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Illinois Office of Tourism Unveils Spring/Summer Campaign and Launches Exciting New Website with AI Capabilities

Illinois evolves its "Middle of Everything" ad campaign to spotlight top regional experiences and will be the first U.S. state tourism website to use AI Chatbot GuideGeek as a virtual travel assistant

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Office of Tourism, is thrilled to announce the launch of its new seasonal advertising campaign and redesigned Enjoy Illinois website, in preparation for the spring/summer travel season.

The refreshed [EnjoyIllinois.com](https://www.enjoyillinois.com) now offers cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities through its AI chatbot powered by GuideGeek, referred to as Big Lincoln, revolutionizing trip planning for visitors and Illinois residents. Illinois will be the first U.S. state destination marketing organization with this GuideGeek AI function on their tourism website for trip-planning purposes.

"The Illinois Office of Tourism is dedicated to providing innovative tools and resources to enhance the travel experience in our state," said DCEO Director Kristin Richards. "The introduction of the Big Lincoln AI chatbot will offer intuitive assistance and enhance accessibility for all visitors using personalized recommendations to help effortlessly plan their next Illinois trip."

"Travelers' needs have continued to change and we are excited to trailblaze using new technology to amplify our dreaming and planning phase of the visitor journey, a critical step to enhancing the Illinois travel experience," said Daniel Thomas, deputy director of DCEO, Office of Tourism. "Our AI chatbot, Big Lincoln, along with our additional website updates, improve the overall user experience while also helping us keep a finger on the pulse of what visitors are looking for when planning a trip to and around Illinois."

"Implementing GuideGeek's AI Travel Assistant to the new Enjoy Illinois website was especially exciting for us because the team at Illinois Tourism has done an incredible job creating rich traveler itineraries and trip planning content for their website," says Ross Borden, CEO of travel publisher Matador Network which launched GuideGeek last year. "GuideGeek scans the website daily and prioritizes Enjoy Illinois' own content within the answers it gives to potential visitors to the state, but unlike a glorified 'site search', our tech still comes with the full conversational intelligence of OpenAI, including perfect fluency in 50 languages."

In addition to the new AI capabilities, [EnjoyIllinois.com](https://www.enjoyillinois.com) now boasts several other exciting features to assist travelers, such as:

- Revamped outdoor landing pages dedicated to showcasing Illinois' diverse natural landscapes including 70 state parks and recreation areas, 2,900 lakes and seven national scenic byways.
- Distinct regional profiles highlighting the unique attractions and experiences of the state's four regions which include Chicago & Beyond (Northern Illinois), Land of Lincoln



(Central Illinois), Great Rivers Country (Western Illinois) and Trails to Adventure (Southern Illinois).

- An enhanced accessibility page, ensuring that visitors of all abilities can easily navigate and enjoy their time in Illinois.

Along with the new website improvements, Illinois Tourism has launched new international Enjoy Illinois websites in markets including the U.K., Germany and Mexico. These sites offer the same user experience available to U.S. consumers, translated for international visitors looking to plan their next Illinois getaway.

The Illinois Office of Tourism is also unveiling its new spring/summer “Middle of Everything” campaign spots, featuring iconic locations across the state. From the towering bluffs of Giant City State Park in Makanda to breathtaking views of the Mississippi River aboard a hot air balloon in Galena, visitors can immerse themselves in Illinois' diverse landscapes and attractions.

“These new ads shine a light on the state’s one-of-a-kind destinations, highlighting the unforgettable adventures awaiting visitors in every region of Illinois,” said Thomas. “Whether it’s exploring the culturally rich Historic Route 66, hiking across the scenic Pomona Natural Bridge in Pomona or indulging in the thrills of Six Flags Great America in Gurnee, these new spring/summer ads showcase the best of Illinois, inviting travelers to embark on unforgettable journeys in all corners of the state.”

The new ads are currently airing on TV in 22 media markets across Illinois and seven neighboring states and on cable TV nationwide. They are also running internationally in Canada and Mexico.

Since its launch in 2022, the “Middle of Everything” campaign has generated an additional 2 million trips to Illinois for \$1 billion spent in hotels, restaurants, small businesses, and attractions around the state, according to data from Longwoods International. Additionally, every \$1 spent on the campaign equated to \$91 in visitor spending while generating \$10 in state and local tax revenue for every dollar spent – an enormous return on investment.

To view the Enjoy Illinois spring/summer toolkit, including all spring/summer 2024 campaign spots, click [here](#).

To learn more and discover all the ways you can enjoy Illinois with the help of Big Lincoln, visit EnjoyIllinois.com.

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.



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