

Chicago Hosts: National Convention of State Legislators in August

The 38th Annual National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Legislative Summit is being held in Chicago on August 6-9, 2012. This prestigious event will bring together state legislators, legislative staff, private sector and international delegates from all corners of the United States and the world for meetings and events in Chicago. This prestigious meeting gives the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago an excellent opportunity to demonstrate a little Midwestern hospitality and showcase all of the wonderful attractions that our state and city has to offer.

Senators Althoff and Trotter, co-chairs of the Summit, have asked us if we would provide volunteers to assist as ambassadors to the guests of this conference. Volunteers are needed for a variety of activities including at the four headquarter hotels at the hotel information desks; special event ambassadors that will serve as shuttle guides for the motor-coach trips to the Opening and Closing Events; volunteers at the meeting kiosks located at McCormick Place to provide general summit information; volunteers to help with press check in; and volunteers to help distribute a gift to each attendee at the Chicago booth located at McCormick Place.

We (IOT, ICCVB and our office) have been asked to assist in obtaining a total of 40-50 volunteers who would be willing to work during the actual conference. Shifts are 4-5 hours in length and can be set to accommodate your schedule, any time you have an available morning, afternoon or even some evenings. The conference will need help Monday, August 6th through Thursday, August 9th. Possible assignments would be working as a Special Event Ambassador (Tuesday and Thursday evening), Hotel Information Desk, Meeting Kiosk Ambassador (on-site info desk), or possible Press Room Ambassador and there could be other duties that may be assigned/needed. We would appreciate it if you can volunteer, as well as reach out to your staff and members to encourage them to help

Calendar of Events— Illinois Tourism Happenings

July 1 - FY13 Begins

August 5-8
NCSL Convention, Chicago

September 3
HOLIDAY: Office Closed

September 15-16
Vintage Illinois Wine Festival, Utica

October 10-12
ICCVB Quarterly Meeting, Joliet

January 15-18, 2013
2013 TSE Show, CHICAGO



Northern Illinois Winetrail News—New Website Debuts

Here is some great news about the wineries in Northern Illinois! At the close of the fiscal year, we debuted a new interactive website that not only features the Wine Trail, its events, BUT highlights each and every individual winery. It allows for Google Mapping, as well as allowing visitors to download the eGuide of the Wine Trail. It's in final stages, and we are tweaking it and working out a few last minute details, but we're excited about the end product. The new site and the continued marketing efforts are an initiative of the Chicago & Beyond Regional Tourism Office.

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**. To promote the Wine Trail, look for their Brochure Ad in the **2012 Spring-Summer Getaway Guide**. 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 are over 34 partners along the trail! Just how many have you visited? I see a road trip in the near future.

New Wine Trail rack cards are available. Contact us if you need any of these to distribute to potential visitors. AND, it is not too soon to get a date on your calendar! Yes, September will soon be here. And, what better place to check out our winery friends than at the Annual Vintage Illinois Wine Festival (in about 60 days) on September 15-16, 2012 at Matthiessen State Park. For festival info, check out www.vintageillinois.com.

ILLINOIS SCENIC BYWAYS NEWS...

Illinois Byway partners said a fond farewell to a long time champion in these past few months as Melissa Hendricks-Krebs retired from IDOT. She had been a strong advocate for the program both statewide and nationally and will be greatly missed. Joining the byway program, will be new partner from IDOT Denise Todd. We look forward to working with her on the exciting projects taking place in all parts of the state.

And, for the first time, we are moving ahead with our new Illinois Byways logo. Utilizing dollars from a special IOT Heritage Grant, the Byways will be reprinting the popular Illinois Byways Road Trip guide, and the logo will be used. And, the website, www.illinoisbyways.org has been re-launched with the new identity as well. The Byways are working with partners from Department of Transportation (DOT) as well as Illinois Office of Tourism (IOT) for a new Byways Map.



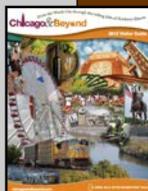
Illinois has SEVEN (yes 7) National Scenic Byways that cover all parts of the State. And the collective experience from visiting the byways makes for a unique getaway for both domestic and international visitors. Lastly, all byways are waiting the announcement on current FHWA grants and most importantly for joint initiatives, we all submitted a FHWA grant for a series of several hundred bike racks which will include the QR codes for easy access to the byway websites. Fingers crossed ..

WEBSITE NEWS...ChicagoandBeyond

Our new website, www.chicagoandbeyond.com is ready to roll. Web listings are now available by community...Did you know that the search feature allows visitors to find things by community OR by category OR by topic? We also have a Calendar of Events that needs content too.

So, please check out the website, and send us the info. Better yet, there is a button at the bottom of the page where you can **Submit Changes or Additions**, which is right next to the **Submit an Event** link. Both links will take you to an online form where the information can be entered pretty simple.

And, we now have the ability to insert a PICTURE with your LISTING so, we need pictures. All pictures, which must have releases on file so they can be used, can be sent in a jpeg format to info@chicagoandbeyond.com. Have I mentioned or begged enough times that we need PICTURES .. and our point person will be Mary Peterson. If you have any questions, please contact her.



Travel Industry Creating Jobs 26% Faster Than Rest of Economy

As provided by the US Travel Association, David Huether, senior vice president of economics and research, provides analysis on today's Labor Department report on June 2012 employment numbers:

The Labor Department reported that the economy added 80,000 new jobs in June, similar to the revised 77,000 gain in May. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate remained perched at 8.2% for a second consecutive month. After creating 226,000 jobs per month in the first quarter, the economy was only able to boost employment by an average of 75,000 per month in the second quarter. And, while some of this deceleration was due to an unseasonably warm winter, there's no denying that the recovery is in a soft patch.

*The slowdown has also extended to the travel sector of the economy, where after creating more than 13,000 jobs per month in the first quarter, travel jobs edged up just 2,600 per month in the second quarter, including an increase of just 1,300 in June to 7.6 million. Still, it is important to note that since the employment recovery began in March of 2011, **the Travel Industry has created 271,000 new jobs and has created jobs at a pace that has been 26% faster than the rest of the economy.***

Heuther cited that two reasons why employment growth in the travel sector has been outpacing the rest of the economy in recent years are that jobs in the travel industry cannot be outsourced abroad or easily replaced through automation. With the travel industry more internationally engaged than most sectors of the economy, the current slowdown in employment growth has likely been due partly to the economic slowdown in Europe, which is why it is important for U.S. policymakers to enact sensible long-term reforms that will make it easier for travelers from other areas of the world, such as Latin American and Asia, to visit the United States. And with the spending of every 33 overseas visitors supporting one U.S. job, more visitors will equal more jobs in America. listing of opportunities.

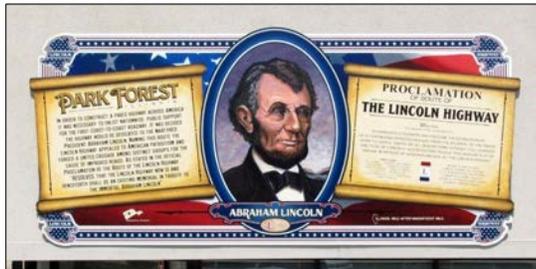
Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guides continue to be a popular item at the Tollway Oases kiosks, the TICs and as a downloadable piece from our website. And, thanks to Madden Media, the new visitor guide is available in an eGuide format, where the entire visitor guide can be downloaded, printed, as well as serve as an interactive tool to directly link to any partner website.



LINCOLN HIGHWAY MURALS... EXCITING NEWS TO SHARE!

The Lincoln Highway is moving along with their murals with two more recently installed in Park Forest and in New Lenox. Batavia is being painted, Lynwood has their design approved...the project is moving along at a fast pace. So proud of all they have accomplished...and will be thrilled to promote this one of the largest public art projects in the country. 26 murals installed, the remaining 10 in stages of design, research, painting.

To see the ILHC murals already completed; you just need to check out the website



FY13 Co-op Marketing Opportunities

We are finalizing our FY13 Marketing Partnership Grant for IOT for ad space for the upcoming fiscal year. While this is NOT by any means a guarantee of acceptance, we have our fingers crossed. So, we have requested the following ad space . and will begin to take reservations for the ad space. C&B has requested one full page in the 2013 Illinois Travel Guide; one full page in the Winter-Holiday 2012 Getaway Guide (newspaper insert), one page in the Spring-Summer 2013 Getaway Guide (newspaper insert).

If you are interested in working with us on these co-op opportunities, please let us know. The format will be repeated from the current year where pages will be divided into 1/6th units. Each partner will receive one photo or logo, headline, 65 words of copy, name of organization, address, website and phone. And, we are including new opportunities for printing projects, search engine optimization programs, website buys, etc. Check back with us for the final listing of opportunities.

CORPORATE IDENTITY—



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 are truly Chicago & Beyond.... from the new Regional Visitor Guide, to the letterhead, website (ChicagoandBeyond.com) and emails... you can definitely find us and regional information.

BUT we need more help. If you are listing our regional office, can you update our name. If you provide website referrals... use the www.chicagoandbeyond.com. And most importantly, we have changed our emails to bonnie@chicagoandbeyond.com and mary@chicagoandbeyond.com. Yes, the old website name redirects to the new site, and all old emails still forward to the new, but we could use your help in updating your contacts. Every so often things are getting lost, overlooked or wrong, and we're doing our best. Can you help us spread the word...Chicago & Beyond Regional Tourism Office is who we are. Thanks!

Visitor Information Kiosks at Illinois Tollway Oases

Our Visitor Information Kiosks are at Tollway Oases in Belvidere, DeKalb, O'Hare, Des Plaines, and Hinsdale. 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. The amount of information we've shared has been phenomenal - so for those participating, please be sure to send your brochures to the appropriate distribution location - summer is here and visitor traffic has picked up! And, as an FYI, there has been conversations on the possibility of having the **2012 Illinois Travel Guides** distributed at the kiosks too.

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

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

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

Power of Travel Coalition: www.travelcoalition.org

Discover America: www.discoveramerica.com

LET'S BE SOCIAL! MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE BEST WORKSHOP ON THIS TOPIC....

The Symposium on the Use of Social Media in the Tourism Industry will be held November 7-9, 2012 go ahead and mark your calendars. The location was chosen by voting on Facebook and we will be heading towards El Paso, TX. The SoMeTO symposium will be a combination of destination marketing organizations,

hotels, resorts, attractions and any other tourism related entities sharing ideas and learning more about how social media is effecting promotion within the travel industry. What makes this conference unique is the involvement of attendees throughout the entire process. Attendees will have a voice in everything from the location to the session topics and presenters.

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LINCOLN HIGHWAY NEWS....

The ILHC has been an advocate in letting partners and stakeholders know what has been happening along the highway, yearly accomplishments and new plans/initiatives for the upcoming year. This year, the ILHC Annual meeting was held on June 20, 2012, where there was a PowerPoint presentation for the Annual Report as well as a printed piece to accompany. The 40+ attendees were wowed with the accomplishments, as well as the future initiatives. But spreading the news doesn't stop there. Letters with the printed reports were sent out to all stakeholders early in July. Letters are sent to state and federal legislators, state agency partners, federal agency partners, national organizational partners as well as our community leaders.

The Annual Meeting also showcased two new print projects tri-fold brochures to expand and enhance ongoing marketing initiatives. Working on the new visitor guide and rack card, staff developed a tri-fold brochure on year-round things to see and do. Also, a companion piece was developed to be released later this year in preparation of the Lincoln Highway centennial in 2013. This piece talks about the highway history, the ways to learn about the stories through the gazebos and murals, and then highlights centennial events and attractions. We'll be releasing this piece at the Illinois Byways Week in October (details to follow).



FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

Chicago and Beyond has a button labeled SOCIAL MEDIA, where we feature links to our regional partners who are engaging in both Facebook and Twitter. Send your information to Mary (mary@chicagoandbeyond.com) if you want to be listed. We are working on a conversion of VisitNorthernIL with ChicagoandBeyond (wish us luck) on Facebook, but have successfully converted to our new identity on Twitter and Flickr.

Check us out!

Chicago & Beyond

ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.