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June 15, 2015

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ILLINOIS FEATURED IN ORBITZ ORIGINALS VIDEO SERIES

Series features seven unique Illinois videos produced by industry veteran, Richard Bangs, in partnership between Orbitz and Illinois Office of Tourism

Chicago – The Illinois Office of Tourism is bringing Illinois to one of the leading online travel sites, Orbitz.com, through a new *Orbitz Originals* video series and online travel guide, produced by travel industry veteran Richard Bangs, which launched today. *Orbitz Originals: Illinois* includes seven new videos that showcase a different slice of the Land of Lincoln. The videos are housed on a special [Illinois-themed landing page on Orbitz.com](#), which also provides travelers the ability to book travel to Illinois directly from the page.

The videos give viewers an intimate and in-depth account of the range of travel experiences that can only be found in Illinois. Destinations featured include Alton, Chicago, Galena, Lake County, Southern Illinois wine country, and Starved Rock State Park/Utica area.

“What makes Illinois so unique is the different types of experiences you can have here, from the world-class cultural mecca of Chicago to the tranquil beauty of Shawnee National Forest,” said Cory Jobe, Illinois state travel director. “Who better than Richard Bangs to take a close look at what makes Illinois so great, and discover the one-of-a-kind experiences that should put Illinois at the top of anyone’s must-visit list.”

Richard Bangs has spent more than 40 years as an adventure travel pioneer, explorer and traveler. He has published thousands of travel magazine articles, books, video documentaries and digital media projects. The *Orbitz Originals: Illinois* series provided Bangs a chance to explore Illinois in-depth for the first time.

“I have worked with tourism authorities all over the world, and throughout the U.S., but I must confess...and I did not expect this...that Illinois was the warmest, most welcoming and enthusiastic among the lot,” said Bangs. “Most of time I felt like I was visiting family. There is such a pride of place and product that it is contagious....I fell under the spell, but the thing is, the reality is as good as any magic. It’s just a great state!”

Videos in the series include:

- ***Orbitz Originals: Illinois*** – Chicago may be its crown jewel, but there's plenty to do and see across the Prairie State. Orbitz and Richard Bangs show you the best of Illinois, where you can sample local wineries, hunt for ghosts and ride some roaring roller coasters. Along the way, you'll also enjoy stunning natural features, family-friendly small towns and some of Chicago's greatest cultural wonders.

- ***Galena: Postcard-worthy small town*** – Step back in time with Richard Bangs as he explores Galena and its idyllic Main Street. Sample its small-batch beers and popcorn—artisans here are dedicated to the craft movement, and their recipes are as authentically old-fashioned as their charming, historic storefronts.
- ***Get back to nature at Starved Rock*** – Stray from the beaten track—and onto picturesque dirt trails—with Richard Bangs as he explores the natural wonders of Starved Rock. He uncovers some of the best spots to disconnect from the daily grind, where you can enjoy canyons, waterfalls and forest trails as bald eagles soar overhead.
- ***Thrill-seekers and families welcome*** – No matter how high your threshold for fun, Gurnee may blow you away. Get your adrenaline pumping with Richard Bangs as he explores the many rides and roller coasters at Six Flags and the sprawling waterpark at KeyLime Cove Resort.
- ***Chicago's cultural treasures*** – Some of the world's greatest cultural treasures can be found in Chicago's renowned museums. Together with Richard Bangs, you'll discover a German submarine up close at the Museum of Science and Industry, and peer through the bones of the world's largest T-Rex skeleton at the Field Museum. The Art Institute, too, shows off this city's cultural star power with its collection of works by Picasso, Monet and Chagall.
- ***Sprawling forests & local libations*** – Southern Illinois is a feast for the senses. Sample the area's best offerings with Richard Bangs as he explores wineries tucked into the Shawnee National Forest. You'll also see the remote pathways, sprawling vineyards and forests that make this area an all-seasons destination.
- ***Things that go bump in the night*** – Face your fears with Richard Bangs as he experiences a brush with the paranormal at Mineral Springs Hotel. It's the most haunted place in Alton, a Southern Illinois town with a spine-chilling reputation.

Travelers can view the entire series, and book their Illinois adventure, by visiting:

http://www.orbitz.com/travel-guide/United_States--Illinois/Originals.tg317.pOriginals/#EnjoyingIllinois5-1

To learn more about Illinois' travel offerings, and to order the 2015 Illinois Travel Guide, visit EnjoyIllinois.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.