



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



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Illinois Office of Tourism and Rivian Automotive Announce Collaboration to Kick Off Upcoming Route 66 Centennial Anniversary**

*Compelling new video series will spotlight Historic Route 66 to promote travel to Illinois*

**CHICAGO** - The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Office of Tourism, today announced its collaboration with Rivian Automotive, Inc. to kick off the state's celebration of the Route 66 100th Anniversary in 2026. Through a series of compelling videos, this collaboration will showcase the experiences of three notable travel influencers, from U.K., Canada and U.S., who are friends in real life, as they drive the Illinois stretch of Route 66 in a Rivian R1S electric vehicle (EV), custom-wrapped with Route 66 Centennial branding.

"We are thrilled to launch this exciting new initiative as part of our Route 66 Centennial initiatives ahead of the milestone anniversary in 2026," **said Daniel Thomas, deputy director of DCEO, Office of Tourism.** "Illinois' 300-mile stretch of Route 66 is an iconic attraction that both domestic and international travelers love to experience and this initiative will bring global attention to Illinois' Route 66, encouraging more visitors to explore our state. By highlighting Route 66, we continue to celebrate the significant economic impact it has had on tourism across our state and the importance of preserving it for future generations."

This video content series will also spotlight unique makers of Illinois—craftsmen, artists, and entrepreneurs, many of them in our Illinois Made program, who embody the spirit and innovation of the route and add to our previously launched video series: [Real People, Real Stories, Real Outdoors](#). This is also an opportunity to highlight just how easy an EV road trip can be here in Illinois with resources on [enjoyillinois.com](#) to plan a trip and find more than 1,200 EV charging stations across the state.

Starting Sunday, June 23, three travel influencers, [Tonia Hope](#) from the UK, [Phil Clavert](#) from Milwaukee and [Brian McIntosh](#) from Canada, will begin an exciting five-day road trip along Historic Route 66 in Illinois while traveling in a customized Rivian R1S electric vehicle.

"As a Midwesterner who loves exploring the diverse cultures and histories of our world, I'm so excited to get my kicks on Route 66 in Illinois during this road trip," **said travel influencer, Phil Clavert.** "This is an incredible opportunity to connect with the past, celebrate the present, and inspire future travelers to embrace the spirit of adventure and sustainability."

The 300-mile road trip down Route 66 will unfold [over three episodes](#), starting in downtown Chicago and heading south along Route 66 through central and southern Illinois, ending at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge in Granite City. Each episode, produced by the Matador Network, will feature the friends' journey as they experience iconic Route 66 attractions and local businesses along the 'Mother Road.' This series invites viewers to discover the heart and soul of Illinois' Route 66 while inspiring a kind of travel that welcomes everyone along the way. The content series will also demonstrate the state's progress in



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offering sustainable travel options along Route 66 by promoting the highway's convenient electric vehicle charging facilities.

Illinois ranks as the nation's second-largest EV market, and it's home to Rivian's state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Normal.

"We are proud to have built more than 100,000 electric vehicles at our plant in Normal, IL, including the Rivian R1S that the travel influencers are driving down historic Route 66," **said Tim Fallon, Rivian Vice President, Manufacturing Operations.** "We look forward to being part of a campaign that celebrates excellence in Illinois."

This content series is the next chapter of the Illinois Office of Tourism's "[Real People. Real Stories. Real Outdoors.](#)" campaign. The new Route 66 content series will be available on [EnjoyIllinois.com](#) as well as Enjoy Illinois YouTube and social channels. The series will also reach international markets, appearing in Canada and the U.K. to inspire travel to Illinois. This video content initiative is supported by Matador Network, media partner and award-winning hub for video travel content.

To download the Route 66 Centennial logo and the Route 66 branded Rivian RS1 EV, click [here](#).

To download B-roll and sound from the press event at Rivian's showroom in Chicago click [here](#).

### **About the Illinois Office of Tourism**

The Illinois Office of Tourism leads tourism industry efforts to inspire visitation to, and within Illinois, resulting in significant economic impact and quality-of-life benefits for all Illinois residents. We are committed to making Illinois a model of inclusivity and celebration of diversity.

Illinois is a state that embodies innovation, craft, surprise and creativity. Whether domestic and international visitors are traveling for business or leisure, the Illinois Office of Tourism is their trusted guide in crafting an unforgettable experience.

To learn more, visit [EnjoyIllinois.com](#).

### **About Rivian**

Rivian (NASDAQ: RIVN) is an American automotive manufacturer that develops and builds category-defining electric vehicles and accessories. The company creates innovative and technologically advanced products that are designed to excel at work and play with the goal of accelerating the global transition to zero-emission transportation and energy. Rivian vehicles are built in the United States and are sold directly to consumer and commercial customers. The company provides a full suite of services that address the entire lifecycle of the vehicle and stay true to its mission to keep the world adventurous forever. Rivian vehicles all share a common goal — preserving the natural world for generations to come. Learn more about the company visit <http://www.rivian.com>.

### **About Matador Network**

Matador Network is the Internet's #1 adventure lifestyle publisher. Matador Network is a leading lifestyle brand redefining travel media with original shows and docs, cutting-edge adventure stories, and global



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