

We Wish You A Merry Christmas.....



We wish...yes it's that special time of year where we can enjoy the season, relax with family and friends, and reflect on the days gone by. We honor traditions of the past, dream of the future and find contentment in the present (yes we always need presents). Yes, this is a magical time of year. So, we wish you all the best to you and yours...enjoy the season and find time for the reason for the season too! So as the song continues.....

.....And a Happy New Year!

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

Lincoln Bicentennial:

www.lincoln200.net

Travel Industry of America:

www.tia.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

DRUM ROLL PLEASE- CONGRATS TO JAY ALLEN, ONE OF OUR OWN IS AWARDED THE STUDS TERKEL HUMANITIES AWARD!



It was recently announced that one of the long-time champion, supporter, volunteer and even a vendor, has been named as a winner of the 2009 Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award. This Award is a biennial honor bestowed on individuals who carry the torch of the humanities, coordinated through the Illinois Humanities Council. These Humanities heroes are nominated by Illinois mayors, so Jay Allen was nominated by Mayor Fred Brereton of Belvidere.

Jay Allen has worked with NITDO beginning with the 1997 WallDog Rendezvous, a mural festival hosted in the downtown corridor where 10 large-scale murals were created in one weekend. This led to the designation for Belvidere as Illinois' City of Murals. Jay serves on the Belvidere Mural Mile Association, on the Boone County Arts Council, and countless other endeavors. He has also served as a speaker at more than one NITDO workshop. Jay Allen, and his business, ShawCraft Signs, were awarded the contract to work with the Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition on their Interpretive Mural Project, where he is overseeing the creation of 40 murals in 40 communities.



2009 marks the 10th anniversary of this prestigious award in alternating years. Since 1999, nearly 450 recipients have been named. These unsung "humanities heroes" contribute to cultural life through projects related to historic preservation, heritage, adult and childhood education, and the study of arts or music. So to Jay Allen, we offer our heartfelt congratulations for your ongoing efforts for Belvidere and beyond. Each of the winners will be honored at a local ceremony, and for Jay, his takes place at Belvidere's Hometown Christmas activities this

weekend December 6 and we'll be there to celebrate with him. Jay, way to go! For more information, check out www.prairie.org/studsterkelaward

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER...ALL THE RAGE

Yes, we just finished hosting two sessions on Facebook, Twitter and the tools-applications to make this an easier and manageable marketing tool for your organization. And, this was also a timely topic at the Fall ICCVB meeting held in Southern Illinois. So, I ask you – has your business, organization, festival or event taken the BIG STEP, are you engaged in Social Media?

NITDO has been actively working with Facebook and Twitter for several months, and has gathered a large number of fans and followers. We have also encouraged and are working with our Scenic Byway Partner, Illinois

Traveling Green:

www.travelgreen.org

Illinois Film Locations:

www.onscreenillinois.com

Lincoln Bicentennial Commission:

www.alplm.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.soulfulillinois.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

The Special Event Show,**2010 New Orleans**

www.thespecialeventshow.com

**SIGN UP FOR CO-OP MAILINGS**

Remember to contact Diane at Illinois Lincoln Highway, 815-547-3854, to participate in the Co-Op Mailing Program. Leads will be coming in from the Fall-Winter Insert. In the mailings, we showcase several communities, the ILHC 2009 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. Great deal at less than \$.16 each!

Lincoln Highway to join in the mix. And while at the workshop late last month, when everyone else was joining in the mix, 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...To find the Northern Illinois Tourism, we have adopted a slight variation of our name: we are VisitNorthernIL. On Facebook you can find us at www.facebook.com/VisitNorthernIL and on Twitter the same applies, www.twitter.com/VisitNorthernIL. For the Illinois Lincoln Highway, we worked off their website, which is www.drivelincolnhighway.com, therefore to find their pages search for www.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 www.facebook.com/NorthernILWine and on Twitter @NorthernILWine.

And we'd certainly appreciate that you would share our request to become our FANS or Followers on your Facebook and Twitter posts too – the more we promote each other, the more people we can attraction to our region.

So now that you know how to find us and become a FAN or Follower, send us your news. We are always looking for things that have a regional appeal. Whether it be a special event taking place or a workshop (such as the TSE or Illinois Governor's Conference), or even a new store opening or attraction, please send us your news to share.

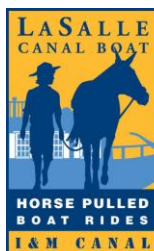
THE NEW REALITY.....2010 ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM

The tourism industry is a thriving source of Illinois' economy. Annually, professionals in this industry come together to learn from tourism experts and take advantage of the latest information, products and services which enhance travel in Illinois. So, the 2010 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism will take place February 17-19 at The Fairmont Chicago – Mark Your Calendars!



The conference begins Wednesday, February 17 with a series of presentations and the annual Ice Breaker reception. We continue with the annual State of the State of Tourism Address, many valuable sessions and an outstanding lineup of keynote speakers including Roger Dow, President & CEO, U.S. Travel Association, Futurist Jim Carroll, and Motivational Speaker Mike Rayburn. The conference will conclude with the Illinois Excellence in Tourism awards luncheon Friday, February 19.

In addition to the conference program, attendees to the Illinois Tourism Marketplace can meet with vendors and view unique products and services for the tourism industry. The Governor's Conference also provides attendees with ample opportunities to network enjoy entertainment options such as Broadway in Chicago and experience the wonderful dining options Chicago has to offer. Register before January 8 and save \$50 per person. Register three or more attendees and receive a 10% discount! Bringing a guest or spouse? Please contact the conference committee for pricing at 630-730-1780 or www.iltourismconference.com for more info – make your plans NOW!

**NEW TOURISM STUDY BEING CONDUCTED THROUGH NATIONAL AREA**

The Canal Corridor Association has been named the local coordinating entity for the development of a comprehensive Management Plan for the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor in cooperation with the National Park Service. The Plan is required to take into consideration State and local



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 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@visitnorthernillinois.com.

plans and involve residents, local governments and public agencies and private organizations in the Corridor. Among other things, the Plan is to present recommendations for the Corridor's conservation, funding, management and development and to include actions proposed to be taken by units of government and nongovernmental and private organizations to protect the resources of the Corridor.

To gain a diverse community input, four public forums were held last week to build a foundation of ideas for the generation of the I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor Management Plan, and one is scheduled for early December. Topics that will require input include: long-term vision, the mission of the Corridor, concepts of a general management plan, continued public input and feedback and the initial stages of the road map for the year-long planning process. For more information on the study, contact the CCA at 815-223-1851.

ILLINOIS TOURISM INFORMATION CENTER BROCHURE NEW POLICY

Hey, big news – we all love our printed materials (visitor guides, festivals and events, museums, byways, etc.) to be displayed at the State's Tourist Information Centers throughout Illinois. And you should be aware there are NEW GUIDELINES that are effective immediately as presented at the October ICCVB meeting for stakeholders. We have put these materials online on our website under the button for Education & Resources. Please be sure and pass this information on to the appropriate staff person that handles your brochure placement to ensure your brochures and tourist information meet the proper requirements.

SIGN, SIGN, EVERYWHERE A SIGN – PERHAPS NOT EVERYWHERE!



Hey, have you seen the new large, blue signs along the Interstates in Illinois, the ones that features ATTRACTIONS? IBOT has been working with IDOT to implement the Tourism Attraction Signage Program for interstate highways throughout Illinois. These large blue signs will be much like those currently found along the interstates for Gas, Food, Lodging and Camping. Due to the cost of implementing these signs statewide, we will phase in the program over the next several years. When completed, these signs will provide all of us a powerful new way to promote attractions throughout our state.

The revised the policy and application can be found on the IBOT website www.enjoyillinois.com under the button at bottom of home page, labeled Travel Professionals. Each sign can accommodate 6 tourism attraction logos and each attraction MUST identify ONE intersection for the sign. The intersection closest to the attraction must also be identified through a computer mapping system, for example, Map Quest or Rand McNally, to verify the directions and the Exit Number. Attractions will not be allowed to request logos at more than one intersection therefore it is important for attractions to use the intersection closest to their facility. There is a nominal fee for this program, and participating attractions will be charged a yearly fee for the signs in the same manner as IDOT's Business Logo Signing Program to cover their costs.

Calendar of Events - Illinois Tourism Happenings . . .

Dec 15

NITDO Board Meeting, Belvidere

Dec 25

HOLIDAY – Office Closed (Christmas)

Jan 1

HOLIDAY – Office Closed (New Year's Day)

Jan 6-8

Illinois Specialty Growers Conference, Springfield

Jan 7

ATPI Annual Meeting, Springfield

Jan 11-16

The Special Event Show, New Orleans

Jan 18

HOLIDAY – Office Closed (Martin L. King Day)

Jan 19

Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition Board Mtg, DeKalb

Feb 17-19

2010 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism, Chicago

May 15-19

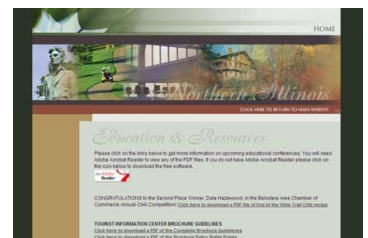
International PowWow, Orlando

So what does this mean to YOU? You, as our partner, are being asked to review this program, check to see that interstates in your area may qualify for the program – AND then secure possible partner businesses that would benefit from the exposure. So, check out the guidelines, and let's get moving. Visitors are looking for new places and things to experience, let's showcase a few more in Northern Illinois.

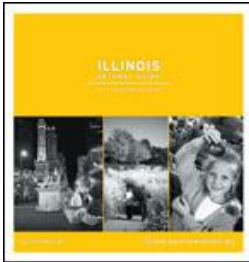
EDUCATION & RESOURCES

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

We have the materials from our Social Media workshops held in late October...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)



FY10 CO-OP MARKETING



OPPORTUNITIES - ONE CHANCE LEFT!

Last Call! NITDO has requested one full page Summer 2010 Getaway Guide (newspaper insert). You can reserve the upcoming publication

OR place your reservation for any and all of the options we are offering in our co-op program. Rates below indicate the cost of the space, your cost as the IBOT grant was awarded at a 50-50 level. The format will be repeated from the current year where pages will be divided into 1/6th units; Each partner will receive a one photo or logo, headline, 65 words of copy, name of organization, address, website and phone. Space in the first two opportunities sold out, but we have a few spaces remaining in the Summer 2010 insert – Deadline: February 4th. Cost for the publication is as follows:

Summer 2010

Full Cost 1/6th Page	\$4,023.66
1/6th page w/50-50 Grant	\$2,011.92
1/6th pg w/40-60 Grant	\$1,609.53

So, make your decisions and let our office know. We have only six (6) spaces available for each publication, so it is truly **FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.**



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of the sessions at the ISEN State Convention held in early 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 handouts 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.

Wondering how your County fared with its Tourism Economic Impact, yes the 2008 statistics are available. So look for the header for the Tourism Statistics by County and find your county. And if you're wondering how your neighboring county did, it's there! And if you are one of our legislative partners, you can pull the specific counties in your district...it's all there for your reference and review.

SOCIAL MEDIA - DON'T JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON by Susan Sweeney

Everyone's jumping on the bandwagon, but a lot of people are also wasting plenty of time in the process. Now, it has become more like social NOT working rather than social networking. Admit it - it's all getting a bit too much! You need to step back and take a good look at your objectives, your target markets and your products and services first before doing anything hasty. You also have to take into consideration the time you have to devote; the personnel you'll use, and the budget you need to allocate. You need to outline what you want to accomplish; what success would look like and how you will measure it.

With so many opportunities and so many consequences of these decisions, you definitely need to have your strategy in place before anything else.

Know all the options:

- What are the social media venues that your target market is using.
- What are the options within each.
- For each determine if this is a one-off or ongoing commitment – a targeted ad can be set up and run on its own with little ongoing attention whereas a Page needs constant attention – the former can be likened to sending a donation to an orphanage vs. the latter is more like adopting a child – BIG difference in what you're committing to.
- How are you going to get business from this (if this is one of your objectives – we can't do everything for branding).
- What does Success look like – Business booked? Members to your e-club? Coupons downloaded?
- How are you going to measure your success?
- How are you going to leverage this opportunity?

Develop and Document Your Strategic Plan:

- What social media venues work given your objectives and target markets?
- Which elements within each are you going to participate in?
- Who specifically in your organization is responsible for each element?
- What is going to be done?
- How often?
- What is the budget?
- What does success look like?
- How are you going to measure?

I'm just saying ... Take a closer look before you jump on the bandwagon.

Author: Internet marketing expert and best-selling author Susan Sweeney is devoted to helping you do more business online. To learn how to register for her free Internet marketing articles, visit www.susansweeney.com. © 2009 SusanSweeney.com

