



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.explorechicago.org

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

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.soulfulillinois.com

Illinois Hispanic Travel:

www.disfrutailinois.com

Upper Midwest CVB Conference

www.umcvbfallconference.com

NITDO CONTINUES TO PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE AT ILLINOIS OASES

We've worked with partners from the Tollway Authority on host Safety Fests at the Belvidere Oasis, the week leading up

STATE'S FINANCIAL NEWS IS GREATLY IMPACTING TOURISM PARTNERS...

By now, you know that the financial situation of the State of Illinois is impacting tourism partners across the State. To date, the state has closed all of the 13 TIC's, ceased advertising efforts, eliminated visitor fulfillment...and the delay in payments (from FY10) has hurt everyone involved. And since we started FY11 and no contracts/grants have been initiated (much less no funding released), everyone is experiencing challenging times to remain open. Our counterpart, the Southern Illinois RTDO, closed its doors at the end of July and is without staff. The other TDOs, including NITDO, struggle daily to remain open and operational, but no one knows for how long this can continue.

The letter below has been sent to Governor Quinn, with copies also sent to Jack Lavin and Warren Ribley, stating the gravity of the situation. This letter emphasizes the importance of tourism and how we are a part of the solution to the State's budget issues. ICCVB (the Illinois Council of CVBs) is encouraging you to take this letter to your legislators to keep them informed of our funding situation and how the delay in funding will further jeopardize other tourism organizations and their ability to stay open. We appreciate your support to communicate with the state officials and legislators on the situation! Sample letter is below.....please edit as you choose.

Governor Pat Quinn
Office of the Governor
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Governor Quinn,
I am writing to thank you for your continued recognition of Illinois' visitor industry as a job-supporting, revenue-generating economic engine. Throughout Illinois - all 102 counties - women and men are supporting families, improving communities and bettering their lives because they have a job in the visitor industry. Your support of this industry makes this possible.

As you well know, tourism annually generates \$2.1 billion in tax revenue to the State of Illinois and local governments, supports 303,500 jobs and pumps \$30.8 billion in to our state's economy. Additionally, each family in Illinois annually saves \$1,100 in taxes thanks to revenue generated by visitors. Tourism is clearly part of the solution to Illinois' economic recovery.

You are facing many challenging decisions, and we appreciate the deliberation and care you are giving each one of them. As you consider ways to quickly create quality jobs and grow Illinois' economy we would ask that you continue to support tourism and the integrated marketing programs led by your Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity and its Office of Tourism. We are partners and want to continue to work hand in hand to be part of the solution to bring Illinois back to the economic engine it should be.

Illinois has led the nation in tourism marketing. Its innovative approach of leveraging state, local and private funds in support of growing the economy by growing tourism has become a model for other states to follow. We all know that this is not just a State investment but one that is supported locally through matching funds our communities invest in tourism. We certainly want to keep

the summer holidays: Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day. For the first two events, regional partners provided information, gift items and as manned tables near our visitor Information kiosk. AND the next one set for September 1st in Belvidere...want to join us? There will once again be a mini-expo where regional partners can showcase their destination, distribute coupons and trinkets, and talk to the visitors about things to see and do. The first ones had tons of regional representation in the form of materials and giveaways....and we were truly appreciative of partners! If interested in participating on



that Wednesday, let us know! We continue to work with reps from the Illinois Toll Authority and US Equities, (the Oasis Management Agency) on the Visitor Information Kiosk program. We created and installed with the support of regional partners five (5) stand-alone Visitor Information Kiosks at Tollway Oases in Belvidere, DeKalb, O'Hare, Des Plaines, and Hinsdale. Renewals are taking place at this time for our Chicagoland Kiosks. It's hard to believe we will be entering our fourth year, and the amount of information we've shared has been phenomenal. We were also able to place destination banners in the Oases too, showcasing the communities and attractions in our area. Also, the large exterior banner (lighted) was moved last Fall from the west bound side of the Belvidere Oasis to the east bound lanes, again another aspect of our partnership.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS WINE TRAIL NEWS

Here is some great news about the wineries in Northern Illinois. Not sure where to visit, the wineries on the Northern Illinois Wine Trail are featured on the center-spread of the 2010 Northern Illinois Visitor Guide. The two-page map is available for download at www.northernillinoiswinetrail.com and a new rack is NOW available and ready for distribution.....call and ask for a quantity, we will make efforts to deliver them to you when we're in the area.



And Vintage Illinois Wine Festival is just around the corner...so, mark your calendar for

funding on both the state and local level intact. Again, your efforts and support have made this possible.

On behalf of the tourism industry, we understand how difficult it has been for you to watch our state's 15 Tourism Information Centers and the Southern Illinois Regional Tourism Development Office close their doors. We respectfully request that you act as soon as possible to commit funds generated by the hotel occupancy tax for these and other tourism-related programs. We are concerned that a lengthy delay will result in a "domino effect", causing Illinois' state and local tourism investment and corresponding market share to be irrevocably eroded, costing precious jobs and general revenue fund dollars for many years to come.

As a case in point, Southern Illinois' dependence on tourism for jobs for the local economy is typical of other rural areas of the state, and while on a much smaller scale indicative of the importance of Illinois' tourism investment in urban areas as well. The closure of the 15 Tourism Information Centers and the Southern Illinois Regional Tourism Development Office that serves nineteen Southern Illinois counties (see attached) eliminated critical resources that attract and guide visitors to an area sorely in need of the tourism jobs and economic stimuli that they provide.

These nineteen rural, low population counties in Southern Illinois maintained almost 4,000 tourism-related jobs and produced over \$26 million in state tax revenue in 2008. There is now no agency in place to serve these counties. Tourism has provided jobs in rural areas as many of the industries that have traditionally maintained the economies of these regions have declined.

Additionally, the 15 Tourism Information Centers that closed had an estimated impact of \$68 million in revenues generated to the State of Illinois which is based on the overall spending of the 1.5 million people that visited the Tourism Information Centers on an annual basis. We now have no one to greet or assist visitors while here in Illinois. We also have no method of fulfilling visitors requests for information, which further exasperates the message we are sending to visitors - that Illinois is not visitor friendly. More importantly, over 40 people lost their jobs when these centers were shuttered.

Independent hospitality industry reporting and forecasting organizations which provide guidance to corporations in the lodging and restaurant industry, such as Smith Travel Reports and PKF Hospitality Research, are among those reporting a significant increase in travel expenditures this past June and predicting double digit growth in 2011.

A member survey conducted in late July by the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (ICCVB) indicates that hotel occupancy and rates increased, often dramatically, in June 2010 over June 2009. On a more ominous note, however, virtually all of them will reduce or eliminate advertising and tradeshow participation if there is continued uncertainty or a reduction in funding regarding the state tourism program.

As you look to the future, please know that Illinois' visitor industry stands with you to achieve solutions to the state's fiscal crisis and in advancing the state's economy. As we work with you, our industry will continue to return economic results that benefit all of Illinois and each of its citizens.

Explore North America's Rural Bounty...or in our case, Illinois Rural Bounty!

It's that time of year....apples, pumpkins, farm-fresh sweet corn.....and visitors want to discover the rich bounty of farm fresh fruits and vegetables, outdoor activities, and family fun that our rural countryside has to offer! Some possible ideas: Daytrip or Vacation to a Farm; Pick Your Own...Fruits, Pumpkins, Trees; or Discover Northern Illinois Wineries; or for the more adventurous, Challenge Your Hunting & Outdoor Skills. The website, www.ruralbounty.com encourages visitors to learn about things to see and do, to come back often to plan relaxing daytrips or weekend getaways.



September 19-20, 2010, and head south to LaSalle County to Matthiessen State Park (near Starved Rock). Over two dozen wineries are participating...many from the Northern Illinois Wine Trail, but others throughout the State. Your admission tickets are available online...you receive two extra tasting tickets when you buy your tickets in advance! For more details on this fabulous event, check out www.vintageillinois.com

News is that Galena Cellars will be extending their Nouveau Celebration combining with the best aspects of Wine Lovers' Weekend (hint - it's a second Great Tasting on Saturday). So, mark your calendars and head back to Galena on November 19-21, 2010, a wonderful celebration right before Thanksgiving.

ILLINOIS LINCOLN HIGHWAY COOKBOOK



David Alan Badger is finalizing his visits to all the Illinois Lincoln Highway communities to gather some favorite recipes from local businesses. He will compile all of them together along

with pencil drawings of the businesses to form an Illinois Lincoln Highway Cookbook. The book will be laid out with several sections to identify the communities along the route. Includes a special section on our Interpretive Gazebos and Murals.

Visit David's [website](#) and get a glimpse of his talent and how it could showcase your community! The partners who have signed up for this project will also be the retail outlets selling these great cookbooks. Our book is set to hit our retail partners in early fall 2010; a possible Christmas gift idea, don't forget this as an option.

BE SURE TO VISIT OUR EDUCATION & RESOURCES SECTION

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.

In the U.S. and Canada, there are approximately 65,000 farms and ranches that invite the public to visit, and more and more are becoming partners/members on the Rural Bounty website. And while in these tough economic times, another membership can be the last thing a small business can afford, BUT Rural Bounty has a basic FREE listing.

A colleague of ours, Jane Eckert of Eckert Agri Marketing, has created this interactive website that allows consumers to showcase their agri-tourism offerings...and this is something you as a tourism partners can encourage your seasonal agri-tourism partners to take advantage of to enhance their marketing. RuralBounty.com is destined to become the premier listing for all farms, ranches, wineries, CSA's, farmers' markets and other businesses with rural roots. Share this wonderful opportunity with your partners... 'tis the season!

STAFF PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

Bonnie Heimbach, who serves in a dual capacity as the ILHC Project Director and the NITDO Executive Director, was selected to as a representative for the Advisory Committee for the NSB Resource Center. Approx. 15 committee members were chosen from all parts of the country, representing tourism, byways, tribal organizations, USDA, and others...all working together to chart the future planning and operational services provided to byway partners through the Resource Center. A 2-day working session was held in late June to provide the overview of the tasks, set goals and outcomes and begin the process on a point-by-point scenario. And following up, we have had at least two conference calls/webinars to continue to gather feedback and insights.



In addition, Bonnie Heimbach, was elected to the Board of Directors for the National Scenic Byway Foundation. Since January, the Board has met in monthly tele-conferences, and is working with the Federal Highway Administration, the Resource Center and other partners to assure the continued support for the National Scenic Byway program at a federal level, and most importantly, to maintain the funding and support provided to the individual byways. A Planning Retreat is being planned for the Board members...and Bonnie suggested working with Chicago Southland CVB and hosting the event (tentatively set for November 4-5) in Tinley Park, along the Illinois Lincoln Highway. We should know in the next few weeks if the ILHC and Illinois partners can welcome this group to our area.

TRAVEL INDUSTRY TO ENGAGE EMPLOYEES DURING 2010 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS



Seeking to provide an innovative way for the travel industry's 10 million employees to engage in the 2010 Congressional elections, the U.S. Travel Association launched a "Virtual Travel Town Hall" where candidates are asked to respond to the most significant travel-related questions facing the industry.

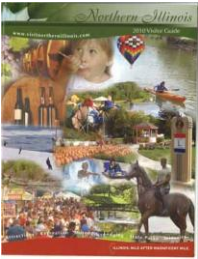
The cutting-edge effort comes on the heels of more than 400,000 lost travel industry jobs since 2008 and one of the most active periods for the travel industry in Washington, including public policies related to the BP oil spill, the discouragement of corporate meetings and events, the H1N1 outbreak and enactment of the Travel Promotion Act, America's first-ever program to market the United States abroad.

Under the brand of its newly formed Power of Travel Coalition, U.S. Travel has extended invitations to more than 150 Congressional candidates to

submit a video or written answers to three questions chosen by travel industry employees during the month of August. The questions will be submitted to participating candidates by September 13 and candidate videos or written responses will be posted on the Coalition's Virtual Travel Town Hall webpage (travelcoalition.org/townhall) on October 4, one month prior to the elections. "This initiative provides Congressional candidates with the opportunity to support one in nine American workers in an industry that is 2.5 times the auto industry and a top ten employer in nearly every U.S. state," added Dow.

CONTACT US FOR TOURISM MATERIALS

With the lack of funding at this time, we regret that we can't ship you cases of materials, BUT we do want to get them into the hands of your potential visitors. We can deliver materials in person if we're heading in your direction. Don't forget that our small loading dock is over-flowing.



And, of course we think our Northern Illinois Visitor Guide is exceptional as another great piece for visitors to utilize when planning their trip to our region. We can deliver materials 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. 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 too. And we have rack cards on specific offerings: the new Northern Illinois Wine Trail and the Illinois Lincoln Highway Interpretive Murals and Gazebos, and we can deliver those as well.

Calendar of Events - Illinois Tourism Happenings . . .

Sept 6

HOLIDAY – Office Closed

Sept 12-14

Upper Midwest CVB 2010 Fall Conference, Quad Cities

Sept 21-23

American Road Foundation Conference, Joliet

Sept 24-26

Camp Experience, Denver, CO

Oct 7-8

ICCVB Meeting, Quincy

Nov 3-4

ISEN State Convention, Tinley Park

ILHC MURALS....SO MANY FANTASTIC STORIES COME TO LIFE

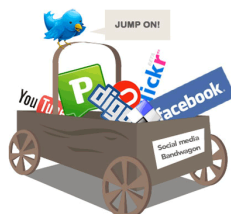
The Illinois Lincoln Highway is cranking this along. In the past few weeks, murals have been installed in University Park, Fulton, and Rock Falls. And in late August look for a special one in Malta to be installed.



It is a tremendous undertaking, and we are continually amazed at the stories the artist brings to life...and the goal is to have as many done as by year-end. Want to get a glimpse of our creations in the past month...University Park talks about the fantastic journey back in 1916 of the Van Buren sisters, riding their Indian motorcycles cross-country. Fulton depicts the picturesque view atop of the Fulton-Lyons Bridge spanning the Mississippi River. Rock falls celebrates a festival tradition...Auto Day at the Corn Carnival where cars were decorated, with you guessed it, corn! North Aurora celebrates the fun found at Exposition Park, along the Lincoln Highway (Route 31) which was touted as one of the largest parks in the country.

There are some new ones coming too...Ashton has a great story of their Paving Jubilee celebration; Malta (to be installed by month-end) of course, references the Seedling Mile, the first one in the entire nation. Morrison's story is the famed 1921 Whiteside County fair, where it was advertised parking for 3,000 cars...quite a feat in 1921. And, think about this fact 3,000 cars in Morrison too. Well, that's enough for now, but WOW more are coming every month and they are great too!

To see the ILHC murals already completed; you just need to check out the website (www.drivelincolnhighway.com) and we'll post updates on their progress. There is a great new web feature just unveiled. We're excited! Over three dozen murals will be completed at the conclusion of this project...one of the LARGEST public art endeavors in the State!



FIND US AND OUR PARTNERS ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

NITDO has 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. Find the icons to follow us at VisitNorthernIL on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr!



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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.

RONALD REAGAN CENTENNIAL COMMISSION....GRAND PLANS FOR 2011

NITDO has been working with state partners, and the appointed members of the Reagan Centennial Commission on plans, initiatives and events being scheduled to honor the ONLY US President actually born here in Illinois. Yes, that would be Ronald Wilson Reagan born in Tampico on February 6, 1911. He is a true Illinois native son, and went on to achieve great things...and in his words, "Dixon (and Illinois) was a place to come home to..."

The Commission, chaired by Representative Jerry Mitchell, has been meeting monthly. Working on statewide initiatives such as an advertising campaign, signature community events, sculpture, and now a documentary and educational curriculum, there are many great things in store for residents and visitors throughout 2011. And the local commissions are equally hard at work...the Dixon Commission has commissioned a musical composition, unbelievable works bringing together orchestration, choral and oration...Reagan's own words. It's pretty impressive and will be debuted in Dixon at this same historic theater where Ronald as a boy watched his western movies.



For more information on the Commission, check out their website at <http://www.illinoisreagancentennial.com>.

