January 24, 2018

**Illinois Tourism Celebrates National Plan for Vacation Day**

**Pop-up Vacation Station to Inspire Vacation Planning – January 30**

Chicago – The Illinois Office of Tourism is joining forces with U.S. Travel Association’s Project: Time Off coalition for [**National Plan for Vacation Day**](http://enjoyillinois.com/vacation)on **Tuesday** **January 30**, to encourage everyone to stop making excuses and start making vacation plans.

**Why does this matter?**

Every year, more than half of Illinois workers, 51 percent, fail to use all their time off, creating a pile of nearly 23 million unused vacation days. In Chicago, 44 percent of employees don’t use all their hard-earned vacation time, wasting more than 18 million vacation days. When it comes to leaving vacation days behind, Illinois ranks 34 out of 50 states, according to research from Project: Time Off.

Nationally, 54 percent of Americans fail to use all their time off, leaving behind 662 million vacation days. Last year, vacation usage in the U.S. rose to an average of 16.8 days, a drastic change considering prior to 2000, Americans took an average of 20.3 vacation days each year.

“Illinois Office of Tourism is celebrating National Plan for Vacation Day because it’s time for workers across Illinois to reclaim their vacation days,” said Cory Jobe, director, Illinois Office of Tourism. “From the rolling hills of southern Illinois to cruising the Great River Road or hiking through Starved Rock Country, Illinois offers amazing places and experiences when you’re looking to escape, unwind and re-charge all year round.”

**Pop-Up Vacation Station inside Union Station**

To motivate and inspire people to plan for vacation, Illinois Tourism will reveal a pop-up Vacation Station inside Chicago’s Union Station Great Hall on January 30 and 31. The Vacation Station transparent dome will offer an instant escape from the winter blues with an elaborate design by the Chicago Flower and Garden Show and an interactive open-air photo booth. There will be free giveaways for morning commuters and the chance to win a free weekend getaway, including round trip Amtrak tickets and a hotel stay, to select Illinois destinations including Alton, Quincy, Champaign and Springfield. To inspire vacation planning, Illinois Tourism encourages everyone to share their favorite vacation memory in Illinois on social media with **#EnjoyIllinois** and **#PlanforVacation** for a chance to be featured on Enjoy Illinois Instagram and Facebook.

**Vacation Planners are Happier**

Research shows that planners have a distinct advantage over non-planners. Project: Time Off’s [*The State of American Vacation 2017*](https://www.projecttimeoff.com/state-american-vacation-2017) report found that planners use more of their time, take longer vacations, and are happier.

* 52 percent of planners took all their vacation time vs. 40 percent of non-planners.
* 75 percent of planners were more likely to take a full week of vacation time or more at a time. Non-planners take significantly fewer days—zero to three—than planners at once (42% to 18%).
* More planners report they are “very” or “extremely” happy with their relationships (83% vs. 70%), health and well-being (57% vs. 48%), company (57% vs. 51%), and job (59% vs. 50%) compared to non-planners.

**Economic Impact**

If more people used their vacation days, it would help boost the U.S. economy, generate jobs and decrease taxes. In 2016, Illinois tourism generated $35.1 billion in direct spending, $2.6 billion in state and local tax revenue and 10,000 jobs. Tourism spending saves the average Illinois household $1,300 in taxes annually.

To start planning the perfect getaway this year in Illinois, visit [EnjoyIllinois.com/Vacation](http://enjoyillinois.com/vacation). Join the conversation online with **#EnjoyIllinois** and **#PlanForVacation**.

**About National Plan for Vacation Day**

National Plan for Vacation Day, celebrated on January 30, is a day to encourage Americans to plan their vacation days for the rest of the year at the start of the year. Launched by the U.S. Travel Association’s Project: Time Off initiative in 2017, National Plan for Vacation Day provides an opportunity to come together at a single moment to rally around the importance of planning for vacation. In its inaugural year, more than 600 organizations, representing all 50 states came together to encourage Americans to plan for vacation.

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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.*