

April 2008

Volume 1, Number 6

**Cheap Trick Celebrating Our Hometown Heroes**  
**Cheap Trick** YES, this newsletter is late...it can either be blamed on celebrating Cheap Trick Day (April 1st), or returning tired from long vacation. Either way, it gave me time to reflect on the vast array of famed citizens that come from our State – and all places where visitors can come and experience what it may have been like to our favorite stars, musicians, athletes and others to grow, live and inspire. Did you know these people were from Illinois: Cheap Trick (Rockford), Barbara Hale (Rockford), Bill Murray (Wilmette), Cindy Crawford (DeKalb), Judi Ford Johnson, Miss America 1969 (Belvidere), John Deere (Grand Detour), Ronald Reagan (Tampico, Dixon), Jane Addams (Cedarville), Calisata Flockhart (Freeport), Pat Sajak (Chicago), Bob Woodward (Geneva), Vince Vaughn (Buffalo Grove, Lake Forest) and even Clyde Tombaugh (Streator – he discovered Pluto!). We have three superheroes: Dick Tracy (Woodstock), Popeye (Chester) & Superman (Metropolis). Athletes – too many well known superstars to list. And, of course you can find out about the movies filmed [www.offscreenillinois.com](http://www.offscreenillinois.com), Amaze your family & friends about Illinois trivia! Check it out!!!

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.

- Illinois Tourism:  
[www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com)
- Northern Illinois Tourism:  
[www.visitnorthernillinois.com](http://www.visitnorthernillinois.com)
- Chicago Tourism:  
[www.choosechicago.com](http://www.choosechicago.com)
- Lincoln Bicentennial:  
[www.lincoln200.net](http://www.lincoln200.net)
- Travel Industry of America:  
[www.tia.org](http://www.tia.org)
- Illinois Wine Industry:  
[www.illinoiswine.com](http://www.illinoiswine.com)



**AgFun.com**

Yes, spring is here, now that the calendar and the weather are in agreement, things are going to start bursting out all over. And with that bit of news, comes a reminder to check out the new website from ATPI (Agriculture & Tourism Partners of Illinois). Just unveiled is [www.AgFun.com](http://www.AgFun.com), the state's comprehensive listing of our vast array of agritourism offerings from Chicago to Cairo – and most important to us, those businesses throughout Northern Illinois.

Designed by Trittenhaus Design of Sycamore, the new site is designed to match the print guide, Agritourism Activities AND the new website just won a Governor's Award at the 2008 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism for overall Website Design. The website and guide highlight attractions and businesses by region. To make sure your information is complete, you can visit the website and update or add your own information directly. While the site does include a Calendar of Events, these events are maintained through the Illinois Department of Agriculture's site, [www.AgriHappenings.com](http://www.AgriHappenings.com). You can add in your own agri-events via their online form.

Make sure that you are ready now that spring is officially here. The visitors will once again be looking for places to go, produce to pick and events to share with family and friends. Check out [www.AgFun.com](http://www.AgFun.com).

**2008 Northern Illinois Website & Regional Visitor Guide**

The website hits continually amaze us, we are averaging 20,298 unique visitors each month with 814,272 hits in March alone. We are getting phenomenal number of hits, visits and most importantly unique visitors. And many of these visitors are viewing multiple pages. We want to make sure that the content on the web is as detailed as possible. One of the requests we have received in the past is for more information on restaurants and hotels. We are asking for your assistance to add in more listings on your community's hotels, motels, cabins, bed & breakfasts, and of course we need your favorite restaurants, cafes and eateries. We appreciate the need for our chain restaurants, but are truly interested in your locally-owned establishments.



And, this listing is completely FREE. Please help us spread the word to your local partners that this is available to them. Check out the button on the website's home page that allows you to Add or Change Listings. Right now we have the listings for Lodging and Dining combined based on limited content. If we have more detailed information, the listing categories will be split. Once again, please help us to spread the word to your partners on this new opportunity. And, of course, the 2008 Northern Illinois Visitor Guides are moving steadily out of the dock, let us know if you need a case or two!

**2008-2009 Co-Op Marketing Plans**

We have barely completed the 3rd quarter of the current year, signed off on the Summer Co-Op Insert in the Summer newspaper, and we are already talking about the co-op ad opportunities for the upcoming fiscal year. As in the current year, NITDO will be writing a Marketing Partnership Grant for ad space in the 2009 Illinois Travel Guide (2 pages of regional ad space), as well as in the one full page of ad space in the three newspaper insets (fall-holiday 2008, spring 2009 and summer 2009). Wow did that feel strange to write. So, we'll utilize the same format, dividing the pages into 1/6th page units. And, of course, we'll work to get the lowest possible price for your advertising dollars.

Northern Illinois Wine Trail:  
[www.northernillinoiswinetrail.com](http://www.northernillinoiswinetrail.com)  
 National Scenic Byways:  
[www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org)  
 Illinois Byways:  
[www.illinoisbyways.org](http://www.illinoisbyways.org)  
 Illinois Agri-Tourism:  
[www.agfun.com](http://www.agfun.com)  
 Film Locations:  
[www.onscreenillinois.com](http://www.onscreenillinois.com)  
 Tour Illinois:  
[www.tourismillinois.org](http://www.tourismillinois.org)  
 Meet In Illinois:  
[www.meetinillinois.com](http://www.meetinillinois.com)  
 Sports Illinois:  
[www.sportsillinois.com](http://www.sportsillinois.com)  
 Illinois African-American Travel:  
[www.soufulillinois.com](http://www.soufulillinois.com)  
 Illinois Hispanic Travel:  
[www.disfrutailinois.com](http://www.disfrutailinois.com)  
 Heartland Intn'l Music Tattoo:  
[www.HeartlandTattoo.org](http://www.HeartlandTattoo.org)  
 Chicago Olympics:  
[www.chicagoolympics2016.com](http://www.chicagoolympics2016.com)

So, at this time, we are still gathering information for the actual grant, but wanted to let you know that we were going to once again offer this opportunity. If interested, let me know. Nothing firm or in concrete, but wanted to let you know well in advance of our plans. Marketing grants will be due to IBOT in mid-May.



### Illinois Museums Face Tough Times

In the March newsletter from the Illinois Heritage Association, the Member Report, stated that several Illinois Museums are faltering. The DuPage County Historical Museum in Wheaton is struggling to maintain county support, working with reduced staff and a drastically trimmed budget. The Dick Tracy Museum in Woodstock is closing due to low attendance and interest. And, the Octave Chanute Aerospace Museum in Rantoul has put out a call for donations just to meet operating expenses. While the call met with success, the museum raises the question of long-term sustainability.

The general attitude among cultural organizations is to hunker down and look to its membership base for support, and to keep demonstrating how they serve their communities in unique and significant ways. These organizations demonstrate how they make a difference in their own communities and how they can impact, impress, and engage our visitors. As these cultural partners are facing these difficult times, remember too partners in your marketing projects. They are vital partners and often times rely heavily on our co-op endeavors. So, check out the website for this association – I have found them very informative in the past. Website is as follows:  
<http://illinoisheritage.prairienet.org>.

## Calendar of Events - Illinois Tourism Happenings . . .

### April 8-10

TIA – Travelcom, Chicago

### April 11

Challenger Learning Center/Museum of Science & Industry Family Science Night

### April 12-13

Heartland International Music Tattoo, DeKalb

### April 15

Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition Mtg, DeKalb

### April 16

IL Association Museum Workshop, Geneva

### April 17

ILHC - Phillips Park Exhibit Unveiling, Aurora

### April 21

2008 Summit, Tri-State Alliance, Freeport

### May 7

Illinois Tourism Alliance Annual Mtg & Spirit of Excellence Awards, Aurora

### May 10-18

National Tourism Week – Celebrate Our Industry

### May 13-15

ICCVB General Membership Mtg, Champaign

### May 17

Midwest Museum of Natural History, Sycamore hosts Jeff Corwin

### IBOT Advertisements Updated for Spring/Summer 2008

IBOT has recently put the finishing touches on its spring/summer 2008 advertising campaign. The campaign consists of a combination of television, print, radio, out-of-home and online advertising that will launch in March in various markets throughout the Midwest. IBOT's spring/summer television ads include new footage shot at 25 locations throughout the state, as well as new music and logo treatment, but have retained the popular "signature whistle" and the sleek, black-and-white format. The new 2008 spots showcase the state's outdoor offerings, romance destinations and Chicago activities/ attractions while encouraging consumers to book a 3-Day Getaway in Illinois. Beginning in June, IBOT's television ads will be hitting the big screen! The new 30-second spots will be showcased on 900 movie theater screens at cinemas throughout Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee and St. Louis. IBOT's print advertisements will feature destinations such as Chicago, Galena, Springfield, Shawnee National Forest and water parks this spring and summer. Be sure to keep your eyes open for these great new ads!

### Website Changes and Additions – More for Visitors to Love

The e-postcards are a BIG HIT and they have only been online for a little over two months. We are now offering partners the chance to showcase their attractions on our e-post cards. Check out the website, [www.visitnorthernillinois.com](http://www.visitnorthernillinois.com) to see the first eight partners we are featuring this month: Spring Flowers at Chaplin Creek, Franklin Grove; Belvidere Seed Company Mural, Belvidere; Golfing in St. Charles; Lincoln-Douglas Debate Site, Freeport; Swedish Days fun, Geneva; Starlight Theatre, Rockford; Heritage Canyon, Fulton; and Flagg Township Historical Society Museum, Rochelle. Visitors can send these images to their friends and family and encourage them to visit our area. We are looking for seasonal beauty shots, as well as quirky and fun iconic shots and we will be including a small caption on the front of the e-card. So, our plan is to continually change the images each month – to keep them fresh, timely and



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visitnorthernillinois.com



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interesting. So, send your best ideas to [nitdo@trittenhaus.com](mailto:nitdo@trittenhaus.com). Use the subject line to state e-post card submission.

And while we are talking about photos, we can always use more images for the website, kiosk, banners and whatever else we create. If you want to send images for consideration, please use the following criteria: 1) minimum of 300 dpi; print size of 5" x 7" minimum; clearly identified location/attraction being sent, and permission obtained to share the images you submit. Again, send them directly to our designer at our "special email address", [nitdo@trittenhaus.com](mailto:nitdo@trittenhaus.com), and include in the subject line a reference to regional photo.

### **Hispanic Travelers Gain New Resource for Planning and Booking Illinois Trips**

Illinois is responding to the growing number of Hispanics going online by developing a new and innovative Spanish Web site, [www.disfrutailinois.com](http://www.disfrutailinois.com), that will help Hispanic travelers explore Illinois. The site is part of the IBOT's Hispanic campaign, "¡Illinois. Vive la Emoción!" (Illinois. Live the Emotion!), and will assist visitors from the very beginning planning stages to the end booking phase. The most enticing part of the site is an unconventional home page where a kitchen setting will introduce site visitors to two couples. Each of the four people on the home page will represent a different personality type (amiable, analytical, expressive and assertive), making the site accessible and appealing to all trip planners. Flash technology is employed to make the site more interactive and engaging.

Following the introduction, visitors will be free to explore the information on the site including 3-Day Getaways, top destinations by region, brochures and maps, features, a calendar of events and fun facts. A new section, titled "Just for Kids" will also be added to feature destinations and attractions that will appeal to families. The website is scheduled to launch in May 2008.

### **IBOT Continues to Bare Its "Soul"**

IBOT continues to promote the rich ethnic, cultural and historical diversity of Illinois to the African-American travel market. In the first quarter, IBOT supported signature events celebrating the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday and Black History Month through its "Soul of Illinois" initiative. Event highlights included the Chicago Sinfonietta's "THE DREAM LIVES ON: Annual Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." concert and reception and Navy Pier's Black History Month series. Additionally, IBOT's "My Illinois" campaign continues to draw more talent and garner significant media attention. The "My Illinois" campaign, which draws on the personal experiences of celebrities from Illinois, recently welcomed its 17th addition, jazz musician and composer Orbert Davis.

Additionally, the "My Illinois" narrative of former Destiny's Child singer and Rockford native Michelle Williams garnered coverage by syndicated radio personality Doug Banks, The Atlanta Voice and the Urban Electronic Report ([www.EURweb.com](http://www.EURweb.com)).

Finally, IBOT will release the new Soul of Illinois travel guide this spring, which will showcase a number of the state's greatest treasures. For more information about the Soul of Illinois, visit [www.soulfulillinois.com](http://www.soulfulillinois.com).

