



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 8, 2021

MEDIA CONTACT:

Madeline Sweeney

Madeline@timezoneone.com

Illinois Office of Tourism Announces 28 New Small Businesses Inducted to the Illinois Made Program

Newest Illinois Made class highlights diverse group of small businesses with goal of generating tourism activity in every corner of Illinois

CHICAGO - The Illinois Office of Tourism today announced 28 new small businesses, or ‘Makers’ have been recognized as part of the [Illinois Made](#) program. The program recognizes each business as a hidden gem for locals and visitors to discover, offering unique products and experiences all around the state. From vegan dessert makers, alpaca and hemp farmers, and a Chicago candlemaker with a mission to provide young moms with critical job training skills - each of the small businesses featured help make Illinois a one-of-a-kind destination for visitors.

The Illinois Made program, launched in 2016, inspires residents and visitors to discover the people, products and authentic experiences created by one-of-a-kind small businesses found in every region of the state. This newest class of Makers is being announced just in time to highlight for consumers even more options to buy local products during this year’s holiday shopping season.

“Illinois is home to a diverse, vibrant small business community which attracts visitors from across the country and around the world. Through our Illinois Made program – we celebrate the unique contributions of small businesses across our communities and provide people yet another reason to explore all aspects of Illinois,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “I want to congratulate the 28 new Illinois Makers on this distinguished honor, and encourage our residents and visitors alike to plan a visit to discover the products and experiences unique to Illinois.”

The Illinois Made program now features over 200 Makers from all corners of Illinois and continues to drive foot traffic into local small businesses around the state.

“Small businesses are the backbone of Illinois’ economy and offer food, products and experiences that make a visit to all regions of Illinois special,” **said Sylvia I. Garcia, Acting Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)**, which includes the Illinois Office of Tourism. “We are excited to expand the Illinois Made program to include 28 additional small businesses that have unique made in Illinois products and highlight why folks should visit communities across our great state.”

“This new Illinois Made class is a diverse representation of the unforgettable experiences visitors can find across our state, from the big city of Chicago and surrounding suburbs, all the way to rolling hills of Southern Illinois,” said **Karla Flannery, Deputy Director of the Illinois Office of Tourism**. “We look forward to finding new and exciting ways to promote this group of small businesses, their owners and communities to both domestic and international visitors.”

The 2021 Illinois Makers reflect a wide range of business types – from restaurants, breweries and wineries, to retail, farms and orchard businesses – which coincide with the latest trends in tourism, including artisan products and those offering outdoor experiences for visitors. This year, more than half (18) of the businesses represented are owned by women or people of color. The new Makers include the following businesses, broken down by region:

Chicago & Surrounding Areas (Chicago & Beyond)

[Accents by Fred](#) - Forest Park
[Boggio's Orchard](#) - Granville
[Brewpoint Coffee](#) - Elmhurst
[Bright Endeavors](#) - Chicago
[Gayety's Chocolates](#) - Lansing
[Hungry Monkey Bakery](#) - Lake Forest
[Kombucha Brava LLC](#) - Evanston
[Magic Meadows Alpaca](#) - Wonder Lake
[McMahon Gallery](#) - Lake Forest
[More Brewing Company](#) - Huntley
[Noir d'Ébène Chocolat et Pâtisserie](#) - Evanston
[Patterson Glass](#) - Mundelein
[Thornton Distilling](#) - Thornton
[Tony Cannoli](#) - Mundelein
[Vintrendi Wine Company](#) - Park Forest

Northwest & Southwest Illinois (Great Rivers Country)

[Dot's Pots](#) - Moline
[Mackinaw Valley Vineyard](#) - Mackinaw
[My Just Desserts](#) - Alton
[The Nut House](#) - Peoria Heights
[Thyme Square Bakery](#) - Quincy
[Water Sweets Soap Company](#) - Edwardsville

Central Illinois (Lincoln of Lincoln)

[CBPB Popcorn Shop](#) - Champaign
[Riley's Vegan Sweets & Eats](#) - Peoria
[Trefzger's Bakery](#) - Peoria Heights
[Wildflour Bakery & Candy Co.](#) - Casey
[Witness Distillery](#) - Vandalia

Southern Illinois (Trails to Adventure)

[Buffalo Bluffs Hemp Farm](#) - Cobden
[Shawnee Hills Lavender](#) - Cobden

“I am honored for my business to be recognized alongside so many other hard working small businesses around the state,” said **Yvonne Campbell, owner of My Just Desserts in Alton (Southwest Illinois), one of the newest Illinois Made makers and recipient of the state’s Business Interruption Grant (BIG).**

“The past two years have been challenging for my business, but through the support I’ve received from the state’s business recovery programs and the Illinois Made program, I look forward to sharing my desserts with visitors to the area for years to come.”

“The pandemic brought about unexpected challenges for Illinois’ farming community but has also given more people reason to discover outdoor hidden gems, like ours, in their own backyard,” said **Sally Kazanis, owner and founder of Magic Meadows Alpacas in Wonder Lake.** “We’re thrilled to be a part of the newest Illinois Made class, as an agritourism destination, that is available for locals and visitors to not only shop homemade products at, but also make memories year-round.”

“Our mission is to help local young mothers gain valuable job experience through our paid training program and we are so glad that the state truly supports us in our goal,” said **Ellen Kogstad Thompson, founder of Bright Endeavors in Chicago.** “Illinois Made was created to uplift local communities around the state through highlighting the people that make Illinois small businesses a travel destination, like the incredible moms that create our hand poured candles, and we are honored to be a part of its mission as well.”

The Illinois Office of Tourism promotes Illinois Made makers through inclusion in both its new road trip itineraries and Enjoy Illinois travel magazine, events, seasonal campaigns and the annual Illinois Made Holiday Gift Guide that encourages consumers to support small businesses throughout the holiday shopping season. The 2021 Illinois Made Holiday Gift Guide will be announced later this month.

The Illinois Made program builds on the State’s efforts to highlight small businesses as a visitor attraction in and of themselves, to celebrate its diverse communities, and to boost tourism activity to support local economies statewide. Moreover, driving traffic toward tourism and tourism related small businesses – among those hit hardest during the pandemic - is a key component of the Pritzker administration’s plan to guide a statewide economic recovery post COVID-19.

The Illinois Office of Tourism (IOT) encourages residents to nominate businesses for the Illinois Made program on a year-round basis. IOT reviews nominations and selects businesses based on the criteria for the program along with local business representation across the state. To nominate a business for the program, click [here](#).

To learn more about Illinois Made visit: [EnjoyIllinois.com/IllinoisMade](https://www.enjoyillinois.com/IllinoisMade)

###

About the Illinois Office of Tourism:

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