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The Illinois Office of Tourism Wins Two U.S. Travel Association Mercury Awards for “The Middle of Everything” and “Illinois Made” campaigns

Tourism industry leaders honor state’s new tourism campaign starring actress, Jane Lynch, and campaign promoting Illinois Made makers

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – The [Illinois Office of Tourism](#) (IOT) received two U.S. Travel Association Mercury Awards at the 2022 ESTO (Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations) in Grand Rapids, Mich. The Mercury Awards recognize all U.S. tourism offices for excellence and creative accomplishment in destination marketing and promotion.

Illinois’ newest tourism marketing campaign, [“Illinois: The Middle of Everything”](#), starring Illinois native, actor and first-time director, Jane Lynch, won the award for **Best Public Relations Campaign**. The campaign launched in April at Chicago’s Shedd Aquarium and generated significant regional and national attention and interest in Illinois destinations, including widespread media coverage and traffic to the Enjoy Illinois website.

The [“Illinois Made”](#) campaign, celebrating small business owners, local craftspeople, artisans and artists, won **The Roads Less Traveled** category. The Illinois Made program inspires residents and visitors to discover the people, products and authentic off-the-beaten-path experiences created by small businesses found in every region of the state.

“We are honored to be recognized by the U.S. Travel Association for our efforts to drive tourism in every part of Illinois. Our Middle of Everything and Illinois Made marketing campaigns showcase so much of what Illinois has to offer and demonstrate there is something for everyone in Illinois,” **said Sylvia I. Garcia, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)**, which includes the Illinois Office of Tourism. “Whether we’re uplifting unique small businesses through our Illinois Made Program or enlisting the help of Illinois native Jane Lynch - we are proud to display the vibrant and unique community of businesses, attractions and destinations that make Illinois such a remarkable place to live, work and visit.”

The Illinois Office of Tourism shared the Mercury Award honors with its Public Relations Agency of Record [TimeZoneOne](#), a global creative communications agency and its Creative Agency of Record, [O’Keefe Reinhard & Paul](#) (OKRP), a Chicago advertising agency.

The U.S. Travel Association’s annual ESTO conference is a national forum for tourism destination professionals across the country to learn about new tools and techniques, share best practices and debate pressing issues impacting destination marketing.

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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.