

June 2012

From the Windy City through the rolling hills of Northern Illinois

Chicago & Beyond



WEBSITE NEWS....ChicagoandBeyond.com

Taa daaō the new website is almost done. As with most things, it takes a bit longer than anticipated, BUT, the site, www.chicagoandbeyond.com is ready to roll. While we are using Chicago & Beyond (with the ampersand in the name), that version of our name was NOT available in the web domain world. So the website is www.chicagoANDbeyond.com, one more thing to get used to in this ever-changing time. We have added in the information from our partners to date, and we have used the existing listings from our new visitor guide, BUT we need more help.

Did you know that the 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? Want golf courses, yes indeed, you can find ALL golf courses. And, theatersō you can find them too. 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 were 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 enteredō pretty simple. And, we now have the ability to insert a PICTURE with your LISTINGō 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. The web stats are good and numbers growingō .and with the new domain name, the name is still getting out there. So, please help us to continue to offer the best variety of things to see and do for our regional visitors.

If you want a case in your office, please drop an email to Mary and wedl add you to the ever-growing list.

Calendar of Events— Illinois Tourism Happenings

June 20

ILHC Annual Meeting, DeKalb

July 1

FY13 Begins

July 4

HOLIDAY - Office Closed

Oct 10-12

ICCVB Quarterly Meeting, Joliet

Jan 15-18, 2013

2013 TSE Show, CHICAGO

Northern Illinois Winetrail 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 2012 Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guide. To promote the Wine Trail, look for their Brochure Ad in the upcoming 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 trailō .just how many have you visited? I see a road trip in the near future.

And there is a new feature for the Wine Trail; we are working on an integrated mapping feature that allows a pop-up box for each of our winery partnersō with their own custom page with content form their direct and individual websites. We have more good info to shareō and more reasons to visit our partners.

New Wine Trail rack cards (yes another 100,000 has been distributed) are available. And you canō begin too early to plan some spring road trip, wouldnō some Illinois wine be just perfect. And with this springtime coming, NOW is the time to visit all of the wineries on the Northern Illinois Wine Trailō .cheers!



BYWAYS NEWS...

We have three National Scenic Byways in our region - Route 66, Illinois River Road AND Illinois Lincoln Highway. We mostly talk about updates along the Lincoln Highway, but here are some exciting news about the other byways. All have been making great strides on their projects. In recent months, Illinois River Road NSB has been installing a series of Interpretive Kiosks, with panels to orient visitors to the byway, tell them about the Illinois River, provide a map with more than 100 nature sites along the corridor and give them a bit of information about the community being visited. Kiosks are in Peoria, Havana, Ottawa, Canton, Pekin and Princeton. They hope that visitors stopping at each of the kiosks will be inspired to visit more of our wonderful sites and communities!

In addition, IRR has been a long time leader in GeoCaching - sounds like fun - check out more info on their website, www.illinoisriverroad.org And not to be outdone, look for a series of wayside Exhibits, which offer the traveler a distinct and interactive opportunity to connect with each community through the unique history of Route 66. Waysides are located in the following communities: Berwyn, Countryside, Willowbrook, Romeoville, Dwight, Pontiac, Bloomington/Normal, Atlanta, Lincoln, Williamsville, Springfield, Virden, Carlinville, Staunton, Litchfield and Hamel - and some towns have more than one exhibit - don't miss them while planning your next getaway.

There is so much to see and do along this long byway, you'll definitely need to plan for a multi-day getaway. For more information, check out www.illinoisroute66.org to see all that's happening~

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

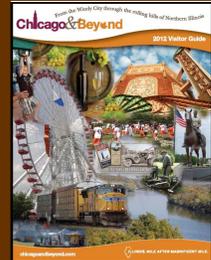
The Symposium on the Use of Social Media in the Tourism Industry will be held November 7-9, 2012 - go ahead and mark your calendars. Locations will be chosen by voting on Facebook and we are anxiously awaiting the decision - will be it Milwaukee WI or El Paso, TX.

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.

The symposium was founded by David Serino, of Gammet Interactive. In the fall of 2011, Gammet Interactive was acquired by Think! Social Media. In 2012, Serino will manage the event with his colleagues at Think! Social Media USA. The Third Annual Symposium on the use of Social Media in the Tourism Industry will be held November 7-9, 2012 at a location to be determined. The inaugural symposium, which hosted 110 attendees - was held in 2010 in Loudoun County, Virginia. In 2011, the second symposium hosted 183 attendees in Tunica, Mississippi.

2012 Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guide

It's true, the first time is always the hardest and the creation of our 2012 regional guide was just that. And now, we have Chicago & Beyond Visitor Guides are here. It's a slightly different format as we needed to determine how best to present the content in a simple format for the reader - and of course, add in tons of new attractions for potential visitors to see and do. Our guide is now 60 pages, the largest we've ever produced. It's colorful, full of content and while we want it to be comprehensive, it can realistically only offer an overview of the thousands of things to see and do. It refers visitors to our regional partners' websites for more detailed information. We do highlight our regional Byways, State Parks, County Fairs, and our lodging partners (we want these folks to come and stay!!). With the increased service area, we opted for three sub-regions: Chicagoland, Fox River Valley and Northwest. 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. We're grateful for the partnership - check it out at <http://www.myvirtualpaper.com/doc/MaddenMedia/chicagoandbeyond2012/2012030501/#0> to see how it flows.



The guides are in the state TICs, the Tollway Oases - and in numerous other places. So, please let us know if you need a case for your offices. We can ship them to you - or better yet arrange to meet you if you're coming our way or if we're near you for a meeting and/or presentation. We truly want to get them into the visitors' hands.

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 shortly after start of fiscal year for the final listing of opportunities.

LINCOLN HIGHWAY MURALS... EXCITING NEWS TO SHARE!



The Lincoln Highway is moving along with their murals—two more recently installed in Park Forest and in New Lenox. So proud of all they have accomplished—and will be

thrilled to promote the one of the largest public art projects in the country. From what I hear we are winding down—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 www.drivelincolnhighway.com

And, with 2013 being the Lincoln Highway centennial, there is much to do with the big planning. Shortly this year you'll be able to request a Illinois Lincoln Highway centennial brochure, where they'll be highlighting the history, signature events, as well as the history and heritage to share in the Interpretive Gazebos and Murals. The guide is to be released in time for the upcoming Illinois Scenic Byway Week, to be designated later this year.

Lastly, 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 is set for June 20, 2012, where there will be a PowerPoint presentation for the Annual Report as well as a printed piece to accompany. If you are interested in attending the Annual Meeting, please contact Sue Hronik at sue@drivelincolnhighway.com

Illinois Scenic Byway News

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. To showcase the cohesive partnership between these seven individual organizations, they have recently 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. The award announcement is pending, but anticipated before too long.

To showcase the accomplishments this program has brought to Illinois, the byways have created the brochure which highlights the projects undertaken with state and federal grant dollars. The brochure is being distributed to State and Federal Legislators, as well as partners and stakeholders. And, note the byways collectively have created their own corporate identity—thanks once again to Trittenhaus Design for the great logo and updating the 10-panel brochure.



And, the Byways are working with partners from Department of Transportation (DOT) as well as Illinois Office of Tourism (IOT) for a new Byways Map. This will be finalized and in the visitors hands before the end of the current fiscal year. Also, grant dollars have been awarded for a reprint of the ever-popular Illinois Byways Road Trip guide—look for more guides at the TICs, the Oases and from our byway partners.

Visitor Information Kiosks at Illinois Tollway Oases

Our Visitor Information Kiosks are at Tollway Oases in Belvidere, DeKalb, O'Hare, Des Plaines, and Hinsdale. Renewals will be taking place and we are determining if we have any open spaces. 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 almost 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—more to come.

REPORT: U.S. Travel and Hotel Bookings are UP 21%

Better make those reservations early; rooms and seats are filling up. If you're planning to do some summer travel this season, you may want to start booking those rooms right now, as travel reports suggests that U.S. consumers will be traveling in greater amounts this summer than in 2011.

At this year's Annual Leisure and Travel Summit, Best Western International, AAA and U.S. Travel Association, say that although summer travel will increase this season, consumers are still keeping a close look on what they decide to spend on travel. "While the economy improves and more Americans will travel this summer, travelers are more discerning than ever and looking for great value add-ons such as free breakfast, parking and Wi-Fi, which is now the most important free hotel amenity for travelers," said Dorothy Dowling, senior vice president of marketing and sales for Best Western.

Best Western says that advance hotel bookings for Memorial through Labor Day jumped to 21%, and the duration of stay is up 4% over the last year. Experts also say the return of family travel has increased summer bookings, including multi-generational summer vacationing, which will increase the amount of tour groups and hotels that cater to families through specific promotions and amenities.

AAA suggests that the most popular domestic travel destinations this summer will be Orlando, Honolulu, Anaheim, Las Vegas, Maui, and New York, and while car rental rates are down, hotel rates will be up this summer. Oster says though outbound international travel is down this summer due to economic concerns, inbound U.S. travel is really starting to thrive.

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

YES - We Are Chicago & Beyond R.T.O.

We are here, and we are totally embracing the new regional brand, and hopefully you will 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. One favor, please update your email address books you can reach the staff at the new emails:

bonnie@chicagoandbeyond.com and
mary@chicagoandbeyond.com.

The old emails will continue to work, but we appreciate your assistance in the transition

Chicago & Beyond
200 South State Street
Belvidere, IL 61008

Phone/Fax: 815.547.3740
www.chicagoandbeyond.com

Bonnie Heimbach, Exec. Dir.
bonnie@chicagoandbeyond.com

Mary Peterson, Office Assistant
mary@chicagoandbeyond.com

Illinois Fan Favorites Sweepstakes...

Enjoy Illinois is still hosting a Super Statewide Showdown between 64 attractions - and it's down to the Final Four!

We started with 64 attractions from all parts of Illinois...Superman, Lincoln Presidential Museum, Nauvoo...and now is down to the Final Four. The final match-ups are all regional favorites (good news for us!) but the finalists are as follows: Starved Rock (Utica) vs. Brookfield Zoo (Brookfield) and the Galena Main Street (Galena) vs. Museum of Science and Industry (Chicago). From a field of 64 attractions, Enjoy Illinois Facebook fans have voted best in class in four categories: Illinois History, Great Outdoors, Museums and Architecture, and Family Fun.

Follow the link to vote for your favorites for your chance to win an Illinois getaway and a \$500 Shell Gift Card! <https://www.facebook.com/EnjoyIllinois/app/263653463729978>.



FIND US AND OUR PARTNERS ON 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. And, we are in the process of converting to our new name as well. We list our partners in alphabetical order, and showcase 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! Send us your information if you want to be listed. We are working on a conversion of VisitNorthernIL with Chicago&Beyond (wish us luck).

Our Scenic Byway Partner, Illinois Lincoln Highway, and the Northern Illinois Wine Trail are also into social media.

For the Illinois Lincoln Highway, find their pages at facebook.com/DriveLincolnHwy or @DriveLincolnHwy.

The Northern Illinois Wine Trail can be found at facebook.com/NorthernILWine and on Twitter @NorthernILWine.

Chicago & Beyond

ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.