

Governor's Conference—Awesome!

Last month was a special time, when the **20th Anniversary of the Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism** was held in Chicago—and it was a signature event by all standards. Congrats to Illinois Tourism Alliance (formerly Visit Illinois) and IBOT on the successful event. Over 600 attendees were able to take part in dozens of educational sessions. And the keynote presentations were inspiring. We always get so much from the State of The State from Jan Kostner and Jack Lavin. And didn't you enjoy Lisa Ford's presentation on Customer Service? Made me realize just how important those front line people are—and the critical skills we need to find in those people. As she said, "hire the attitude" and "train the skill". You just can't teach the critical people skills we need to have in welcoming our visitors. And, what about Keith Reinhard's speech on The Future of Tourism in Today's World. Wow! And for those in attendance, the ideas discussed were staggering. From insights on the American image worldwide to the ways world citizens view Americans, it really opened my eyes. There are suggestions for what you, the individual, can do when traveling abroad—and how to better deal with international guests. Business and government agencies are working together, check out the website www.businessfordiplomaticaction.org for info. It's a lot to think about—really insightful! Be sure to check it out!



And some special thanks to regional partners for your donations to the **Silent Auction**, always a highlight at the conference. I've heard that over \$13,000 was raised—way to go! The items were fantastic—too many choices.

And a special thanks to all of you who entered the **Awards Competition**—a record of 154 entries this year. The judges had a hard time selecting the winners from a broad field of submissions. Congrats to those who took home the prizes—Northern Illinois was very well represented.

Illinois' Signature Whistle—A Ringtone!

With the launch of the new IBOT radio commercials a few years ago, the new brand came complete with a signature sound—**The Whistle**. Think back to the last time you've heard the commercials aired in your market. The compelling words talking about the marvelous things to see and do in Illinois. And how does it end—the whistle. Its classic, ear-catching and very memorable (according to industry experts). And now it can be your signature cell-phone ring tone!

So grab your cell phone and text **the code 50416 to the phone number 69937**. Your phone must be able to text message and download customized options through a web browser. It's really easy. And it's FREE.

So while cell phones that ring during a speech, movie or church service are annoying and rude, get the signature Illinois Whistle and be truly unique. Just like Illinois destinations—classic and memorable, now your ringtone can inspire others to enjoyillinois!

ILLINOIS SEVEN WONDERS—WHAT'S THAT

As was announced by Jan Kostner at the Governor's Conference, you have the chance to help identify Illinois' most unique treasures in a new promotion, **Seven Wonders of Illinois**. In a unique partnership with Chicago's ABC7 and IBOT, you have the chance to nominate your favorite beautiful, interesting or just plain quirky destination in Illinois. These winning entries will be taken online at www.enjoyillinois.com/sevenwonders through April 30th. Nominations were gathered through February and the final voting takes place in March. It will be narrowed down to the top two choices in each region. The winning **Seven Wonders of Illinois** will be announced on April 30th and will be showcased with themed travel packages, downloadable videos and more. So the voting takes place NOW—check to see your top "wonders" in each region and vote for your favorite. The **Seven Wonders of Illinois**—What are they? Where are they? Do you know? Check back!

CYBER DICTIONARY—WHAT A TOOL

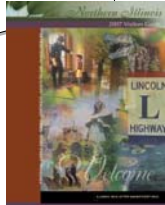
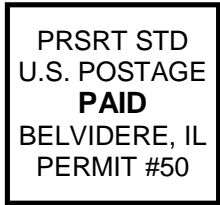
For those who regularly check-out the Travel Professionals side of www.enjoyillinois.com, you know that it is full of good information. Grant info. Tourism contacts. Copies of *Illinois Tourism News*. And, now it offers you something new—a **Cyber Dictionary**. For those times when you're in a conversation on new technology and trends, like gearing up your **MP3**, making sure your website offers "**dynamic content**" or that you have the ability to create **blogs**, the new resource provides clear definitions on these and so many more terms. We want to keep abreast of the trends, but we also need to understand them. Check out this new and very helpful guide!

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD!

We continually want to learn and thank goodness the opportunities abound here in Northern Illinois. Still this month there are two great opportunities. First on **March 14-15**, the ISEN (Illinois Special Event Network) is hosting their annual **Festival & Event Workshop and State Convention** in Tinley Park. Two full days on great ideas, networking and much more. Check out our website (www.visitnorthernillinois.com under the Educational Opportunities button) for details. On **March 29**, join regional partners at Moraine Valley Community College for a presentation of **Disney Key's To Excellence**. Learn all about Disney's successful skills in Leadership, Management, Customer Service and Customer Loyalty—all four tracks in one day! Again details can be found on our website. Lastly, in April we are working on another workshop with partners from McHenry County, **Marketing 101—Now I see Why Its Important**. Details are being firmed up on location and specifics, but look to our website & April newsletter for details.

KIOSK PROGRAM EXPANDS

With two successful **Visitor Information Kiosks** up and running at the **DeKalb and Belvidere Oasis**, the program is set to expand this spring. We will be opening three new kiosks in the **Des Plaines, O'Hare and Hinsdale Oasis** this month. Details are being finalized and we hope to have all regional DMO partners secured within days. Check with us for details on the program. Thanks for your interest and support in this new program to put visitor information into the travelers hands. It's working—thanks to our terrific CVB partners!



News From National Tourism Partners & Sources . . . News To Use & Share!

Chicago Bids To Host Summer Olympics 2016...find out more!

You've probably heard that the race is on to determine which US City will be named the finalist to host the 2016 Summer Olympics. Here's a little background on what's happened to date. July of 2006, the field of potential United States cities that would compete for the 2016 Olympic bid was narrowed. Houston and Philadelphia were eliminated leaving Los Angeles, San Francisco, and **Chicago** as the remaining possibilities. On November 13th, San Francisco withdrew its Olympic bid when the 49'ers football team informed the Olympic committee that they would not jointly build a new stadium that would be used to host the Olympic ceremonies.

The final U.S. decision will be made in spring of 2007. Los Angeles or **Chicago** will be chosen by the USOC (United States Olympic Committee) to represent the U.S. in our bid to host the 2016 Olympic Games. Chicago has formed a local coordinating committee, and their goal is to bring attention to Chicago's dream of finally bringing the games to our great city. Los Angeles has previously hosted the Olympic Games in 1984. Chicago once won the U.S Olympic bid in 1904 but President Roosevelt insisted the venue be changed to St Louis to coincide with the "Louisiana Purchase World Expedition."

We want the world to take a closer look at **Chicago** and see that **Chicago** is a true world class city. It offers a combination of architecture, parks, museums, beaches, nightlife and diverse culture second to no other city. **Chicago** has the public backing, the corporate financing, and the transportation infrastructure to make the perfect venue for the 2016 Olympics. Check out their official website, www.ChicagoOlympics2016.com and check back often for the latest updates on Chicago's bid to host the games. We will be frequently adding information on breaking news, public opinion, and how you can help support the bid! Get the info and be a part of the efforts to win the bid for **Chicago**!

Illinois Tourism Happenings . . .

March 7	ICCVB Tourism Advocacy Day, Springfield
March 14-15	ISEN State Convention, Tinley Park
March 20	IL Lincoln Highway Coalition Mtg, DeKalb
March 20	Agriculture Tourism Partners of IL Mtg, Springfield
March 25 -	
April 8	Chinese Delegation tours thru Northern Illinois
March 29	Disney Keys to Excellence Workshop, Palos Hills
April 5	Office Closes at Noon—Holiday
April 13	Challenger Learning Center's Science Night / Museum of Science & Industry, Woodstock
May 11	Illinois Tourism Alliance Annual Meeting, Chicago
May 17-18	ICCVB Spring Mtg, Bloomington
May 22-23	National Scenic Byway Conference, Baltimore, MD
June 5	Disney Keys to Excellence Workshop, Naperville

For specifics on any of the above mentioned meetings, workshops or grants, contact NITDO at (815) 547-3740.

Websites For Your Review . . .

Illinois Tourism:	www.enjoyillinois.com
Northern Illinois Tourism:	www.visitnorthernillinois.com
Chicago Olympics	www.chicagoolympics2016.com
Illinois Film Locations:	www.onscreenillinois.com
Visit Illinois:	www.visitillinois.net
Chicago Tourism:	www.877chicago.com
Travel Industry of America:	www.tia.org
Illinois Wine Industry:	www.IllinoisWine.com
National Scenic Byways:	www.byways.org
Illinois Byways	www.illinoisbyways.org
Illinois Lincoln Highway:	www.LincolnHwyIL.com
Illinois River Road:	www.illinoisriverroad.org
Great River Road:	www.greatriverroad-Illinois.org
Historic Route 66:	www.illinoisroute66.org
World Culture Game	www.passportculture.com
Camp Experience	www.campexperience.com

We are researching new sites - so if you know of a site that might interest our partners, contact NITDO. We'd be happy to include others recommendations. Thank-You!