



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity

OFFICE OF TOURISM

Bruce Rauner, Governor

FOR DISTRIBUTION

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Numbers Show Continued Growth in Visitors to Illinois in 2015
*Initial Estimates Indicate Domestic Visitors Rose 1.4 Percent in 2015;
Generating 5 Percent Increase in Overnight Hotel Stays*

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Office of Tourism today announced that Illinois saw an increase in domestic visitors in 2015. Illinois welcomed 108.91 million domestic visitors in 2015, up 1.4 percent from 2014 visitor volumes. In addition, overnight stays in paid accommodations rose 5 percent last year, contributing to continued growth in state hotel-motel tax revenue. That tax revenue, combined with the other economic impact contributions the state tourism industry makes through job creation and other taxes, is vital to Illinois' economic growth.

The Illinois Office of Tourism's goal is to find unique and creative ways to showcase the state's diverse travel offerings. For example, the Illinois Office of Tourism this year unveiled a brand new lifestyle magazine designed to inspire travel to and within Illinois. The new magazine, *Travel Illinois*, is a full-color, bi-annual publication that celebrates the places, people and experiences that await travelers on a journey to Illinois.

Increased visitors to Illinois are the direct result of the dedicated hospitality industry in our great state," said Cory Jobe, Director, Illinois Office of Tourism. "Even though our industry faced unique challenges in the past year, these increases are an indication that the hard work that goes in to promoting our state is drawing not only new visitors, but repeat travelers as well, who find in Illinois a welcoming state with attractions and experiences suited for every type of interest."

These initial visitor estimates are provided by D.K. Shifflet & Associates. Final visitor statistics will be available later this summer.

The Illinois Office of Tourism directly supports the travel industry by promoting visitor travel both domestically and internationally, to help grow the tourism industry throughout the state. The Illinois Office of Tourism is funded by a percentage of the state's hotel motel tax revenue.

Destination information, trip inspiration ideas, the debut edition of *Travel Illinois* magazine and more can be found at 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.