



Wishing Everyone a Wonderful Christmas and Holiday Season!

**NITDO TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP A HUGE SUCCESS**

Last month, NITDO worked with University of Illinois' Dr. Bruce Wicks and Byeong Cheol Lee to create a new session entitled, Tourism, Technology & You. Over 50 people joined together in Sycamore to review new technologies, hardware and software offerings. It was an amazing scenario and the #1 comment was "WOW, my head hurts, and I have so much work to do". We truly appreciate the efforts of our DeKalb County partners who assisted in securing the facility and working through all logistics of the session.

And, the materials shared, Dr. Wick's PowerPoint, is posted on the regional website ([www.visitnorthernillinois.com](http://www.visitnorthernillinois.com)) under the button for Education & Resources. In addition to the PowerPoint, the strongest asset of the session was working through the internet connection; we were able to visit first-hand the sites LIVE to see exactly what was being discussed. There is a second hand-out with the links embedded is also

**UPDATE ON ILLINOIS' STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES**

Thousands of Illinois residents have made their voices heard on Lt. Governor Pat Quinn's [www.SaveOurStateParks.org](http://www.SaveOurStateParks.org) petition. With over 30,000 with on-line petitions a message is being sent, but we need to make a stronger statement. Please tell your friends and families, tell your neighbors and community members that they should go to the website and help us reach 50,000.



On November 30th due to the budget situation, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources closed 11 state parks and 14 historic sites. Legislation was passed (SB 1103) by the General Assembly to approve appropriations to keep these parks and sites operational. ICCVB shared with partners that they were informed that the Governor has stated he will not sign SB 1103 until he is sure the state can withstand the current economic downturn. The Pantagraph (Bloomington - Normal area) published a story confirming this information, which you can read by clicking on the following link: <http://m1e.net/c?89081502-RDzZxpnTZJBQ2%403700274-A7LOipkAJbA36>.

We will continue update you on the progress being made for the restoration of these vital funds. You can show your support on this issue by signing an electronic petition at [www.saveourstateparks.org](http://www.saveourstateparks.org).

There is good reason to get involved, Les Winkeler of the Southern Illinoian (newspaper) wrote that there will be additional state park closures after the first of the year: "The latest bad word is that as many as 11 state parks in Region IV and V, read Southern Illinois, will be closed after New Year. Coincidentally, I heard the same rumor from two distinctly different sources within a three-day period." It is interesting to note that in the first wave of closures to state parks, none in Southern Illinois were mentioned.

**FY09 NORTHERN ILLINOIS ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES – SPRING & SUMMER NEWSPAPER INSERTS**

NITDO has submitted their FY09 Marketing Partnership Grant. So, here is what we planned for co-op opportunities: 1-1/2 pages for Northern Illinois regional promotion in the 2009 Illinois Visitor Guide; insert for the Northern Illinois Wine Trail; and 3 full pages in the Fall (already closed & dropped August 2008), Spring and Summer 2009.

Deadline for ad space in the Spring Newspaper Insert closed end of November and Summer insert closes in late-January 2009.

We have learned that our award amount is at the 45%-55% level, where you, the local partners, pay 55% of the ad costs and IBOT's grant program pays for 45%. The costs for the 1/6th page units are as follows:

|             | Full Cost  | 1/6th Page of 1/6th pg w/45-55 Grant |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Spring 2009 | \$2,975    | \$1,636.25                           |
| Summer 2009 | \$4,023.66 | \$2,213.01                           |

The Fall-Winter 2008 Insert dropped over Labor Day weekend and responses continue to arrive (we have reached 3,000). And the 2009 Illinois Travel Guide

posted, so those who want to review can find the exact page/site discussed.

There was tremendous interest in this session, and we were probably at capacity for this workshop. If others would like to attend another session of Tourism, Technology & You, please send us an email.

If there is enough interest, and U of I staff is willing, we'll look to host another date in the near future.



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)

**Lincoln – Douglas Reunion:**

[www.lincolndouglasreunion.com](http://www.lincolndouglasreunion.com)

**Travel Industry of America:**

[www.tia.org](http://www.tia.org)

**Illinois Wine Industry:**

[www.illinoiswine.com](http://www.illinoiswine.com)

**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 (ATPI):**

[www.agfun.com](http://www.agfun.com)

**Film Locations:**

[www.onscreenillinois.com](http://www.onscreenillinois.com)

**Lincoln Bicentennial**

**Commission:**

[www.alplm.org](http://www.alplm.org)

**Illinois Council of CVBs:**

[www.iccvb.org](http://www.iccvb.org)

**Tour Illinois:**

[www.tourismillinois.org](http://www.tourismillinois.org)

**Meet In Illinois:**

[www.meetinillinois.com](http://www.meetinillinois.com)

drops shortly after the new year – and responses will continue. So, we are soliciting for ad space for our next opportunities, the 2009 Spring and Summer inserts. If interested, let us know in holding a space in either publication – and remember the Spring Insert deadline is NOW!

**CO-OP MAILINGS ... WE NEED YOUR MATERIALS**

We have coordinated a regional fulfillment mailing for partners showcasing the various things to see and do along the Illinois Lincoln Highway Corridor. We use the leads from Madden Preprint's Illinois Fall-Winter Guide (released over Labor Day weekend) as well as ads placed in the 2009 Illinois Travel Guide and the Spring and Summer 2009 newspaper inserts that will drop in 2009. In the mailings, we showcase several communities with their materials, the ILHC 2008 Visitor Guide, Illinois Scenic Byways rack cards, Northern Illinois Wine Trail rack card, and the Northern Illinois Visitor Guide. If your community would like to take part in these co-op mailings, please send 3,000 of your brochures or rack cards along with a check made payable to ILHC in the amount of \$475 to cover the cost of bulk mailing. Where else can you mail out your brochure for less than \$.16 each? If interested, call Diane at 815-547-3854.

**SEND IMAGES TO PROMOTE YOUR REGION ON THE IBOT FLICKR PAGE**

We want to make sure we've got your region covered – please send us any pictures you'd like to include on the IBOT Flickr page. Events, attractions or just landscape photos – we welcome them all. Please send photos in jpeg format (ideally file should be 200KB or higher for optimum quality) to [enjoyillinois@gmail.com](mailto:enjoyillinois@gmail.com), and include a brief description including where it's from and who (if anyone) should be given credit. Remember, your photos are representing Illinois tourism, so be sure to send the best ones! At the same time, the goal of the Flickr page is to connect with consumers, so please note that photos should not be commercial.

**Re:New DeKalb** SOMETHING NEW IN DOWNTOWN  
**DE KALB ... COMMUNITY ICE RINK**

The City of DeKalb and Re:New DeKalb, Inc. have spent time preparing for the installation of the DeKalb Community Ice Rink. The site was leveled and the fencing, restrooms, skate rental facility, temporary trees, and other site preparations were made. The rink opened on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 27th and remains open throughout the winter season. The skating rink is located at the corner of 1st and Locust Streets in DeKalb, just one block off the Illinois Lincoln Highway Scenic Byway.

The Grand Opening Celebration will now be held on Sunday, December 7 from Noon - 6 p.m. Learn to skate classes and special events will not be affected by the delayed opening, including the free Skate with Santa session on Saturday, December 6 from Noon to 2 p.m. There is a nominal charge for the skating, and there is skate rental provided.

"We appreciate the dedication shown by the City of DeKalb throughout the process of creating a community ice skating rink and we look forward to the rink being open for the public on Thanksgiving day," stated Jennifer Groce, Executive Director for Re:New DeKalb, Inc. For more information on the updated ice skating schedule or to learn more about the DeKalb Community Ice Skating Rink visit [www.renewdekalb.com](http://www.renewdekalb.com) or call 815-748-7788.

**NEW ICCVB WEBSITE UNVEILED**

At the ICCVB Fall Membership Meeting, the brand new ICCVB website, [www.iccvb.org](http://www.iccvb.org) was unveiled to the attendees. ICCVB will use this site as a central point of communication with the



**Sports Illinois:**

[www.sportsillinois.com](http://www.sportsillinois.com)

**Illinois African-American Travel:**

[www.soulfulillinois.com](http://www.soulfulillinois.com)

**Illinois Hispanic Travel:**

[www.disfrutailinois.com](http://www.disfrutailinois.com)

**Chicago Olympics:**

[www.chicagoolympics2016.org](http://www.chicagoolympics2016.org)

**University of Illinois Extension****Agritourism:**

[web.extension.uiuc.edu/agritourism/](http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/agritourism/)

Membership. We will continue to add content to the site so there are a variety of tools and resources available. One item added that should be of great benefit are the tourism statistics for Illinois. This information is located under the Members Only area, under ICCVB info, resources, with the title Illinois Tourism Facts. Please continue to visit the site and as always provide feedback and suggestions for content. The ICCVB calendar, membership directory, past meeting minutes, bylaws, operating procedures and other important information are available online at [www.iccvb.org](http://www.iccvb.org).

**Tax Incentives Work**

During the veto session, the General Assembly approved legislation to reintroduce the Film Production Service Tax Credit at 30 percent and make it permanent. The credit, until last year, was for 20 percent on expenditures in Illinois.



The credit is meant to be an incentive for filmmakers to bring business to Illinois. Without a tax credit this year, there are currently no movies scheduled for production in Illinois during 2009. Michigan, which has a 46 percent credit, will be the site for 56 movies next year.

According to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the state paid nearly \$7 million in tax credits to the film industry in 2004 for film production that spent \$75.8 million in Illinois. The state offered \$20 million in credits during 2007 in exchange for \$390 million in production activity.

The film industry provides good paying jobs and revenues to the state, so these tax credit incentives are beneficial to Illinoisans. SB1981 now moves to the governor's desk for approval.

**TRAVEL RESEARCH NEWS**

Smith Travel Research revised its 2008 and 2009 forecasts, as well as its projection for the U.S. hotel industry's performance in 2010. "We are looking for things to get tougher before they get better," said Randy Smith, CEO of STR. The revised forecast for 2008 includes a 3% drop in average occupancy vs. 2007, to 61.2%, and a 3.4% increase in the average daily rate, to \$107.44. For 2009, STR is projecting a further 3.5% decline in occupancy, to 59.1%, and a modest increase of 1% in the average daily rate, to \$108.52. Looking ahead to 2010, STR projects a further 0.6% decline in occupancy, to an industry average of 58.7%, and a 2.1% increase in the average daily rate, to an industry high of \$110.80. PKF Hospitality Research also has revised its 2009 industry forecast, released last month, to reflect the state of the economy more accurately. Occupancy now is expected to drop by 4.%; average daily rate, or ADR, essentially will be flat, with an uptick of 0.1%; and RevPAR will decline by 4.3%. The revised report also noted that lodging demand will fall by 1.5% next year, while supply will increase by 3%. PKF now estimates hotel profits will drop by 7.9% next year, compared with 2008.

**NEW PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Peoples Economic Development Corporation (PEDC), a subsidiary of Peoples National Bank headquartered



PEOPLES  
economic development  
CORPORATION

in Southern Illinois, has partnered with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, through the Illinois Bureau of Tourism, on a unique and exciting program to help revitalize our historic downtowns and increase heritage tourism expenditures. As a demonstration initiative, the PEDC and the IBOT will

**CONGRATULATIONS TO JAN KOSTNER AND IBOT ON THEIR MERCURY AWARDS**

The NCSTD Mercury Awards are exclusively for state and territory tourism offices. They were created in 1985 by TIA's National Council of State Tourism Directors (NCSTD) to recognize members for excellence & creative accomplishment in state/territory tourism marketing and promotion, and inspire, by showcasing outstanding work, the continued development of imaginative and exciting marketing and promotion programs.

There are 12 categories of awards with opportunities to participate in a maximum of five categories. IBOT won for Best Broadcast - Television Campaign, as well as, Best Overall Marketing Campaign. Mercury Award entries are solicited in the spring (between March and May) and winners are announced and recognized at the Annual Awards Banquet held during the 2008 Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO). Begin thinking about your own materials that can be considered for submission in the Awards Competition at the 2009 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism!

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

### **Dec 3**

Belvidere Mural Mile, Strategic Planning Session

### **Dec 5**

Deadline: Spring 2009 Newspaper Insert

### **Dec 9**

RTDO Meeting, Springfield

### **Dec 19**

Delivery of 2009 Northern Illinois Visitor Guides

### **Dec 24-25**

Office Closed – Holiday

### **Jan 1**

Office Closed – Holiday

### **Jan 7-9**

Specialty Growers Conference, Springfield

### **Jan 8**

ATPI Board Meeting, Springfield

### **Jan 19**

Office Closed – Holiday

### **Jan 23**

Deadline: Summer 2009 Newspaper Insert

### **Jan 27-30**

The Special Event Show, San Diego

### **Feb 4-5**

ISEN State Convention, Tinley Park

### **Feb 12**

Lincoln's Bicentennial Birthday

### **Mar 4-6**

Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism, Chicago

### **Mar 31-Apr 2**

TravelCom '09, Atlanta, GA

select up to eight Illinois communities to participate in the program. Each selected community will receive individualized consultation centered on community planning, restoring historic buildings, accessing available incentive programs such as tax credits, tax increment financing funds, and other governmental incentives, and planning and preparing for additional visitation from heritage tourism travelers.

This initiative is being led by heritage preservation, heritage tourism, and economic development specialists. In addition, PEDC is working with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity on legislation that will help communities, individual building owners, and developers utilize expanded state support to jump start a new emphasis on using historic preservation as an economic development tool. Through a program to stimulate economic investment in our historic downtowns and the historic homes that surround them, this legislation will promote the saving of our history while helping secure stable and needed business development within the core of our historic downtowns.

If you would like additional information on the program or would like to discuss the possibility of your community joining this effort, contact Maynard Crossland, 618-237-3962 or Cory Jobe, 618-237-3961 from the PEDC.

## **10 TIPS FOR BUILDING SUCCESSFUL ONLINE CUSTOMER COMMUNITIES**

According to a recent White Paper by Communispace, done right, online customer communities can help companies connect deeply with their customers and prospects, capture marketing insights, and build brand advocates. From Communispace's experiences building and facilitating more than 300 online customer communities over the past seven years, we've found that panels, chat rooms, blogs, and focus groups just skim the surface compared to what marketers can learn from continuously talking with people in their communities.

However, we've also observed that companies' instincts on how to manage their communities are often too self serving, relying on research techniques rather than social networking engagement principles. The reality is that running communities is counterintuitive to what marketers typically do when they get a group of customers together. It's not about just asking questions and getting feedback, although plenty of that goes on in communities. Nor is it about responding to and trying to 'fix' negative issues that customers raise. It is about creating a sense of community among people with common interests, and then tapping into the community in multiple ways, through a variety of proven methodologies to get into the hearts and minds of customers.

Based on the experience of 300 online customer communities, following are 10 tips to building successful online customer communities:

1. Invite the right people, keep it small and private
2. View members as advisors to the company
3. Find the social glue, make it member-centric
4. Work at building the community
5. Be genuine, encourage candor
6. Just plain ask
7. Pay even more attention to what members initiate
8. Don't squelch the negative
9. Don't ask too much, too often
10. Use the right mix of technologies and methodologies, and keep experimenting

## **TRAVEL COMMUNITY UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO HELP PRESIDENT - ELECT OBAMA REVITALIZE ECONOMY, STRENGTHEN AMERICA'S IMAGE ABROAD**

Roger Dow, President and CEO of the Travel Industry Association (TIA), released



## **2009 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism**

New web site has been launched where you can regularly check back for registration information and other details as we get closer to the March 4-6 dates. And, it's shaping up to be a very exciting conference as we're confirming a wide variety of dynamic speakers and industry experts. We look forward to seeing you at the Fairmont Chicago for what's sure to be a fun and educational event.

## **VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE CHICAGO IN 2016 VIDEO**

We asked you to tell us why you think Chicago should be chosen to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016 and received some really great videos! The video submission portion of our "Why Chicago" video contest has ended and there are now five finalists for you to vote on!

The final round of voting starts today and we need your help in choosing our grand prize winner! Click here to vote for the videos that you think do the best job of telling the International Olympic Committee and the world why the Games should come to Chicago in 2016.

Just voting gives you a chance to win an Olympic Experience trip to the Olympic training facility in Colorado Springs, Colorado!

Watch the Finalists on T.V.!  
Tune in to NBC 5 Chicago during the NBC 5 News Today Show at 6:20 AM each morning December 1 - December 5 to see the videos on-air. We'll announce the video submission Grand prize and Second prize winners and the Voter winner the week of December 8.

Show your support for Chicago 2016 by voting at [www.chicago2016.org/contest!](http://www.chicago2016.org/contest!)

the following statement Wednesday (November 5) on President-elect Barack Obama's historic victory: "America's travel community congratulates President-elect Obama and pledges our support to the new Administration as it tackles two of the most daunting challenges facing America today: improving the U.S. economy and strengthening America's image in the international community. Travel is uniquely positioned to address both of these challenges.

The American economy is dependent on travel. The industry employs one out of every eight U.S. workers, drives more than \$700 billion in spending and is a major economic force in each of the 50 states. The small and medium-sized businesses that make up more than 90 percent of America's travel community can trigger the kind of bottom-up economic growth and job creation that will put this economy back on track.

Travel is also uniquely capable of helping America win hearts and minds around the world. The international business people, students and tourists who visit the United States each day are America's most effective diplomats. Those who have visited the United States are 74 percent more likely to have a favorable opinion of America and its policies than those who have not. Nine in ten travelers who visit the United States tell their friends and neighbors about their experience. TIA has a positive agenda for change that includes modernizing America's infrastructure and travel processes, creating jobs and improving the nation's energy security. We look forward to working closely with President-elect Obama to achieve these goals and build a stronger America."

The Travel Industry Association is the national, non-profit organization representing all components of the \$740 billion travel industry. For more information, visit [www.tia.org](http://www.tia.org).

## **TRADITION OFFSETS STRUGGLING ECONOMY TO KEEP HOLIDAY TRAVEL STRONG**

The 41 million people forecast by AAA to travel over Thanksgiving despite mounting economic concerns is due to a desire to maintain traditions, create memories and build relationships, according to a unique Harris Interactive survey recently completed for the TIA (Travel Industry Association) that identifies why people travel over the holidays. The survey of 2,256 adults conducted earlier this month showed that despite economic concerns some 60 percent of those visiting with out-of-town family or friends strongly feel the time and money spent is a small price to pay to be with people they love. "Holiday travel's stability and relative strength compared with other sectors of the economy is an indication of how much people value the experience of sharing time with loved ones," said Suzanne Cook, TIA's Senior Vice President of Research.

Thanksgiving travel is expected to decline a modest 1.4% compared with a year ago. Many other areas of the economy affected by discretionary income, such as automobile sales and certain retail sectors, have reported significantly larger declines in recent months or anticipate larger declines during the fourth quarter. The 41 million people that were forecasted to travel for Thanksgiving this year are essentially the same number that traveled in 2006.

The Harris survey revealed that among those who visit with out of town family or friends:

- 70% recognize it's a tradition to be with family or friends at Thanksgiving
- 68% strongly agree that it creates memories for them and/or their children
- 61% strongly feel being with family and friends over the holidays helps them reconnect with loved ones and build relationships



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## **DATE SET FOR ILLINOIS SPECIALTY CROPS AND AGRITOURISM CONFERENCE**



The Illinois Specialty Crops and Agritourism Conference (sponsored in part by ATPI) will be held January 7-10, 2009, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. Three pre-conference workshops (concurrent) will be offered during the daytime on Wednesday, January 7, which will include “Pumpkins,” “Biocontrol in High Tunnels & Greenhouses,” and “Federal Grantwriting Basics.” On Thursday and Friday, January 8-9, the conference will kick off with Chefs and Culinary Educators Michael and Brigitta McGreal as the keynote speakers followed by the traditional concurrent breakout sessions on fruits, vegetables, herbs, and agritourism/marketing.

The agritourism/marketing track will feature sessions on how to capitalize on consumer trends, how to increase on-farm sales, and how to work with the media. Other topics will include “Creating a Successful Tourism Partnership,” “Safety Considerations for Agritourism Operations,” and “Virginia Agritourism.” A local foods program entitled “Buy Local – Eat Healthy” on Saturday, January 10, 2009, will feature Chef Michael McGreal, Joliet Junior College, who will demonstrate the preparation of delicious and exciting dishes with fresh produce. Other sessions will include cooking with edible flowers and pairing wines with food. A detailed conference agenda can be viewed at [www.specialtygrowers.org](http://www.specialtygrowers.org) or check out the NITDO website under our button on left-hand side called Education & Resources.



**ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.**