



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF TOURISM
JB Pritzker, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 26, 2019

CONTACT: Bob Gough, 217-685-4454

Illinois kicks off major promotional effort

Chicago – In an effort to increase Illinois' \$40 billion travel and tourism industry, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has enlisted the service of one of the nation's top marketing and advertising agencies located in Chicago.

O'Keefe Reinhard & Paul (OKRP) is tasked to provide its premier promotional expertise to tout the state's many historic and popular tourism destinations to both domestic and international travelers as well as a top choice for national conventions and meetings.

"By bringing aboard OKRP, we are looking to expand Illinois' brand around the world," said Erin Guthrie, DCEO Acting Director. "We want to encourage visitors to experience Chicago's Magnificent Mile, be inspired while walking in Lincoln's footsteps, and embrace the beauty of our many state parks."

Guthrie said the initial term of the contract with OKRP will run through June 2022 and will help improve on the more than \$3 billion already brought in as state and local tax revenue from visitor expenditures.

More than 114 million people visited Illinois in 2018 and pumped in \$40 billion to the state's economy, proof that a thriving tourism industry is vital to the state's economic vitality.

"We had several impressive, professional marketing firms step up and the competition was strong, as is the competition Illinois faces for a family's vacation budget," Guthrie said. "We cannot rest on thinking people are already aware of the many great things to see and experience in the state. We need to let people know what Illinois has to offer."

The Illinois Office of Tourism is 100 percent funded by the state's hotel motel tax revenue and is a strong revenue generator for Illinois' economy.

###