



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

JB Pritzker, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2024

DCEO Contact:

DCEO.media@illinois.gov

**Illinois Office of Tourism Launches New Outdoor Content Series,
“Real People, Real Stories, Real Outdoors”**

Compelling new video series highlights authentic Illinois stories to promote outdoor recreation statewide

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Office of Tourism today announced its new outdoor video series featuring stories from Illinois adventurers spotlighting the extensive range of outdoor recreation and activities available throughout the state. The series of videos titled, “[Real People, Real Stories, Real Outdoors](#),” aims to capture genuine experiences of Illinois residents and visitors exploring the outdoors, while highlighting the state's natural beauty and outdoor adventures.

Home to 70 state parks and recreation areas, 2,900 lakes and seven national scenic byways, there is no shortage of outdoor adventure in Illinois. The stories featured in this new content series uncover picturesque nature trails, hidden gems, iconic landmarks, unique stays and beyond.

"This campaign inspires visitors to explore all that Illinois has to offer and positions the state as a leading outdoor destination – especially in downstate Illinois," **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards**. "Illinois' one-of-a-kind outdoor experiences have the power to attract a large market of outdoor enthusiasts and bring economic development to more rural areas of the state. This campaign shows the world why Illinois' outdoor wonders should be at the top of everyone's travel bucket list."

"In our increasingly hectic and digital world, it's vital to reconnect with the great outdoors, where every hiking trail offers a journey of discovery and every beautiful scene reveals a moment to remember," **said Natalie Phelps Finnie, Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources**. "As spring approaches, we hope this new series inspires visitors and residents to get outside and discover the incredible parks, trails, and recreational areas in every region of Illinois."

"The essence of 'Real People, Real Stories, Real Outdoors' perfectly captures the natural beauty and awe-inspiring experiences you can find at Illinois' state parks, encapsulating how Illinois is truly an outdoor enthusiast's paradise year-round," **said Daniel Thomas, Deputy Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism**. "From hiking and cycling to horseback riding, canoeing, fishing and more, there are endless opportunities to explore and enjoy nature across Illinois."

The content series features up close and personal stories of friends and families in Illinois as they explore outdoor destinations, including:

- **A love letter to family camping & fishing in Illinois:** For Dennis and Carol Sporleder, visiting their home state of Illinois is an opportunity to create special memories with their granddaughters by returning to some of their beloved places like **Rock Cut State Park near Rockford and Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Park in Oglesby**. To watch the Sporleder family's experience, click [here](#).
- **Finding beauty in a nature escape from Chicago:** Watch as a group of friends escape Chicago to discover the beauty of diverse landscapes like **Camp Aramoni's luxury safari-style campground in LaSalle County and Rend Lake in Southern Illinois**. The group's experience creates an easy itinerary for outdoor adventure options like paddling, swimming and off-the-grid camping with friends and family. To watch their adventure, click [here](#).
- **Adventures in Illinois to challenge and inspire you:** Follow Chicago adaptive climber Meaghan Cusack and her squad to some of Illinois' best climbing spots for people of all abilities and skill levels, including **Cave-in-Rock State Park, Giant City State Park near the Shawnee National Forest** and breathtaking **Pere Marquette State Park** along the Mississippi River. To watch Meaghan's inspiring journey, click [here](#).

The new outdoor content series will be available on Illinois Office of Tourism's website, EnjoyIllinois.com, as well as Enjoy Illinois YouTube and social channels, including Facebook, Instagram and TikTok as part of Illinois Office of Tourism's upcoming seasonal outdoors campaign. The series will also reach international markets as well, appearing in Canada, U.K., Australia and New Zealand to inspire travel to Illinois. This video content initiative is supported by both Brand USA and Matador, media partner and award-winning hub for video travel content.

To view "Real Stories. Real People. Real Outdoors," click [here](#). For more information about Illinois and to start planning your Illinois outdoor adventure, visit 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.

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