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We Have Moved

We have moved to a new location, still in Belvidere. If you have a chance, stop by and see us and our new space. We are at 8200 Fairgrounds Road in Belvidere. Phone, fax, email, etc. remain the same.



Cancelled: Culinary Tourism Workshops

Well, it was a GREAT idea, had lots of promise and content to deliver, but the number of attendees just were not there. So, based on conversations with the Board of Directors and our restaurant partners, we have opted to cancel the workshops previously scheduled for the remainder of 2013. Just didn't click with the partners, so we're changing the game.

In the next few weeks, we will be sending out a survey, asking partners what kind of topics may be of interest. Hosting regional workshops have been a strong endeavor for years with our organization, and past topics have included Social media, Marketing, Agri-Tourism, Motorcoach, Festivals & Special events, just to name a few. And we thought with Culinary Tourism we had another strong topic. So, now we're going to ask for ideas on what makes sense for your colleagues. Our workshops have been smaller in nature, a half-day format with one or two presenters on a current topic or issue. Cost has been low (\$35) and we've worked closely with our local CVBs and others (Chambers, Main Streets, EDCs) to spread the word. So, when you get the survey, please give us some ideas on what may be of help to your community, your local partners and then let us know if you'd want to work with us in planning a session.

I was disappointed that we couldn't bring these workshops to fruition, but maybe in a different location, different time or as part of a session, we can keep the topic prevalent. In the mean time, we want and value your opinion. Thanks~

Illinois Tourism Happenings

November 19-20 ~ Washington DC
Connecting America Through Travel

November 28-29 ~ Holiday - Office Closed

December 24-25 ~ Holiday - Office Closed

December 31 ~ Happy New Year

January 1, 2014 ~ Holiday - Office Closed

January 7-11, 2014 ~ Nashville
TSE 2014

February 3-5 ~ Chicago, IL
IL Governor's Conference on Tourism

February 26-27 ~ Washington DC
Destination Capitol Hill

April 5-9 ~ Chicago
USTRavel Association's IPW



Travel Improves Educational Attainment & Future Success

Working with US Travel Association, new research indicates that adults who took educational trips in their youth earn more and are significantly more likely to hold a college degree compared to those that didn't take such trips. New research by The Wagner Groups shows strong links between educational trips for youth and better performance in and beyond school.

Researchers looked at survey responses from 400 respondents — 200 who had taken educational trips between the ages of 12 and 18 and 200 who hadn't taken such trips but were otherwise similar in average age and distribution of gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status during those teen years. The data suggests that educational travel in that window is linked not only to more engagement and better grades while in school, but also a greater likelihood of earning a college degree and a roughly \$5,000 higher median income.

Importantly, the survey suggests that families can create these effects outside of school settings. Eighty-four percent of respondents for whom researchers documented the effects above said they'd taken an educational trip that wasn't school-sponsored, while only 69 percent said they'd gone on school trips.

Key findings include that educational travel between the ages of 12 and 18 is linked with better grades, greater interest in school subjects and lessons and a better understanding of cultural diversity. The survey also suggests that travel during that time can impact career choice in a number of ways, and that adults who did travel as youth have a median income approximately \$5,000 greater than their peers.

"Travel Improves Educational Attainment and Future Success," finds that adults who took educational trips in their youth achieved better grades, were significantly more likely to pursue higher education and earn 12 percent higher personal income annually in their careers. Roger Dow, president and CEO of U.S. Travel, discusses the benefits of youth educational travel with FOX 26. Link is as follows: <http://traveleffect.com/videos/educational-travel-sparks-academic-and-financial-success-youth>

Facebook and Twitter

Check out the button labeled SOCIAL MEDIA on our website for links to our regional partners - to be listed, contact us.



Connecting America Through Travel set for November in DC

While the rest of the world is speeding up, aging U.S. transportation infrastructure is slowing America down. Everyone agrees on the problem, but solutions are scarce. Join transportation visionaries and travel industry leaders at the Connecting America Through Travel Conference at the Newseum's Knight Conference Center in an important dialogue on how to break the logjam on renewing America's vital infrastructure. Mark your calendars for November 19-20 in Washington DC with this new session hosted by US Travel Association.

Don't Miss the Chance To:

Discover new research examining the links between travel infrastructure investment and national economic growth;
Hear from local and national leaders on the challenges to maintaining and building efficient, connected transportation systems; and
Forge new partnerships and allies for advocacy efforts in Washington and around the country.

Will Be There:

Travel industry leaders – hotels, car rental firms, gaming companies, attractions, destination marketing organizations and state tourism offices;
Transportation and infrastructure experts – airlines, airports, construction and engineering companies, city and regional planners, private investors, transit providers and high-speed rail developers;
Policy influencers – federal, state and local policymakers, Congressional staff, regional development authorities, trade associations and Washington representatives.

Destination Capitol Hill Returns in 2014

Destination Capitol Hill is the travel industry's premier legislative fly-in. Travel professionals from across all segments of the industry converge on Washington, D.C. to speak directly to lawmakers about issues that impact the travel industry. Make your plans to be in Washington DC for February 26-27th.

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. Congressional meetings will take place between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 27, 2014. Soapbox Consulting will schedule all appointments on Capitol Hill for our Destination Capitol Hill participants. Registrants will be contacted directly by Soapbox to discuss business locations, congressional relationships, and key offices. These calls will help us make the best use of your time on Capitol Hill.

Staff will be in attendance working with the National Scenic Byway Foundation, representing the 150 scenic byways through America. Working alongside other byway leaders, we will be sharing the importance of the byways, especially the seven byways here in Illinois.



Registration will open in December. Early Bird rates are \$95 through January 13, 2014 and then rise to \$135. The registration fee includes: Wednesday sessions and networking reception; Thursday morning networking breakfast and transportation to Capitol Hill; and pre-scheduled Thursday appointments on Capitol Hill (fee excludes hotel, travel, and personal expenses).



Celebrate Nouveau in Galena - help us Break a World Record

Calling all wine-lovers epicureans of all levels! Join us as we celebrate the French-inspired tradition of Nouveau, previewing a sampling of the vintage from the fall harvest.

And, on Friday, November 22, help us make history as we set out to break the world record for the longest toast relay. The goal: 1,000 people toasting in domino-style fashion along Main Street in Galena's historic downtown. Pre-purchase your registration ticket or click here for the Toast schedule. It's being called the "Toast of the Town" and they need at least 1,000 participants, check out www.nouveaueweekend.com for all the details.

While many wineries have Nouveau celebrations, there are many seasonal events taking place. We encourage you to check the website (www.northernillinoiswinetrail.com) for info on seasonal events. And remember, the holidays are coming...wine makes a GREAT GIFT.

Economic Impact from Tourism

As in the past, if you want to know how a specific county fared with its Tourism Economic Impact, just check out our website. Under the button for Education & Resources, you will find the two-page PDFs for each of the counties in our designated service area, as well as a few adjoining areas. The first page compares the specific county's figures for 2012 to the Chicago & Beyond region and the State of Illinois. And the reverse page reflects a 10-year history. You can download them and provide the data to your partners, legislators, stakeholders, etc. And we have compiled Economic Impact stats for two of our regional byway partners: the Illinois Lincoln Highway and the Illinois River Road.

Illinois Wine

Raise a glass to, well, your glass! We have some FUN happenings coming along to celebrate the fabulous Illinois Wine. And did you know, the Illinois wine industry has exploded in recent years, growing from just 12 wineries in 1997 to over 100 today. During this time, the acreage devoted to grape production has grown at a tremendous rate, with over 1,000 Illinois acres under vines. Today the Illinois wine industry creates a direct economic impact of more than \$692 million annually.

IGGVA is the organization that works with the 100 wineries and vineyards in the state. Did you know there are over 60 varietals of grapes grown here in Illinois? Wine production has grown in Illinois from 356,500 gallons produced in 2007 to 651,800 gallons in 2012.

According to a report commissioned by IGGVA, wine and wine grapes had a \$692 million economic impact in the state in 2012, more than double of the impact in 2007, when it was \$318 million. This includes \$153 million in wages, which represents 3,887 full-time jobs. The industry saw 500,000 wine-related tourists in 2012 and paid \$54 million in federal taxes and \$34 million in state and local taxes. Illinois ranks 19th in the nation for gallons of wine produced.

Mini-Abe Showcases Illinois

Maybe spontaneity is just exactly what Illinois needs more of as the state attempts to market its various attractions to tourists.

Illinois' current tourism ad campaign features a miniature statue of a familiar icon often associated with the state — Abe Lincoln. The Mini-Abe, as he has been dubbed for this ad campaign, is seen whizzing around Illinois to draw attention to some of the state's principal tourist activities and attractions, including river boating, county fairs, ballooning, stock car racing, the Willis Tower Skydeck ledge and Route 66, a section of which passes through the state. He's been photographed in Elgin running from Zombies, in Alton for Halloween, and most recently in DeKalb checking out Huskie athletics. He even visited Rochelle for the unveiling of the 35th Interpretive Mural along the Lincoln Highway.

The Mini-Abe commercial that is the centerpiece of the campaign is not hugely-sophisticated advertising. But it's the kind of stuff that people can immediately relate to, thanks to its directness and the absence of pretension. Plus, using the theme of spontaneity is a good one, because that's how a lot of people approach vacationing, especially the briefer, long-weekend sort of getaways that many in-state residents take in the fall and early winter.

So far, Mini-Abe is making a mark. And, this fall, IOT launched a new initiative to send our beloved mini-mascot, Mini Abe, to all areas of our state. We invite you to welcome Mini Abe to your area for a week to capture content for your social media initiatives and share the latest and greatest points of interest from your region on Enjoy Illinois social channels. Chicago & Beyond is excited to welcome Mini-Abe to our office the first week of December...wonder what the staff here will dream up for Mini-Abe to see and do! Have ideas? Send an email to mary@chicagoandbeyond.com, from what we hear, Mini-Abe is up for almost anything. Ideas and suggestions are welcome and encouraged.

Wine Trail Updates

The wineries in Northern Illinois are continuing to grow and add in new tasting rooms and special events along the Northern Illinois Wine Trail. They are featured on the center-spread of the 2013 Chicago & Beyond Visitor 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 the go. Our 2014 regional guide will have a similar spread as well.

We have over 36 partners along the trail and just received official confirmation of our new winery partner, Vigneto del Bino located in Antioch will be celebrating their grant opening November 22-24. So, the questions bears asking, how many wineries have you visited?

Check out the unveiling of our new eGuide. This eight-page eGuide is totally interactive and can be downloaded from www.vacationfun.com and from our website. Our first-ever Wine Trail brochure has been printed and is a new format to showcase the wineries and tasting rooms with more content and images, perfect for our visitors. Contact us if you need any of these to distribute to potential visitors.



2014 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism

It's never too early to begin planning, especially when you can save money. Mark Your Calendars for the Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism, the state's premier educational forum for the travel industry, and focuses on the importance of tourism as a tool for stimulating and continuing economic development within Illinois. When? February 3-5, 2014. Where? The luxurious Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago. How much? Here is the best news, register before December 1st and get a special rate of \$395 and register NOW and get entered for a pair of American Airline tickets (bonus). To register, click here: http://www.ilgovconference.com/ilgovsite/reg_step2.cfm

This year will bring together over 500 travel industry professionals. Now more than ever, local, regional and state governments are seeing the importance of tourism in leading the way to economic growth and we need to band together to make sure that tourism dollars support bringing visitors into our hotels, restaurants and attractions in Illinois.

In the spirit of saving money, why not book your accommodation at Palmer House Hilton at the same time! Registration is now available -be sure to secure our pre-negotiated rates for you and your colleagues. Located in Downtown Chicago and right in the heart of Chicago's Theatre district. This hotel will also be the host for the conference and organizers, with special valet parking rate for all those who are driving to the city.

As always, one of the most anticipated conference activities is the Silent Auction, taking place on the expo floor. Is an excellent way to highlight great designations to our audience of travel professionals. Funds from the auction are used to support the educational components of the conferences, as well as awarding hospitality students with scholarships. Heather Wilkins of the Land of Lincoln RTDO is coordinating this conference event and is needing your assistance in auction prizes. We are looking for overnight getaway packages, restaurant certificates, wine tastings, attraction tickets...anything you can donate to create special offerings. Find the form on our website, or email Heather for one. at heather@visitLandofLincoln.com. Deadline is December 19th, so let's help get some fantastic prizes for the auction this year's event.

The Lincoln Highway Mural Project Comes to a Close

It is truly bittersweet that the mural series has now been completed!

A legacy project and a labor of love, these extraordinary works public art are something to be very proud of! The multi-site mural project showcases the history of the early highway, bringing the intriguing stories into people's lives so they can recognize its impact on American travel and the communities.

The creation process for each mural was a team effort of the artist Jay Allen, owner of Shaw Craft Sign Company, the mural community and the ILHC board of directors and staff, as well as countless others who contributed over the years to the project.

With a total of 35 murals in the series, the final two were installed October 10, 2013; number 34 in Sterling and number 35 in Rochelle. It was a second mural for Rochelle, which was part of the original "pilot program" in 2006 consisting of three murals. Those can be found in Creston, DeKalb, and Rochelle.

Rochelle held its mural dedication ceremony on October 16, 2013, keeping their mural covered until that day. The Illinois Office of Tourism was gracious enough to allow Mini Abe to attend and he assisted in the unveiling of the mural during the event. Abe also was thrilled to meet everyone, including the mural artist and the Rochelle Mayor!

During Sterling's mural dedication ceremony, held on October 26, 2013, Jen Hoelzel, the Illinois Deputy Director of tourism, said the program has helped to connect all the communities. "You're connected by the Lincoln Highway, and now you're connected by an artistic pathway," she said. "You clearly already understand the importance of murals, the importance of art in Sterling. But now you're part of this larger Lincoln Highway Coalition."



JOLT... Jobs Originated Through Launching Travel

As a follow up to the October ICCVB meeting, tourism partners are being asked to help gain support on legislation that would spur Illinois' economy and support jobs throughout Illinois and America: HR 1354, the "Jobs Originated Through Launching Travel" (JOLT) Act. The JOLT Act is a bipartisan solution that would harness the power of travel to create more jobs and economic opportunity in Illinois. You can help in harnessing the power of travel for your district by asking your Congressmen/women to co-sponsor the JOLT ACT.

Materials have been designed specifically for Illinois by the U.S. Travel Association that includes an overall travel stats document; an Illinois specific economic page; a page on the JOLT Act and Illinois specific info regarding Brand USA as well as a letter that can be used in addressing those Congressmen/women who have not signed on as co-sponsors to the JOLT Act. A big thanks to ICCVB's Legislative Chairman Kimberly Bless for keeping our partners up to date on current happenings and actions to take.

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

IL Magnificent Stuff Happens Here

www.ilmagstuff.com

Chicago and Beyond:

www.chicagoandbeyond.com

Chicago Tourism:

www.choosechicago.org

US Travel Association:

www.ustravel.org

Illinois Council of Convention & Visitors Bureaus:

www.iccvb.org

Illinois Wine Industry:

www.illinoiswine.com

Northern Illinois Wine Trail:

www.northernillinoiswinetrail.com

Power of Travel – info & stats:

www.poweroftravel.org

Power of Travel Coalition:

www.travelcoalition.org

National Scenic Byways:

www.byways.org

Illinois Byways:

www.illinoisbyways.org

Illinois Film Locations:

www.onscreenillinois.com

Discover America:

www.discoveramerica.com

Traveling Green:

www.travelgreen.org



2014 Visitor Guide

Our 2013 guide is the largest that we have ever produced. The entire guide, all 72 pages and ads, were converted into a digital eGuide where this format allows the consumer to download the content, but also use the live links to partners websites. Check it out at www.vacationfun.com or from our website homepage. If you need a case, email Mary and she will get it out for you.



Looking ahead, 2014 will be here before you know it and we are already updating content for the 2014 Visitor Guide. We are continuing in the style and format established with the new regional publication. Mary Peterson of our office is working on the content, and once again we are partnering with Wendy Tritt of Trittenhaus Design for the overall production and ad sales. For info about ads please contact Wendy (wendy@trittenhaus.com). We are always seeking new photos for use in the guide and websites, please send images to Mary for use and let us know if you have specific milestone events or attractions that we can and should highlight.

Website News - chicagoandbeyond.com

Our regional website is up and running. The Calendar of Events is a great feature that constantly needs new content. Please send our way events that you want to see listed on our site. There is a button at the bottom of the page where you can Submit Changes or Additions. This will take you to an online form where the information can be entered. We 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.

Please contact us with your questions, comments and/or concerns:

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