the United States as a premier international travel destination and communicate U.S. security and entry policies. According to analysis by Oxford Economics, the bill is estimated to drive \$4 billion in new consumer spending annually, provide \$321 million in new federal tax revenue each year and create 40,000 U.S. jobs nationwide. Further, it is expected to reduce the federal budget deficit by \$425 million over the next 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Overseas visitors spend an average of more than \$4,000 when they visit the United States.

The Travel Promotion Act is modeled after successful state-level initiatives and is funded through a matching program featuring up to \$100 million in private sector contributions and a \$10 fee on foreign travelers who do not pay \$131 for a visa to enter the United States. The fee is collected once every two years in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security's Electronic System for Travel Authorization. No money is provided by U.S. taxpayers.

SIGN UP FOR CO-OP MAILINGS

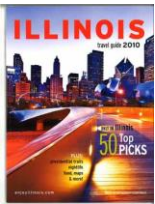
Remember to contact Sue at Illinois Lincoln Highway, 815-547-3854, to participate in the Co-Op Mailing Program. Leads are coming in from the Fall-Winter Insert. In the mailings, we showcase several communities, the ILHC 2010 Visitor Guide, Illinois



and ALL types of events. People shots are awesome to have on hand! You can assist by sending us your images (with proper photo credits) to [Mary](#).

Scenic Byways rack cards, Northern Illinois Wine Trail rack card, and the Northern Illinois VG. If your community would like to take part in these co-op mailings, call Sue to get your brochure or rack card approved. It's only \$475 to have 3,000 of your brochures or rack cards included in these bulk mailings. Great deal at less than \$.16 each!

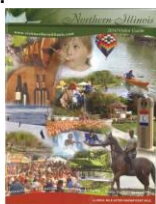
THE DOCK IS FULL ~ AND WE HAVE MATERIALS TO SHARE!



Yes, we're pleased to announce that the new publications are in house and our small loading dock is over-flowing. First, we have received a quantity of the 2010 Illinois Travel Guide,

designed in a new format with new page formats. If you haven't seen it, check out the website, www.enjoyillinois.com to download or request your copy.

And, of course we think our Northern Illinois Visitor Guide is exceptional too as another great piece for visitors to utilize when planning their trip to our region. We can either ship a case to you, or deliver in person if we're heading in your direction. Contact [Mary](#) at the office or email her if you need some. You can also download our guide directly. AND, we'd be remiss if we didn't tell you that the new 2010 Illinois Lincoln Highway Guide is available as well. You can get copies of this publication by contacting us to request a quantity.



NEW ILLINOIS LEGISLATION CAN AID IN HISTORIC TAX PRESERVATION – IT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

We are sharing information about a new initiative *Illinois Coalition for Historic Preservation and Economic Development* and sending you're their requests for support of two key pieces of legislation: HB4823 and SB2559. The Illinois legislature is currently considering these two bills, and both bills are based on the highly successful Missouri tax credit enacted in 1997, which has generated nearly 40,000 jobs for Missourians. The Illinois tax credit would allow a credit on Illinois state income taxes equal to 25% of the cost of qualified historic rehabilitation, and it can be used in conjunction with the 20% federal tax credit to provide an important "boost" for many small-scale rehab projects that would not be possible otherwise.

The Coalition is seeking support for a Rehabilitation Tax Credit that will create new jobs, encourage reinvestment in Illinois towns, revitalize historic main street communities and be the true tourism development tool we need in heritage tourism across Illinois. This legislation would assist with:

- Creation of New Jobs
- Increase Demand for Local Labor
- Attract New Investment to Illinois
- Stimulate Economic Development
- Product Development for the Heritage Tourism Industry
- Produce Good Public Policies

The Coalition is in the final process of working on a sales sheet to provide to state legislators they are looking to indicate statewide support from all kinds of tourism partner agencies: CVBs, Chambers, Main Street programs, attractions, etc. If you would like to have your organization included as a support of the Rehabilitation Tax Credit, please send an email to cory.jobe@peoplesnationalbank.com. A prompt response is greatly appreciated as this legislation is moving quickly through channels.

Calendar of Events - Illinois Tourism Happenings . . .

March 11

Tri-State Tourism Conference, Galena

March 16

Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition Mtg, DeKalb

March 17

Regional Call Center Training, Taylorville

March 17

Northern IL Festival & Special Event Workshop, **CANCELLED**

March 18

Downtown Training, Monticello

April 20-21

Historic Tax Credit Workshops, Sycamore & Marengo

May 8-16

National Tourism Week

May 15-19

International PowWow, Orlando

And, to learn more about the Historic Tax Credit...

The Illinois DCEO, through a contract with our office, has been working with Peoples Economic Development Corporation to promote the rehabilitation and promotion of Illinois' magnificent historical infrastructure. Through this program several communities throughout the State of Illinois have taken a renewed look at how their downtowns can become a draw for both retail development and tourism. Even though there is no single funding source that can be used to support the rehabilitation of these historic structures, there are several programs that can be used by local governments, economic development agencies, and individual building owners, to assist in planning, marketing and rehabilitation.



Peoples
Economic Development Corporation

SAVE THE DATE



As a part of the commitment to the NITDO and the grant requirements, we are conducting a series of workshops to help educate local officials and building owners in these opportunities. The goal is to educate economic and community development leaders, tourism and downtown development coordinators, as well as historic preservation specialist in each of the RTDO Regions. This is an opportunity to learn firsthand the importance of preservation as an end game toward sustainability and economic growth in our communities.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS 10 YEARS OF PROGRESS FOR NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY PROGRAM AND AMERICA'S BYWAYS RESOURCE CENTER

National Scenic Byways Program and America's Byways Resource Center: 10-Year Report, is now available for viewing on www.bywaysresourcecenter.org.



This December 2009 report represents the byway-specific knowledge base and resources created over the previous decade to fortify the success and sustainability of designated byways. It covers work

implemented by the FHWA-National Scenic Byways Program and America's Byways Resource Center as these two complimentary organizations have progressed toward fulfilling their respective visions.

For ease of viewing this 10-year compilation, descriptions of the work follow the Introduction in four categories: Research, Training, Tools and Evaluation. Links to digital resources are provided when available. To view the full report in HTML format, click here. For printable PDF and .txt versions of this report, click here.

Workshops for the Northern Illinois region have been set for Tuesday, April 20th in the afternoon (1:00 – 5:00 p.m.) tentatively set in Marengo. Our second session takes place the following morning, Wednesday, April 21st in Sycamore at the American National Bank of DeKalb County (1985 DeKalb Avenue). Details will be available as the dates draw closer, but we wanted to give you the info to Save The Date. So, put April 20-21 on your calendars and learn more about the proposed new program...and if we cross our fingers, the news may not be about the “proposed” program is may focus on the “new legislation”.

REGIONAL TRAINING....WE'RE TALKING ABOUT YOU!

We have been asked to traveling to the Call Center, where the counselors who answer the state's toll-free calls are anxious to learn more about Northern Illinois. Yes, the people who talk to others will allow me to talk to them! So, working with our regional CVBs and others, we have put together three-ring binders on the best of the best for our area. We're talking about the top attractions; the top events...and we're delivering the most current and hot-off-the-press regional guides for their review. The packets will be delivered on March 17th and presented to the operators in two training sessions.

Now, here's where you can help....do you have a small trinket or gift that can be included? A festival t-shirt? A button or pin? Candy or cookies? We'll take anything you have...and we need a quantity of 35 items (that way every operator gets the gift bag). We've been given bags from a partner in Belvidere, large blue reusable canvas bags...and need some fun items for inclusion? Anything you have laying around would be appreciated! If you have something, please email me at bonnie@visitnorthernillinois.com. Thanks for letting me talk about you, and the wonderful things we have to see and do here in Northern Illinois. You know, we rock!

INTERPRETIVE MURAL PROJECT

ILHC Interpretive Mural Project moving along, WOW what news to share this month! Last month's newsletter highlighted Joliet and Aurora as both were installed...BUT now Genoa and Cortland have their murals done (and scheduled to be installed the week of March 8th). Oregon is done, and should be installed



shortly, same with Byron, Dixon and University Park. Fulton is on the drawing board as is Elburn and University Park. And, thanks to the partners of the Fox River Valley...we made progress in North Aurora, Geneva, Batavia and St. Charles. See, the ILHC will get the 40 murals completed; you just need to check out the website for updates on the progress. They are truly amazing!



If your community is an ILHC-certified community, and has not taken advantage of ILHC's offer to install a 10' x 20' mural depicting the highway's history, now's the time to bug in the ear of your mayor or president. Have them contact ILHC emailing Sue Hronik at sue@drivelincolnhighway.com and make sure to get the info out. Most communities have been contacted and are taking the steps to procure one of these beautiful murals.



offer to put a village by we'll



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FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

NITDO has been actively working with Facebook and Twitter for several months, and has gathered a large number of fans and followers. And, we have done, as most others have, provided a means to become a FAN or a FOLLOWER on the home page of our website. BUT, we have also added in a New Feature. On the Home Page we have a button labeled [SOCIAL MEDIA](#). Here we want to feature links to our regional partners who are engaging in both Facebook and Twitter. We'll be listing our partners in alphabetical order, and showcasing the organization's page using their avatar as well as address with live links. We'll be unveiling this new website addition in the upcoming weeks, and will be soliciting your pages to make sure we have the correct info.



We have also encouraged and are working with our Scenic Byway Partner, Illinois Lincoln Highway to join in the mix and we did it again to promote the Northern Illinois Wine Trail. Now here is where we can use your assistance - to get more fans and to provide news to share, also find the Northern Illinois Tourism, on Facebook at facebook.com/VisitNorthernIL and on Twitter @VisitNorthernIL. For the Illinois Lincoln Highway, find their pages at facebook.com/DriveLincolnHwy or @DriveLincolnHwy. Our newest endeavor, with the smallest reach to date is for the Northern Illinois Wine Trail. You can find posts about the wine trail facebook.com/NorthernILWine and on Twitter @NorthernILWine.

