



Save the Date - 2013 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism

The 2013 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism is shaping up. The Conference takes place Wednesday, February 27 - Friday, March 1 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont. Co-Chairs Bob Navarro and Daniel Thomas, and committee members, are "shaking things up" by reinventing the conference. The event will feature a stellar lineup of expert speakers and panelists to provide educational and motivational insights on a wide range of issues vital to the Illinois tourism industry. Confirmed speakers to date include Jen Hoelzle, IOT Deputy Director; Chris Thompson, Brand USA; Jason Dorsey, The Center for Governmental Kinetics; Kelly McDonald, McDonald Marketing; and Jay Baer, Convince and Convert...and many more to be announced in the near future.

We understand the need to spend down time with business colleagues and friends. Every year, the Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism offers important networking events and enjoyable social activities. The fun includes the always anticipated Icebreaker Reception, the Illinois Marketplace Trade Show, Silent Auction, Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards, plus a plethora of dining and theater options. And with "The Park at Rosemont's" many top-notch entertainment options, you can't go wrong!

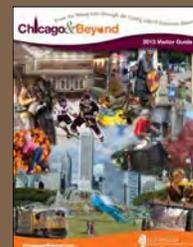
So, mark your calendars. And you can register online...and if you register by February 10th, there is a discount. The conference website is updated every week so check back for information. This is the place to be and the best way to start your New year!

2013 Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guide

It's in final stages of production, but the 2013 Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guides is nearing completion. Our expanded coverage area, Chicago & Beyond, now reaches from the Windy City to the communities large and small in the Northern Illinois' countryside. The guide continues to offer the amenities of our past print publications, but with the larger area offer an overview of the various communities and attractions available to visitors. Since this is but a glimpse of the region, we are making efforts to encourage viewing our website (which will contain EVERYTHING you supply) for complete details. And, the 2012 regional guide increased to 60 pages, and in 2013, we will produce 72 pages of information.

Regional CVBs were asked to assist with updating editorial content to make sure that we have all things listed correctly and updated. And, while all attractions can't possibly be included in the book, we will make sure that everything you submit is included in the regional website. We have been asking our regional partners for an overview of their area...obviously we can't possibly include everything, but our goal is to entice the visitor and then offer resources (local websites) for a more in-depth, comprehensive overview.

Again this is totally supported with your ad dollars and distributed through various media outlets, ad inquiries, Visitor Information Kiosks and the Tourist Information Centers and through regional Chambers, CVBs and other partners' businesses. We know the 2012 guide was a very popular publication, and the 2013 Visitor Guide is sure to be a success! Haven't seen a current copy of the guide? It can be downloaded from our website.



And with delivery anticipated at the end of this month, please let Mary know if you'll like to have guides sent to you....we expect to have 75-80 guides in a case. Let Mary know ASAP and we can have them shipped out as soon as they are delivered to us.

Calendar of Events—Illinois Tourism Happenings

January 15-18, 2013 * 2013 TSE Show, Chicago

January 21 * HOLIDAY, Martin Luther King Day

January 31—Feb.3 * IGVVA Conference, Springfield

February 12 * HOLIDAY, Lincoln's Birthday

February 18 * HOLIDAY, President's Day

February 27 - March 1 * 2013 Illinois Governor's Conference, Rosemont

April 10-11 * Destination: Capital Hill, Washington DC

**WE ARE CHICAGO & BEYOND
REGIONAL TOURISM OFFICE**



We've totally embraced the new regional brand, and are hopeful you'll work in the new brand within your marketing as well. Our service area for our office now totals 17 counties: Boone, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Putnam, Stephenson, Will and Winnebago. We need your help. Be sure to update our name and website on any of your listings, as well as update our emails,

The Special Event Show (TSE)...A Unique Opportunity for Illinois Partners



The Special Event Show (TSE) is the single largest trade show and conference in the world for event professionals, with attendees coming from over 56 countries. The show has been produced for more than a decade by Penton Publishing and supported by the world-recognized trade publication the Special Events Magazine. Traditionally held in warm weather communities in January, the show has selected Chicago as its 2013 site, Penton is forecasting that thousands of event planners will brave the cold wintery weather for a warm Chicago welcome and embrace the Midwestern hospitality.

The TSE 2013 Chicago event is estimated to attract 6,000-6,500 attendees. The extensive conference schedule will feature more than 100 sessions in nine (9) core industry tracks including Business and Professional Development; Design; Event Management; Event Tools and Resources; Sales and Marketing; and Wedding Trends. New in 2013 was a special focus on the explosion in social media and this trend continues in 2013 planning. A mainstay of The Special Event has always been the show floor, which will give attendees the opportunity to meet face-to-face with some 300 potential vendor partners. Rounding out the event are the much-anticipated and over-the-top Showcasing Events, where Chicago and its core attractions will be showcased in a once-in-a-lifetime spectacular. There are 11 Showcasing Events, some in the host hotels, convention center...but many out and beyond in Chicago's finest locations. THIS IS A HUGE ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR CHICAGO AND ILLINOIS~

In the past, TSE staff and organizers and Penton Publishing have created a "give back" program to thank the local community who welcomes and hosts the event. In the past, projects have included "design makeover" on a low-income school in Los Angeles, blood drive, home-re-building in New Orleans, and even a charitable Silent Auction. For Chicago 2013 we have broadened the scope of the TSE Gives Back, and working with a giving concept to partner with Illinois stakeholders not just Chicago.

Penton has given the approval for a concept to teach Illinois non-profit organizations (attractions, museums, scenic byways, CVBs, etc., or any organization who creates and produces special events as a source of their OPERATING and SUSTAINABLE ANNUAL REVENUES), how to do their events bigger, better and with a much more profitable bottom line. At this time we have been offered a program that consists of the following items which can be packaged and made available through scholarship/grant applications to 50 individuals representing 50 Illinois non-profit organizations. To date after a few cancellations over the Christmas holidays, we have THREE available scholarships.

Again there are THREE remaining scholarships of the 50 FREE TSE Gives Back packages provided. We have made the offer to our statewide CVBs to select a non-profit in their area to participate. At this time, there are still scholarships available for NFPs, and I want to take advantage of all 50. So, interested, call or email me directly.

TOLLWAY OASIS VISITOR INFORMATION KIOSKS GET UPDATING

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.



With dollars requested through the FY13 Marketing Partnership Grant, the kiosks will be getting a new updated look, to match the new look and feel of the Chicago & Beyond Regional office. We're excited about this opportunity, and look forward to debuting the new look in early 2013. New graphics are hoped to be installed in January at our five kiosks.

Renewals took place in summer for the Chicagoland kiosks, and we are determining if we have any open spaces. And, renewal notices were just sent out to partners' for the Northwest Oases in Belvidere and DeKalb...also gauging if we are at capacity. If any regional partner is interested in learning more about the program, please contact the office to determine if there is space availability at specific Oasis. It's hard to believe we will be entering our fourth year, and the amount of information we've shared has been

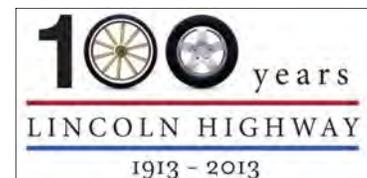
Lincoln Highway News

The National Centennial Celebration of the Lincoln Highway has been designated as one of the Top 100 Events in North America for 2013 by an expert tourism industry selection committee. The event will take place next year in Kearney from June 30- July 1.

Inclusion in the Top 100 list indicates that the Lincoln Highway Centennial will offer excellent entertainment value to tour groups and individual travelers from around the world, according to the American Bus Association (ABA). What began as a way for motorcoach operators to incorporate new product into their itineraries has grown into one of the most sought-after lists by travel professionals, motorcoach operators and the general public. The honor gives Kearney an important boost in visibility among professional tour planners.

According to research, one overnight visit by a motorcoach group can add \$5,000 to \$11,000 to a local destination's economy. Those dollars are spent on lodging, meals, admissions, fees, shopping, souvenirs, services and local taxes.

"Motorcoach groups spend more and stay longer," said Peter J. Pantuso, ABA's president and CEO. "That's why the Lincoln Highway Centennial is truly a local economic asset. There is no better way to jump-start tourism than to attract motorcoach groups to a great event and



ILLINOIS WINE NEWS

Get ready for a fresh take on the Annual Conference, set for Thursday, January 31 to Saturday, February 2, 2013 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. This year's event will merge the traditional conference offerings with all the fun of an Illinois wine festival! We will truly offer something for everyone throughout the three-day conference.

It all kicks off Thursday, January 31st with a special pre-conference workshop with the Wine Aroma Wheel creator Dr. Ann C. Noble. The Wine Aroma Wheel is a tool to learn about wines and enhance one's ability to describe the complexity of wine flavor. This is a must-attend program for anyone growing wine grapes, making wine, selling wine, serving or promoting it, or just loving it! Participants will learn how to distinguish specific tastes in popular red and white wines - and be able to explain exactly what they are tasting and why.

Thursday evening we will host our wildly popular and equally hilarious Wine, Pizza, and Trivia Night.

Friday, we'll delve further into the wine making process with educational workshops offered by top-notch enology experts. Friday evening the conference twists into festival mode with a Winter Wine Festival open to the public. Participating wineries will offer tastings of their wines as well as wine available for purchase by the glass and bottle. Culinary offerings will be staged throughout the room to allow attendees to create their perfect food pairings.

Saturday morning we'll offer concurrent educational tracts: one for wine lovers and marketing professionals and one for the Commercial Grape Grower. As always, the grand finale will be the IGGVA Annual Banquet and Auction which features four courses of culinary delights, each paired with the Best of Show and Governor's Cup winners of the Illinois State Fair Wine Competition. So, mark your calendars, and whether you attend for the entire 2.5 days, or just a single day, there is so much to learn. To get info or to register, visit the website at <http://www.illinoiswine.com/conference-register.html> . Cheers~

Wine Trail Updates

Here is some great news about the wineries in Northern Illinois, which are continuing to grow and add in new tasting rooms and special events along the Northern Illinois Wine Trail. Not sure where to visit, the wineries on the Northern Illinois Wine Trail are featured on the center-spread of the 2012

Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guide, and will be featured prominently in the 2013 Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guide too. The two-page map with Google driving directions is available for download at

www.northernillinoiswinetrail.com and we have created an interactive/downloadable eGuide with Madden Media partners for use by our visitors while on go. AND, did you know that we have over 36 partners along the trail....just how many have you visited?



New Wine Trail rack cards are available. Contact us if you need any of these to distribute to potential visitors. This weekend (November 16-18), many of our winery partners will be celebrating Nouveau, will you celebrate? Calling all wine lovers—epicureans of all levels! Join our winery partners as they celebrate the French-inspired tradition of Nouveau, previewing a sampling of the vintage from the fall harvest.

And you can't begin too early to be thinking about those holiday gifts, wouldn't some Illinois wine be just perfect. How about stocking up on hostess gift for the gathering? And with this before winter sets in with the snow and cold, NOW is the time to visit all of the wineries on the Northern Illinois Wine Trail!

Destination: Capitol Hill

Destination: Capitol Hill is the travel industry's premier legislative fly-in set for April 10-11. Travel professionals from across all segments of the industry will converge on Washington, D.C. to speak directly to lawmakers about issues that impact the travel industry. Don't miss the chance to:

- Learn about upcoming legislation that impacts travel.
- Mingle with key influentials and travel industry professionals.
- Meet with Members of Congress to stress the importance of travel as an economic driver.



Destination: Capitol Hill is your chance to make sure that Washington supports travel. Registration opens in mid-January and you can learn more at <http://www.ustravel.org/events/destination-capitol-hill> . Remember, mark your calendars...what happens in DC does have a lasting impact here in Illinois, on our museums, our byways, our heritage areas, and our visitors overall.

WINE TRAIL UPDATES

Here is some great news about the wineries in Northern Illinois, which are continuing to grow and add in new tasting rooms and special events along the Northern Illinois Wine Trail. Not sure where to visit, the wineries on the Northern Illinois Wine Trail are featured on the center-spread of the 2012 Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guide, and will be featured prominently in the 2013 Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guide too. The two-page map with Google driving directions is available for download at www.northernillinoiswinetrail.com and we have created an interactive/downloadable eGuide with Madden Media partners for use by our visitors while on go. AND, did you know that we have over 36 partners along the trail....just how many have you visited?

New Wine Trail rack cards are available. Contact us if you need any of these to distribute to potential visitors. And you definitely should mark your calendars for Wine Lovers Weekend, set for March 23-25 in Galena. And with this before winter sets in with the snow and cold, NOW is the time to visit all of the wineries on the Northern Illinois Wine Trail....cheers!

As been our practice, we continually research new sites 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

Chicago and Beyond: www.chicagoandbeyond.com

Chicago Tourism: www.explorechicago.org

US Travel Association: www.ustravel.org

Illinois Council of CVBs: 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

Traveling Green: www.travelgreen.org

Illinois Film Locations: www.onscreenillinois.com

Power of Travel: www.poweroftravel.org

Power of Travel Coalition: www.travelcoalition.org

Discover America: www.discoveramerica.com

SoMe Tourism: www.sometourism.com

Travel Means Jobs!

The Travel Means Jobs report is a new study that details the significant impact of travel and the distinct makeup of travel jobs. It illustrates how travel serves as a powerful economic engine driving our nation's recovery and putting Americans back to work. To read the complete report, check out the link provided http://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2012/08/e-Travel_Means_Jobs-2012.pdf and then get a copy of the official toolkit on how to share this info with your partners too. The link for the toolkit is as follows: <http://www.ustravel.org/news/travel-means-jobs-toolkit>. Check it out, it's important~



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More ILHC NEWS & UPDATES...



The Lincoln Highway is moving along with their murals with another being installed in Matteson, and more will be unveiled in the coming weeks as Mokena, Franklin Grove, and Sterling are also getting close. So proud of all they have accomplished and will be thrilled to promote this as one of the largest public art projects in the country. Our artist and partner, Jay Allen of Shawcraft, has been told that this is one of his best pieces by national muralists, so we thought you may want to see a time-lapse creation of the mural. Check it out and see one of the murals come to life. <http://s442.photobucket.com/albums/qq143/shawcraft/Matteson%20mural/?albumview=slideshow>

29 murals installed, the remaining 7 in stages of design, research, and painting. To see the ILHC murals already completed; you just need to check out the website www.drivelincolnhighway.com.

AND more exciting news...the centennial of the Lincoln Highway takes place in 2013, and the ILHC is working to make sure that they are part of the celebration. A new tri-fold brochure for the centennial is highlighting the highway's history, the stories contained in the interpretive gazebos and murals, as well as signature events and attractions not to be missed while traveling the roadway...and will be featured as a pull-out piece in the Winter Issue of American Road. To date, there are three (3) auto road trips (one international too) being coordinated to have visitors drive the entire route, New York to San Francisco. And take note of the new centennial logo the ILHC has developed for the signature year.

Lastly, check out the website for the new Avatar Tour of the Murals and Gazebos. So if you can't make the drive along the Byway, our newly designed avatar (hint, it bears the name) will give you a personal tour. And since we have our new avatar, you can also find an informative narrative on the highway's history. Plans are also including a new narrative of the entire Illinois Lincoln Highway, and what better tour guide than our Avatar Lincoln...check back for details~

Travel Weekly Preview: Looking ahead to 2013

The travel industry is poised for a good year in 2013. The industry's engines aren't firing perfectly on all cylinders just yet, but they are purring well enough to meet demand, maybe exceed expectations, and make a profit. Unfortunately, the major players can only go so far to make it happen. As always, they're going to be at the mercy of external events: global oil prices, macroeconomic forces, Middle Eastern geopolitics, U.S. government policy, European monetary policy, storms and all the rest.

In short, if 2013 turns out to be a bummer for travel, it very likely won't be the industry's fault, because travel companies have spent the better part of the recession taking care of business.

