



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2020

Illinois Office of Tourism Announces \$1.9M for Tourism Grant Recipients

CHICAGO - The Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Office of Tourism, is pleased to announce \$1.9 million in grant funding for two tourism grant programs designed to increase tourism across the state. Illinois welcomed a record 117 million visitors from around the world in 2018, resulting in \$42 billion in visitor spending and generating \$3.3 billion in tax revenue for the state and local communities. The DCEO Office of Tourism’s grant programs are funded entirely by the state’s hotel motel tax revenue.

“There’s a reason that Illinois is breaking records for tourism; it’s because communities throughout our state have so much to offer,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “I’ll continue to be a proud advocate for everything that attracts people to Illinois and these tourism grants – entirely funded by visitors staying in our hotels and motels – play a significant role in supporting the tourism industry and its nearly 350,000 jobs.”

“Developing new events and attractions is necessary to inspire new audiences to visit Illinois. These grants will result in increased visitor spending in local communities across our state, generating revenue and creating jobs for Illinois residents,” said Erin Guthrie, Acting Director of DCEO.

The Tourism Attraction Grant Program will help develop new or enhance existing tourism attractions to grow visitation and overnight stays in Illinois. DCEO provided grant funding to 16 organizations in the amount of \$1 million. There was significant demand for this grant program, receiving more than four times the number of requests than available funding.

The Tourism Private Sector Grant Program will help attract major new events to the state or significantly enhance existing events to increase visitation. DCEO provided grant funding to seven applicants in the amount of \$869,000.

Below is a list of grant recipients from the two grant programs.

Tourism Attraction Grant Program Recipients

College of DuPage Foundation: \$100,000

The Cleve Carney Museum of Art in Glen Ellyn will enhance its venue as a cultural and tourism destination. Enhancements include upgraded security system, lighting, displays, outdoor dining tables, and gallery fabrication features.

Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois, Inc.: \$45,607.50

Supporting "Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg" Special Exhibition - the Midwest Premiere of this vibrant, comprehensive exploration of Justice Ginsburg's life using a dynamic array of gallery interactives, listening stations, archival photographs and documents, historical artifacts, and contemporary art. Based on the book and Tumblr page of the same name, Notorious RBG is the first ever museum exhibition focused solely on the judicial icon.

Chicago Zoological Society (Brookfield): \$125,000

This grant will support a free seasonal dinosaur exhibit scheduled from May - September 2020 featuring 44 giant animatronic dinosaurs, including the Argentinosaurus, the largest dinosaur ever discovered. The Argentinosaurus model will be created especially for this exhibit and will be shown for the first time anywhere.

Chicago Architecture Foundation: \$74,350

The Chicago Architecture Center's will enhance its lobby to attract and drive more tourism in Chicago. The project will transform the Chicago Architecture Center lobby to reflect an essential piece of its mission: to be a guide to the city of Chicago. Redesigned signage and wayfinding will be included to more clearly direct visitors to the exhibits inside the Center – and to the many unique cultural experiences and architectural treasures outside the center and out in neighborhoods throughout the city.

Hoogland Center for the Arts, Inc. (Springfield): \$103,000

The grant will be used to support the Center's current HVAC project to replace a failing system that causes the building to be too hot in the summer months and allow more use of the facility to increase visitation.

John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell Foundation/Cedarhurst Center for the Arts (Mt. Vernon): \$26,262.50

Cedarhurst Center for the Arts (operated by the John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell Foundation) will utilize the grant funds to help pay for the design and fabrication of Interpretive and Wayfinding Signage (exhibition kiosks, individual trail markers, and pole banners) that will enhance the visitor experience at Cedarhurst, and especially in the museum's outdoor sculpture park.

Friends of Wildlife Prairie Park (Peoria): \$179,688

Funds will be used for construction of unique cabin lodging. Often referred to as the "Jewel of the Midwest", Wildlife Prairie Park is an 1,800-acre nature park located in central Illinois that contains over 150 animals of 50 different species. The park is creating a group of cabins overlooking the bison and elk pasture. The cabins will provide lodging for those who might come from a distance to visit the park or those who live close but might enjoy more than just a one-day visit. Also, the cabins, in combination with other promotional methods, can offer an opportunity for gatherings such as family reunions, weddings (many are currently held in the park), corporate and organizational workshops and retreats.

Discovery Center Museum of Rockford, Inc.: \$25,516.50

Grant funds will be used to expand the play area in the Outdoor Science Park and purchase three new pieces of equipment. The Outdoor Science Park is a popular seasonal tourist destination as it is the only science-based playground in the state.

Frank Lloyd Wright Trust: \$30,527

Frederick H. Robie House will enhance programming in connection with its 2019 inscription to the UNESCO World Heritage List, including: updating Robie House Past and Present audio tour in 8 languages and adding 4 additional languages; creation of an interpretive station in the Servants' Quarters; and completing the restoration of the Servants' Quarters through the refinishing of wood floors and reproduction of missing original light fixtures.

Timber Lake Playhouse (Carroll County): \$61,757.79

To continue operating as a fully functioning year-round theatre, Timber Lake Playhouse will utilize the grant to complete the next phase of winterization (completion of the lobby enclosure to include the bathrooms, enclose the rehearsal area to be used for year-round rehearsal). Founded in 1961, Timber Lake Playhouse is the oldest continuously operating professional and resident summer stock theatre company in Illinois.

DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau: \$28,772

Grant funds will complete the required funding needed and expedite the development of "Phase II" of the Windy City Curling Center. Funding will be used to purchase curling stones and handles, furniture for seating and viewing area, pool table and shuffleboard table for seating and viewing area; and, signage for the front and rear of the building.

Western Illinois Tourism Development, Inc.: \$13,347.50

Upgrade kiosks and signage along Illinois' Great River Road National Scenic Byway. Nine kiosks will be refurbished and 20 story boards replaced in/near Great River Road communities.

Canal Corridor Association: \$60,000

Upgrades for the I & M Canal Bike Share Expansion and Audio Storytelling at 20 interpretive sites. Twenty locations within the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Area (IMCNHA) will be chosen to add audio stories to existing sign panels.

City of Litchfield: \$100,000

Costs associated with Lake Lou Yaeger Recreational Area renovations. Lake Lou Yaeger Recreational Area is an active part in the City of Litchfield's economy. It is a popular travel destination for both outdoor recreationalists and Route 66 Travelers. Constructed between the years of 1964 and 1966; amenities need updated. Grant funds will be used to update the Milnot Beach House, including ADA compliant restrooms; and, equipment to enhance, maintain, and sustain the grounds, both in the water and on the shore.

Children's Museum of Oak Park Inc. (Wonder Works Children's Museum): \$17,200

Wonder Works Children's Museum is a tourism attraction and community changer in Oak Park, Illinois. The museum's mission is to spark curiosity and creativity for all young children through positive, play-based learning experiences. With humble beginnings as a traveling museum, Wonder Works Children's Museum found a permanent home in 2003 and has been changing lives through creative play ever since. The museum is in need of significant repairs. Grant funds will be used to replace the boiler as this is most critical component needed to continue operations.

National Museum of Gospel Music (Chicago): \$39,859.81

Grant funds will be used to construct a temporary preview gallery that will become a mobile exhibition once the permanent facility is completed. It will provide a glimpse into the museum's future and provide a physical location that visitors can visit year-round. The museum will integrate technology and foster connections to the historical impact of Gospel music.

Tourism Private Sector Grant Recipients

College of DuPage Foundation: \$292,571.89

Supporting the upcoming Frida Kahlo art exhibition, opening in June, including costs for the rental of the artwork, visitor transportation between local Metra stations and the museum, the hiring of additional security and art handlers, and audio guide technology.

Rockford Convention & Visitors Bureau Charitable Foundation: \$27,797.50

Hosting the 2019 International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) North American Olympic Table Tennis Trials.

Illinois South Tourism: \$150,000

To promote advertising for the NASCAR K & N Pro and IndyCar Series doubleheader at World Wide Technology Raceway at Gateway Motorsports; and celebrating connections to Illinois Route 66 by hosting a classic, nostalgia event: Mother Road Rendezvous.

Flower Show Productions, Inc.: \$123,500

Enhancement of the Chicago Flower & Garden Show, "20/20 Focus on Flowers". This event will bring together newly crafted small-space design lifestyle living-space exhibits, interiorscapes, urban agricultural, rooftop gardening and special project gardens built to surround more than 100 educational classes and hands-on workshops. These additions will help draw a new audience of visitors/consumers to the show and provide for overnight trips from enthusiasts and newbies alike.

Illinois Agricultural Resource Council, Inc.: \$100,000

New Illinois Agriculture Music Festival: The Illinois Agri-Women will host and showcase current Women in Agriculture Entrepreneurs from across the State of Illinois at the Nelson Park in Decatur, Illinois. Guests and consumers will have an opportunity to learn more about small agricultural businesses owned by women and purchase their wares as they enjoy the music provided in the beautiful Devon G. Buffett Lakeside Amphitheater. The grant funds will be used to supplement ticket sales to cover the cost of entertainment, speakers, and marketing outside the immediate Decatur area for the two-day event.

Arena Partners, LLC: \$128,279

Enhancement of the New Year's Eve 2020 Fireworks Celebration in downtown Chicago. The "New Year's Eve 2020 Fireworks Celebration" is a comprehensive promotion and event program aimed at driving increased attendance and revenues for restaurant and hospitality venues in Chicago. At the heart of the program is a mile-long, synchronized public fireworks display along the iconic Chicago River.

National Trust for Historic Preservation in the U.S.: \$47,500

The Farnsworth House will use the grant to implement expanded programming to enable its participation in the Bauhaus100 Centennial in addition to implementing "Edith Farnsworth Revisited" - a new installation, exhibition, and related events that celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Edith Farnsworth. These new programs and public events will appeal to a wide audience and bring more visitors to the Yorkville region.

For more information on the areas and events around Illinois visit www.enjoyillinois.com.

###

In 2018, Illinois Office of Tourism welcomed a record 117 million visitors from around the world, resulting in nearly \$42 billion in visitor spending and generating \$3.3 billion in state and local tax revenue. The Illinois travel and tourism industry supported 342,500 jobs in 2018, an increase of 5,200 jobs from 2017. 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.

MEDIA CONTACT:

MARLA CICHOWSKI

MARLA@TIMEZONEONE.COM

312-324-3510

Filename: DCEO Illinois Tourism Grants Release FINAL.docx
Directory: /Users/madlinecarlson/Library/Containers/com.microsoft.Word/
Data/Documents
Template: /Users/madlinecarlson/Library/Group
Containers/UBF8T346G9.Office/User
Content.localized/Templates.localized/Normal.dotm
Title:
Subject:
Author: Microsoft Office User
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 2/3/20 12:03:00 PM
Change Number: 2
Last Saved On: 2/3/20 12:03:00 PM
Last Saved By: Madeline Carlson
Total Editing Time: 0 Minutes
Last Printed On: 2/3/20 12:03:00 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 4
Number of Words: 1,903
Number of Characters: 10,966 (approx.)