



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

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2012 ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE MARKED 25TH ANNIVERSARY PROVING THE POWER OF PEOPLE AND TRAVEL

ROSEMONT – More than 400 of Illinois' leading travel professionals gathered last week at the 2012 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Office of Tourism (DCEO/IOT) and the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (ICCVB) co-hosted the event which was held at the Donald E. Stephen Convention Center March 14-16. This year's theme, "The Power of People and Travel," emphasized how working together can facilitate forward-thinking and innovative initiatives to ensure the tourism industry continues to be a key economic driver for the state.

A wide array of nationally recognized speakers and panelists came together to provide attendees with a series of practical and educational sessions on the tourism industry. The conference included the annual "State of the State of Tourism Address" given by Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity Director Warren Ribley and Illinois Office of Tourism Deputy Director Jan Kostner. Both Ribley and Kostner discussed the landscape of tourism throughout Illinois and the Illinois tourism industry's vital role in statewide economic development, while sharing information on where Illinois tourism stands with key economic indicators and proactive steps the state has taken in planning for the future.

Highlights of Illinois' 2010 economic impact numbers include:

- In 2010, Illinois welcomed more than 86 million domestic and international visitors, spending a total of more than \$29 billion.
- Leisure travelers spent on average \$106 per person, per day for a total of \$80 million daily in Illinois businesses.
- The economic impact of tourism directly generated 287,500 jobs within Illinois in 2010, with one-in-10 jobs in Illinois directly or indirectly supported by travel expenditures.
- Travel-related spending accounted for more than \$5.3 billion in federal, state and local tax revenues in 2010. The additional tax revenues save an average Illinois household over \$1,000 in taxes each year.
- Twenty-one of Illinois' 102 counties received over \$100 million in domestic traveler expenditures in 2010.
- Nearly 1.7 million overseas visitors traveled to Illinois in 2010 and spent \$2 billion, ranking the state seventh among most popular U.S. states for international travelers.
- Also included were highlights from the state's forthcoming Spring/Summer 2011 advertising campaign, integrating a cross-medium strategy (TV, radio, Web and social media) with exciting creative ads highlighting statewide destinations and attractions.

A full transcript of the 2012 State of the State of Tourism Address will be available at www.ilgovconference.com.

Illinois Excellence in Tourism Award Winners

The 2012 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism concluded by celebrating the groundbreaking work of industry innovators with the "Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards." NBC5 Chicago anchor and reporter, Stefan Holt, emceed the awards luncheon, honoring those destinations, attractions, and events that led the way for the state's many successes. Designed locally by Dolphin Creative Promotions of Skokie, Ill., awards are presented in 12 categories, four of which recognize two budget categories – Division A with total marketing and operational budgets \$700,000 and above; and Division B with budgets under \$700,000. The entries were judged by a panel of marketing and tourism professionals on clarity of message, creativity, originality and the project's overall success.

2012 Governor's Awards Recipients

Best of Show: *Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau: GoRockford.com, Screw City Beer Festival and Hideaway in Rockford*

Best Leisure Collateral: *Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, "Road Trip" Seasonal Guides*

Best Sales Collateral: *Naperville Convention & Visitors Bureau, Banquet Guide*

Best Electronic Marketing: *Woodfield Chicago Northwest Convention Bureau, Sales Video*

Best Social Media Marketing: *KeyLime Cove Indoor Waterpark Resort*

Best Media/Public Relations Initiative: *The Greater North Michigan Avenue Association, The Magnificent Mile Lights Festival presented by BMO Harris Bank*

Best Cooperative Partnership: TIE – Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition, Illinois Lincoln Highway Interpretive Mural Series; John Hancock Observatory, Skating in the Sky

Best Branding Initiative: *Streator Tourism, Streator Downtown Farmers Market Brand*

Best Web site

Division A: *Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, GoRockford.com*

Division B: *Aurora Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, enjoyaurora.com*

Best Visitors Publication

Division A: *Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, All Around Alton Visitors Guide 2012*

Division B: *Chicago North Suburbs Convention & Visitors Bureau, Getaway Guide*

Best Event or Festival

Division A: *Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Screw City Beer Festival*

Division B: *The Greater North Michigan Avenue Association, In-Fashion: The Magnificent Mile Shopping Festival Presented by Mastercard*

Best Tourism Marketing Campaign

Division A: *Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Hideaway In Rockford*

Division B: TIE - Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Kankakee County Cultural Heritage Campaign; Quincy Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Drive the Tour Summer Campaign

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The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Office of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.

The mission of ICCVB is to enable its members to be more effective and efficient in attracting visitors to their communities by providing educational opportunities, which raise the level of professionalism in the travel industry, and a forum for networking and cooperative action between members.