



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



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Illinois Office of Tourism Unveils “Illinois: The Middle of Beats & Blues” Float for 135th Rose Parade

Enjoy Illinois float showcases Route 66 attractions and will include a live musical performance by a cappella group Straight No Chaser to promote Illinois as a premier travel destination

PASADENA, Calif. – [The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism](#) (Enjoy Illinois) will return for its second float appearance at the 135th Rose Parade® presented by Honda on Monday, Jan. 1, 2024, in Pasadena, California, as a part of America’s New Year Celebration®.

To reflect the Rose Parade’s theme, “Celebrating a World of Music,” Enjoy Illinois will spotlight the state’s music history along Route 66 with its float called, “Illinois: The Middle of Beats & Blues,” a nod to the state’s award-winning tourism campaign, “Middle of Everything.” Parade spectators will experience a captivating live musical performance by the hit a cappella group [Straight No Chaser](#) delivering a medley from the iconic movie filmed in Illinois, “The Blues Brothers.” The float will feature a replica of a drive-in movie scene, showcasing “Joliet” Jake Blues and his brother Elwood, along with a classic 1950’s car.

“We are thrilled to showcase Illinois at the 2024 Rose Parade for the second year in a row and celebrate the state’s rich music history along Route 66 with our “Illinois: The Middle of Beats & Blues” float,” said Daniel Thomas, Deputy Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism. “From the Route 66 starting point in Chicago to Springfield and Collinsville and all the historic small towns in between, the Mother Road serves as the crossroads of cultural expression, offering unique attractions and adventures you can only experience in Illinois.”

The Enjoy Illinois float recreates the iconic Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway, starting with Chicago’s Route 66 “Begin” sign. The journey through the float reveals larger-than-life replicas of the Gemini Giant spaceman in Wilmington, the Pink Elephant in Livingston, and the World’s Largest Catsup Bottle in Collinsville – an homage to the quirky roadside attractions along the historic route. At the front of the float, iconic Springfield landmarks, Shea’s Gas Station and the Route 66 Legends Neon Sign Park Experience, offer a glimpse into Route 66 landmarks around the state’s capital.

The 24-foot-tall float took three months to build with the help of nearly 22,000 volunteer hours and will feature 30,000 flowers. The Enjoy Illinois float will incorporate many elements to spotlight Illinois’ agritourism industry, including pumpkins, corn, soybeans, lavender, sunflowers, prairie grass and blue violets, the state’s official flower.

“The Tournament of Roses is thrilled to see Straight No Chaser’s performance on the Enjoy Illinois float during the 2024 Rose Parade, marking the second consecutive year of Enjoy Illinois’ participation,” said 2024 Tournament of Roses President Alex Aghajanian. “Straight No Chaser’s a cappella brilliance will grace the float harmonizing with the theme ‘Celebrating a World of Music,’ to showcase Illinois’ rich musical heritage. The group’s unforgettable musical experience will be an incredible addition to the festivities and bring us all together to celebrate the vibrant spirit of Illinois.”



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"We are so proud and beyond excited to be performing on the Enjoy Illinois float in the 2024 Rose Parade," said Straight No Chaser member Randy Stine, who was born and raised in Illinois. "Like so many people around the country, we grew up watching the parade every New Year's Day. What a dream come true it is to be a part of such an iconic event."

To view a rendering of the "Illinois: The Middle of Beats & Blues" float and images of the a cappella group Straight No Chaser, click [here](#).

The Enjoy Illinois "The Middle of Beats & Blues" float will be available for viewing post-parade on Jan. 1-2, 2024 during Float Fest accompanied by a special appearance from Enjoy Illinois' mascot, Big Lincoln. Promotional materials from the Illinois Office of Tourism and Rose Parade will be distributed while supplies last.

To learn more about planning a getaway in Illinois, visit [EnjoyIllinois.com](https://www.enjoyillinois.com) and follow @EnjoyIllinois on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#).

About the Illinois Office of Tourism:

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Office of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents. To learn more, visit [EnjoyIllinois.com](https://www.enjoyillinois.com).

About the Pasadena Tournament of Roses® and The Rose Parade® presented by Honda:

The Tournament of Roses is a volunteer organization that hosts America's New Year Celebration® with the Rose Parade® presented by Honda, the Rose Bowl Game® and a variety of accompanying events. The Association's 935 volunteer members supply more than 80,000 hours of manpower, which will drive the success of the 135th Rose Parade, themed "Celebrating a World of Music" on Monday, January 1, 2024, followed by the 110th Rose Bowl Game. For more information, visit www.tournamentofroses.com. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

About Straight No Chaser:

Initially formed at Indiana University, a cappella group Straight No Chaser emerged at the forefront of the modern-day a cappella movement and has since sold more than three million albums worldwide, garnered over a billion streams on Pandora alone, and sold more than 1.5 million concert tickets worldwide. In the fall of 2022, the group performed in more than 60 cities across the US with multiple sold-out shows. The group is currently on their "Sleighin' It Tour," a three-month-long U.S. trek. Last month, the group released "Stocking Stuffer," their latest EP of holiday originals and favorites. For more information, visit [sncmusic.com](https://www.sncmusic.com).

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