



**PRESS RELEASE**

**ENJOYILLINOIS.COM**

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MEDIA CONTACT: COLLEEN CORRELL  
COLLEEN@TIMEZONEONE.COM  
312.281.6520

## **Illinois Office of Tourism Celebrates Bicentennial Anniversary with New Initiatives to Promote Visits to Illinois' Most Significant Sites**

**CHICAGO** – Illinois Office of Tourism is excited to announce several new initiatives to celebrate the state's Bicentennial year while promoting tourism around the state. Now through Dec. 3, 2018—the official 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Illinois becoming a state—Illinois Tourism is offering special programs that encourage visitors to experience the state's many contributions to architecture, history, culture and agriculture in a new way.

### **Doors Open Illinois**

During weekends in August, Doors Open Illinois will offer free access to 80 participating historical sites and museums around the state. Doors Open Illinois will feature a different region of the state each weekend to celebrate and encourage visitors to learn more about Illinois history and heritage. Regions include: Southern Illinois, Aug. 4-5; Central Illinois, Aug. 11-12; Western Illinois, Aug. 18-19; and Northeastern Illinois, Aug. 25-26. For more information on Doors Open Illinois click [here](#).

"We're incredibly excited to give visitors access to these historically significant sites," said Cory Jobe, director of Illinois Office of Tourism. "The Doors Open program is the perfect way to showcase Illinois' unique history and highlight what makes our state an amazing place to visit for locals and visitors."

### **Illinois' Bicentennial Birthday Cake Celebration**

In partnership with local convention and visitors' bureaus, Illinois Tourism is hosting a Bicentennial Birthday Cake Celebration on Aug. 26, Constitution Day, in seven cities state-wide: Alton; Du Quoin; Champaign; Peoria; Quad Cities; Rockford; and Springfield. Chicago's-own Illinois Made maker, [Eli's Cheesecake](#), will provide cheesecakes for guests at each of the seven parties, revealing a special custom-designed Bicentennial cake in Springfield. All events are open to the public. Additional information and event locations are available [here](#).

### **Bicentennial-themed Farm Mazes**

This fall several farms state-wide will reveal Bicentennial-themed corn and apple tree mazes for the public to enjoy. Specially designed and grown to celebrate Illinois' 200<sup>th</sup> birthday, the mazes are a nod to the state's rich agricultural history and contributions. Highlights include the "World's Largest" corn maze in Spring Grove's Richardson Adventure Farm featuring the outline of Navy Pier's Ferris Wheel, the Mississippi River and State Capitol as well as the country's first apple tree maze at Royal Oak Farm Orchard in Harvard. Additional information is available [here](#).

### **200 Years, 200 Stories**

Leading up to Dec. 3, Illinois Tourism is sharing 200 new stories highlighting the state's heritage, history and amazing destinations. Each story demonstrates how the amazing people, places and innovations of the past 200 years have shaped the state. The written and video pieces are available [here](#).

### **Illinois Bicentennial Passport**

Additionally, Illinois Tourism is promoting the Illinois Bicentennial Passport program organized by the I&M Canal and Lincoln Heritage Corridor. The program encourages participants to visit 56 historical locations and museums from Chicago to the Quad Cities and Springfield to southern Illinois. Participants can pick up their passport booklets any of the [passport stop locations](#) or local Illinois tourism bureaus and have it stamped during their visits. After Nov. 30, participants can mail-in their passports to their designated address to be eligible to win prizes. For more information on the Illinois Bicentennial Passport [click here](#).

"We couldn't be more excited to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Illinois with the many local businesses, farms and historical treasures that make Illinois amazing," Jobe said.

To learn more about the Doors Open program and the other Bicentennial celebrations, visit [EnjoyIllinois.com/Illinois-Bicentennial](http://EnjoyIllinois.com/Illinois-Bicentennial)

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*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.*

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