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2015 ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE AWARDED INDUSTRY INNOVATORS
Annual conference showcased new travel offerings and highlighted Illinois' tourism marketing initiatives

CHICAGO – The 2015 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism kicked off this week to celebrate the power of people and travel. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism (DCEO/IOT) and the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (ICCVB) are co-hosting the event, which runs through February 4 at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago.

Illinois Office of Tourism Director Cory Jobe highlighted domestic and international marketing initiatives from the past year in the annual "State of the State of Tourism" address. During the address Jobe also previewed the state's upcoming seasonal promotional campaigns and new marketing efforts.

The annual conference, attended by more than 400 Illinois travel industry professionals, began Monday evening by honoring the creative work of tourism industry professionals with the "Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards." Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner welcomed attendees through a personal video message and Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti congratulated the industry on their award-winning campaigns. In addition, the conference posthumously honored Judy Baar Topinka with the **Friend of Tourism** award for her decades of unwavering support for the Illinois tourism industry.

Awards were presented in 11 categories, plus the Best of Show Award. Entries were judged by a panel of marketing and tourism professionals on clarity of message, creativity, originality and the project's overall success. Award winners included:

Best inShow: Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

Best Leisure Collateral:

Division A: Wedding/Bridal Advertisement, submitted by Galena/Jo Daviess County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Division B: Mississippi Valley Wine Trail, submitted by Quincy Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

Best Sales Collateral:

Division A: DuPage County Meeting Planners Guide, submitted by DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau

Division B: Kankakee County Direct Mail, submitted by Kankakee County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Best Social Media Marketing:

Division A: Luna the Sea Otter campaign, submitted by Shedd Aquarium

Division B: #aboutquincy Photo Contest, submitted by Quincy Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

Best Cooperative Partnership:

Summer in Lake County, submitted by Visit Lake County

Best Branding Initiative:

Division A: Marvels on the Mississippi River, submitted by Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau

Division B: Abraham Lincoln and Pig Statue, submitted by Taylorsville Tourism Council

Best Website:

Division A: SheddAquarium.org, submitted by Shedd Aquarium

Division B: VisitKankakeeCounty.com, submitted by Kankakee County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Best Visitors Publication:

Division A: 2014 Lake County Getaway Guide, submitted by Visit Lake County

Division B: Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition, submitted by Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition

Best Event:

Stroll on State, submitted by Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

Best Hotel/Lodging Campaign:

ACME Hotel Campaign, submitted by ACME Hotel

Best Culinary Marketing Campaign:

The Local Fix Culinary Guide, submitted by Quincy Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

Best Marketing Campaign:

Division A: Galena/Jo Daviess County, submitted by Galena/Jo Daviess County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Division B: Ottawa Visitors Center, submitted by Ottawa Visitors Center

For a complete recap of the 2015 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism, including conference schedule and list of speakers, visit www.ilgovconference.com. To learn more about Illinois tourism, and to plan your trip, visit www.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.