



UPDATES: 2008 Regional Visitor Guide & visitnorthernillinois.com

We are pleased to say that the 2008 Northern Illinois Visitor Guide is one of our most popular editions ever. Thanks to co-op partnerships with the Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition, the guide is included in every ad response from the advertising placed in the IBOT Madden newspaper inserts (over 10,000 to date this fiscal year).

The website is going tremendous and the stats continue to impress each month. We are thrilled with the unique visitors and the length of sessions. And, remember your information is only as good as the content you supply. Have you checked to make sure you (and if you are a CVB, Chamber or other community-based organization that has other partner businesses) are listed? Is the information current and accurate? And you can now add or edit your information via our online form! Do it now before you forget, and remember your listing info is FREE. Each listing contains information on your attraction or business, description, address, phone and where available, your website. While we can't possibly list every attraction in the entire 14-county area, we will try to be as inclusive as possible in our website. So, go to the home page, find the button to add or change your listing. **BE SURE TO TELL OTHERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY - HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY.**



25TH ANNUAL NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK: DISCOVER GREAT AMERICAN TRADITIONS

The Travel Industry Association (TIA) announces the selection of "Discover Great American Traditions" as the theme for the 25th annual National Tourism Week, to be held May 10-18, 2008. The silver anniversary theme encourages travel to American locales and highlights the role that tourism plays in discovering the icons of a destination. "From baseball games and Broadway shows to 'The Great American Road Trip,' our collective memories are filled with places and activities traditionally associated with travel," said Roger J. Dow, President and CEO of TIA. "For our 25th celebration of National Tourism Week, TIA is presenting cities and states with a theme and resources to help them interpret and celebrate the defining assets of their destinations."

New this year, AOL plans to salute great American travel traditions during National Tourism Week and invites TIA members to participate. The global Web services company will include travel and tourism messages on AOL.com and the AOL Travel channel. TIA members can submit editorial ideas and images to AOL for inclusion on one of 10 themed galleries featuring U.S. destinations and also receive a reciprocal link from AOL Travel, one of the top five travel information sites on the Web. More details on this opportunity are available at www.tia.org/NTW. TIA expects to have refreshed resources, including a National Tourism Week logo and updated industry facts and figures, available for use in your local efforts.

NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK IN ROCKFORD UNVEILS NEW COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTER

Congratulations to the Rockford Area CVB and their partnership with the Clock Tower Resort & Conference Center on opening their Community Information Center. Located in the Clock Tower Resort at 7801 E. State Street in Rockford (the intersection of I-90 and Business US 20), the new information center is a facility where visitors and residents can obtain more information on living, working and playing in the Rockford Region. An open house is set for Friday, May 16th which ties into National Tourism Week. For more details contact the Rockford Area CVB offices at 815-963-8111.

POW WOW, THE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY'S PREMIER SHOWCASING EVENT

Join us for the 40th annual International Pow Wow and be part of the travel industry's premier international marketplace and the largest generator of Visit USA travel! The event takes place from Saturday, May 31 - Wednesday, June 4, 2008 in Las Vegas, Nevada for five days of intensive pre-scheduled, computer-generated business appointments; opportunities to network with thousands of fellow travel organizations across the industry; business negotiations with 1,500 International and Domestic Buyers; unique news coverage for USA travel destinations and products; high profile speakers with great presentations to share, exciting evening events (wouldn't expect anything less in Vegas!), and unbelievable sightseeing tours (did you know that the famed Las Vegas Strip was a Scenic Byway?). To register or if you have any questions, please contact TIA at 202-408-8422 or powwowreg@tia.org.



THE NEW LASALLE CANAL BOAT & LOCK DAM

Keep abreast of all the exciting activities and programming in the I & M Heritage Corridor, with the new LaSalle Canal Boat and Lock 16 Visitor Center. With the opening of the canal boat rides and the visitor center around the corner, we have launched a new website to keep everyone informed about the activities surrounding the boat ride and visitor center. The website can be found at www.lasallecanalboat.org.

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

Northern Illinois Tourism:

www.visitnorthernillinois.com

Chicago Tourism:

www.choosechicago.com

Lincoln Bicentennial:

www.lincoln200.net

Travel Industry of America:

www.tia.org

Illinois Wine Industry:

www.illinoiswine.org

National Scenic Byways:

www.byways.org

Illinois Byways:

www.illinoisbyways.org

Illinois Agri-Tourism:

www.agfun.com

Film Locations:

<http://www.onscreenillinois.com>

Tour Illinois:

www.tourillinois.org

Illinois African-American Travel:

www.soulfulillinois.com

Illinois Hispanic Travel:

www.disfrutailinois.com

Heartland Intn'l Music Tattoo:

www.HeartlandTattoo.org

Chicago Olympics:

www.chicagoolympics2016.com

25th Annual National Tourism Week:

www.tia.org/NTW

Calendar of Events - Illinois Tourism Happenings . . .

May 1

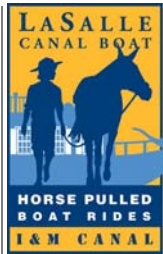
FY09 IBOT's MPP and TAP Grants accepted

May 3

Open House, ILHC Interpretive Center/Dixon Welcome Center Re-Opening, Dixon

May 5

Deadline for Transportation Enhancement Grants, IDOT Springfield



The LaSalle Canal Boat, launching in June 2008, will be a full-size replica of the wooden boats that plied the I & M Canal are more than 150 years ago. Then, travelers as illustrious as Abraham Lincoln headed to distant ports on the canal. The legendary Wild Bill Hickok worked on the canal. Follow the same route they did. Journey back in time through rustic scenery to an era when dramatic changes were unfolding in the Midwest and nation. Tour guides dressed as Canal Era crew and guests will further bring history to life with stories of the early days on the canal and Illinois prairie. The characters and stories will change often, so be sure to come back for more.

A few short blocks from the LaSalle Canal Boat will be the Lock 16 Visitor Center, opening in June 2008. The restored vintage building that was once home to a horse buggy maker now celebrates another historic form of transportation: the canal boat. A hub for LaSalle Canal Boat rides, with ticket sales and bus drop-off for group tours, the visitor center will also be a place to linger and learn, snack and shop. Enjoy light fare at the café, featuring free Wi-Fi. Buy gifts and souvenirs at the canal-themed heritage gift shop. Enjoy special I&M Canal exhibits, talks and cultural programs. Fun, interesting, relaxing, and educational, the Visitor Center will be all that and more. The characters and stories will change often, so be sure to come back often. To learn more about the I & M Canal Corridor, visit their website at www.canalcor.org or call 866-610-7678.

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS – HIGHLIGHTS FROM FREEPORT!



Lincoln-Douglas Debates, Freeport, Illinois

Freeport's 150th anniversary of the famous Lincoln-Douglas Debate will take place with a four-day festival on Labor day weekend, August 29 – September 1, 2008. The grand finale of the celebration will be held on September 1st in beautiful historic Taylor Park on Freeport's East Side near their downtown. Flavor's of Freeport's Lincoln is intended to celebrate the cultural diversity in this small community; both Freeport's "Past, Present and Future" will be showcased in food, music and fun. A wide variety of ethnic cultures will be celebrated with music and food,

including: German, Polish, Scottish, African, Spanish, Asian, Irish, Italian, Swedish, East Indian and Chinese.

In preparation for the Grand Ball, held on Saturday night of the weekend's festivities, Freeport's committee has planned a "What Shall I Wear" seminar to encourage residents (and visitors) to get in the spirit and dress in period costumes. A workshop is scheduled in early May to showcase period fashions, provide sources to rent costumes, or provide patterns for those who may want to create their own costumes.

And lastly, Freeport's Committee is working with the Illinois Secretary of State to create commemorative license plates. On sale beginning April 15th, the plates are valid from July 4th through September 1, 2008. The plates are on sale at various locations in Freeport, and you can always contact Freeport/Stephenson County CVB for details. It's a fun time planned for Freeport and we'll try to showcase some planning ideas from Ottawa in future months. Northern Illinois is lucky to have two of the debate sites in our region. Be sure to check it out www.stephenson-county-il.org or call 815-233-1357.



ILLINOIS LINCOLN HIGHWAY COALITION -- UPDATES

Thursday, April 17th, was the official unveiling of the Interpretive Kiosk at the Visitor Center in Phillips Park – Aurora. This 3-sided kiosk tells the story of Lincoln Highway, has a visitor

May 10-18

National Tourism Week – Celebrate Our Industry

May 13-15

ICCVB General Membership Mtg, Champaign

May 16

RACVB Unveils Community Information Center, Rockford

May 17

Midwest Museum of Natural History, Hosts Jeff Corwin, Sycamore

May 28

HOLIDAY – Office Closed

June 6-8

Rockford AirFest 2008, Rockford

June 17

ILHC Annual Meeting, DeKalb Oasis

July 1

FY09 Begins, Happy New Year

July 4

HOLIDAY – Office Closed

July 18-20

Great Performers Series, Chicago



Website Changes and Additions – More for Visitors to Love

We are now offering partners the chance to showcase their attractions on our e-post cards. Go to 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. Send your best ideas to nitdo@trittenhaus.com. Use the subject line to state e-post card submission.

guide holder mounted on one side, and houses a computer. This computer allows the visitor to view ILHC’s website, request a visitor guide be sent to their home, relay a story about their travels on the Lincoln Highway, or send e-postcards to their friends and families. Visitors can design their postcard using various photos of the Illinois Lincoln Highway communities.

ALSO, the ILHC’s 2008 Visitor Guide is here! This 84-page guide highlights over 40 communities along the Illinois Lincoln Highway corridor and includes a foldout map in the back. The guide is divided into three easily read sections – Eastern, Central, Western – each in a different color. Not only does the traveler learn what each community has to offer them, but they can also read about the history of Lincoln Highway, the development of ILHC, and the new projects coming to the highway. It’s a colorful guide filled with beautiful photos and lots of information. Send an email to: info@drivelincolnhighway.com to request a 2008 Illinois Lincoln Highway guide.

Lastly, the ILHC will be hosting their Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 17th at the DeKalb Oasis (yes, our second time for a meeting in an Oasis). The ILHC will showcase all accomplishments from the current year, provide updates on their many projects: 20 gazebos, 40 murals, update on web-based Community Toolkit, new VG and much more. For details or to attend meeting, contact their Associate Director Diane Rossiter at diane@drivelincolnhighway.com. Thinkin’ Lincoln now you can drive Lincoln!

FY09 NORTHERN ILLINOIS ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

IBOT has recently put the finishing touches on its 2009 Co-op Advertising Campaign and NITDO is working to complete their FY09 Marketing Partnership Grant. So, here is what we are planning for co-op opportunities: two (2) full pages for Northern Illinois regional promotion in the 2009 Illinois Visitor Guide; one (1) full page (divided into 1/6th page units) in the Fall-Holiday 2008 newspaper insert; one (1) full page, similar format, in both the Spring 2009 and Summer 2009 newspaper inserts. As soon as we get the grant written, we will send off the actual rates, but for now if you are thinking about participating in this grant opportunity, please let us know to hold your space.

Also, NITDO will once again be producing our regional visitor guide. The actual rates for the 2009 Northern Illinois Visitor Guide aren’t firmed up, plan for at least a 5% increase. We are working with designer to get the rates established in the next few weeks and will post them online and include them in the next newsletter. And, ad opportunities do exist for banner ads on the website, www.visitnorthernillinois.com. For specifics on advertising in there, the 2009 visitor guide or the regional website, contact Trittenhaus Design at wendy@trittenhaus.com.

ROCKFORD AIRFEST 2008 – KEEP YOUR EYES TO THE SKIES!



The Chicago Rockford International Airport (RFD) will once again be showcasing their Rockford AirFest 2008, held Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 6, 7, & 8, 2008 on airport grounds. The theme for AirFest 2008 will be "Hear the Thunder" with performances by the USAF Thunderbirds Jet Team, the US Army Golden Knights parachute team, and many other civilian and military acts. Other highlights of the air show include: Friday night fireworks, performer autographs, aircraft and other displays, the Rockford Fire Department’s Safety Fest, a NASA exhibit, and a Kids’ Fun Area. AirFest organizers are working hard to enhance this year’s “ground show” by adding exhibits and other displays including the world-famous Budweiser Clydesdales. To meet the growing demand of “RVers” and 5th Wheel campers interested in extended parking opportunities over the AirFest 2008 weekend, a RV Park will be open with advanced registration.

Advanced online tickets are available and tickets will also be available for purchase at select Rockford-area Road Ranger store locations beginning May 1, 2008. Over the next two months as the AirFest team finalizes show details, performers, static displays, and other show details – information will be added daily to the air show site at www.FlyRFD.com.

National Trust’s America’s Most Endangered Places including Historic Route 66 Motels
America’s priceless heritage is at risk and mom-and-pop motels of Route 66-some of America’s most irreplaceable landmarks are threatened. The sites on this year’s list of



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America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places embody the diversity and complexity of America's story, and the variety of threats that endanger it," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "The places on this year's list span the continent and encompass the broadest range of the American experience. Each one is enormously important to our understanding of who we are as a nation and a people." Affectionately called "The Mother Road," Route 66 is known for quirky roadside attractions and unique mom-and-pop motels, constructed between the late 1920s and late 1950s and often clad in neon. In recent years, Route 66 motels in hot real-estate markets have been torn down at record rates, while in cold real-estate markets, motels languish and are being reclaimed by forces of nature. Stretching more than 2,000 miles from Lake Michigan to the Santa Monica Pier, the Illinois section is designated as National Scenic Byway. Overall, Route 66 reflects the 20th century evolution of transportation and tourism in the United States.

Many historic Route 66 motels are threatened by the compound forces of long-term deferred maintenance and obsolescence while others fall to the lure of cash to demolish and valuable real estate into upscale developments. Motels in expanding urban areas are subject to development pressures associated with sprawl. A solution, local governments need to develop policies and financial incentives to support motel properties and businesses. Some historic motels have been successfully rehabilitated and maintained in their original use. These motels offer models of "best practices" that others can emulate. Most importantly, the traveling public from the United States and abroad can directly support the heritage of Route 66 by patronizing its historic motels and related roadside attractions.

