



PRESS RELEASE

enjoyillinois.com

April 27, 2017
PRESS RELEASE
IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: MARLA CICHOWSKI
TIMEZONEONE: 312.324.3510
MARLA@TIMEZONEONE.COM

Illinois Office of Tourism Kicks Off National Travel and Tourism Week's "Faces of Travel" with Expanded *Illinois Made* program

Illinois Tourism Director to Unveil State Tourism Numbers and Announce New Attractions and Travel Itineraries Celebrating Local Artisans

Chicago, IL – The Illinois Office of Tourism kicks off National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW) May 7-13 by celebrating the "Faces of Travel" in the US travel and tourism industry. The State of Illinois is showcasing its very own "Faces of Travel" through the newly expanded *Illinois Made* program featuring unique artisans and creators, all small business owners helping to drive tourism around the state. Those artisans and businesses are the focus of new customized *Illinois Made* "Art-is-an" travel itineraries and tourist attractions highlighting the experiences, encounters and escapes you can only find in Illinois.

On **Monday May 8th**, Illinois Tourism Director Cory Jobe will unveil the latest 2016 statewide tourism numbers and discuss tourism's economic impact at a press conference at 10am at Optimo, a custom hat making business in the historic Monadnock Building at 51 W. Jackson.

"This year's National Travel and Tourism Week theme recognizes 'Faces of Travel,' saluting the amazing people behind the travel industry. Here in Illinois we want to recognize and promote more of our *Illinois Made* artisans who are small businesses and job creators helping to drive the state's economy," said Cory Jobe, Director of the Illinois Office of Tourism. "The expanded *Illinois Made* program will attract new visitors to explore our state, while supporting local businesses and generating important tourism spending for our communities."

New *Illinois Made* "Art-is-an" interactive itineraries feature the state's most popular sites and best kept secrets. The new routes shine a spotlight on Illinois and drive tourism to the state by highlighting truly local experiences tourists can't find anywhere else. They include:

- **Illinois Made on Route 66:** Cruise the state's iconic Mother Road to experience Illinois' best and eccentric experiences. Taste classic Illinois Made flavors and explore hidden gems along the way.
- **Illinois Made Outdoor Adventures:** Witness the natural wonders of Illinois state parks from Peoria and Utica to scenic bike trails in Alton and the Garden of the Gods at Shawnee National Forest.



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF TOURISM
Bruce Rauner, Governor



PRESS RELEASE

enjoyillinois.com

- **Illinois Made in Chicago:** Discover the latest local artisans and hangouts in Chicago's diverse neighborhood including Pilsen, Logan Square and Wicker Park.
- **Illinois Made Local Flavors:** Taste your way through Springfield, Alton and Southern Illinois through local wineries, craft brewers and hand-picked coffee spots and neighborhood restaurants.

New *Illinois Made* partnerships include a first-of-its-kind tourist attraction launching this summer on the Chicago River. Shoreline Sightseeing will offer Illinois Made themed cruises in June and August where tourists and locals can experience an authentic "Taste of Illinois" culinary cruise featuring food and beverages from *Illinois Made* artisans.

The latest Illinois Made artisans include:

- **Optimo – Chicago, IL**
Optimo owner Graham Thompson is Chicago's last true hat maker known for handcrafting the best custom hats in the country. Thompson's creations are worn by people around the world including Hollywood movie stars. Optimo's hat making factory is housed in a former Chicago Fire house in Chicago's Beverly neighborhood. Visitors to Chicago can experience Thompson's work at his shop located in the historic Monadnock Building.
- **Eshelman Pottery - Elizabeth, IL**
Artisan Paul Eshelman's craft is inspired by bringing everyone together around a dinner table. His pottery reflects an artful expression of the everyday, bold, innovative, austere and practical. Eshelman pottery is featured in art shows across America as well as well-reviewed restaurants, including Chef Grant Achatz's Roister in Chicago's Fulton Market District.
- **Heritage Bikes – Chicago, IL**
Heritage Bikes in the Lakeview neighborhood is the first bicycle manufacturer to set up shop in Chicago since Schwinn shuttered its production plant decades ago. Heritage builds around 500 bikes every year and each bike takes six weeks to assemble. Custom bike maker Mike Salvatore opened Heritage Bikes in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood which doubles as a café. Today Salvatore continues to grow his business customizing the Chicago commute, one made-to-order bike at a time.
- **Blaum Brothers Distilling Company - Galena, IL**
Against their mother's wishes Matt and Mike Blaum both quit their day jobs to take their passion for good booze to a higher level. After learning everything they could about crafting fine whiskey, Blaum Brothers Distilling Company was born. Now a popular Galena tourist attraction the Blaum brothers take pride in producing highest quality spirits the old-fashioned way.



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF TOURISM
Bruce Rauner, Governor

ARE YOU UP FOR
Amazing?

PRESS RELEASE

enjoyillinois.com

Illinois Made recognizes the artisans, products and experiences that are unique to the state. Launched in 2016, the program inspires Illinois at www.EnjoyIllinois.com/Illinoismade which encourages people to extend their travel beyond a day trip by exploring the local businesses and great attractions around the state.

The 34th annual National Travel and Tourism Week (May 7-13) unites communities across the country to celebrate what travel means to American jobs, economic growth and personal well-being. The theme of this year's NTTW, "Faces of Travel," shines a spotlight on the 15 million people who make up America's travel industry. To learn more about NTTW visit <https://www.ustravel.org/events/national-travel-and-tourism-week>

To learn more about Illinois Made and to view the latest video content and featured makers, visit www.EnjoyIllinois.com/Illinoismade or www.Facebook.com/EnjoyIllinois.

###

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.



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF TOURISM
Bruce Rauner, Governor