



**Illinois
Department of Commerce**

& Economic Opportunity

OFFICE OF TOURISM

Bruce Rauner, Governor

FOR DISTRIBUTION

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Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism Kicks Off in Chicago

More than 400 Illinois tourism leaders, partners and elected officials to convene to learn latest industry and marketing trends

Chicago – The 2015 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism kicked off this week to celebrate the power of people and travel. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism (DCEO/IOT) and the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (ICCVB) are co-hosting the event, which runs through February 4 at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago.

Illinois Office of Tourism Director Cory Jobe will highlight domestic and international marketing initiatives from the past year in the annual "State of the State of Tourism" address. During the address Jobe will also preview the state's upcoming seasonal promotional campaigns and new marketing efforts.

The annual conference, attended by more than 400 Illinois travel industry professionals, will begin Monday evening by honoring the creative work of tourism industry professionals with the "Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards."

"Recognizing the stars of the tourism and hospitality industry in Illinois is one of the great moments at our annual conference," said Cory Jobe, Director of the Illinois Office of Tourism. "Our people are our most valuable asset, and this gathering is a chance to praise great work and prepare for another great year ahead."

Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner will welcome attendees through a personal video message and Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti will be in attendance to congratulate the industry on their award-winning campaigns. In addition, the conference will posthumously honor Judy Baar Topinka with the Friend of Tourism award for her decades of unwavering support for the Illinois tourism industry.

Additional conference highlights and presentations include:

- Regional social media workshops by Destination Think!
- National Travel Update from Brand USA and the U.S. Travel Association
- Breakout sessions including Farm and Form: Packaging and Promoting Culinary; Multicultural Marketing: Today's American Dream; and No Child Left Inside: Outdoor Travel for Families and Beyond
- Innovation Hall Tradeshow with opportunities to network with other professionals and distribute business collateral
- Keynote remarks from Shawn Anchor, "The Happiness Advantage"
- Closing Luncheon and sessions with George Zimmerman, former Vice President of Travel Michigan

For a complete conference schedule and list of speakers, visit www.ilgovconference.com.

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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.