



**Illinois**  
**Department of Commerce**

& Economic Opportunity

**OFFICE OF TOURISM**

Bruce Rauner, Governor

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**New Illinois Tourism Ad Campaign and Website Unveiled at 2017 Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism**

*Over 400 travel and marketing experts gathered in Springfield to celebrate past successes in state tourism and collaborate on future marketing opportunities*

**SPRINGFIELD, Ill., March 23, 2017** – The state's premier gathering of tourism industry and marketing professionals took place in Springfield this week at the President Abraham Lincoln – A Doubletree by Hilton Hotel. Each year, thought leaders convene at the annual Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism to present the latest trends, technology, products and services that will enhance tourism in Illinois in the year ahead. This year, the state's new "Up For Amazing" ad campaign and re-vamped website took center stage.

After seeding the "Up For Amazing" message with a test ad campaign in the fall of 2016, the Illinois Office of Tourism realized how well it resonated with millennial travelers today. Beginning Wednesday, March 22, the four new ads will run on TV and online in multiple domestic markets – including Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis and Milwaukee – as well as internationally. Each ad features travelers experiencing iconic Illinois destinations: a road trip along Route 66 and the Great River Road, President Lincoln historic sites in Springfield, views of Galena Main Street, outdoor destinations like Starved Rock State Park and Chicago destinations like Millennium Park, North Avenue Beach and Wrigley Field.

"According to our research, 78% of millennials today prefer to learn something new when traveling – they value experiences much more than things," says Cory Jobe, Director of the Illinois Office of Tourism. "Our goal with the new 'Up For Amazing' ad campaign is to differentiate from the competition by creating a more engaging, challenging message that acts as a call to action, encouraging visitors to immerse themselves in Illinois' unique cultures and return with amazing new experiences they will feel compelled to share, both in person and on social media."

In addition, the new EnjoyIllinois.com features many of the same Illinois destinations as the ads, with an editorial twist. A combination of videos and stunning photography is used to help change the way people think about travel in Illinois. The site also uses content from the Illinois Made videos that were created last year, showcasing the artisans and craftspeople throughout Illinois – like the Blaum Brothers Distillery in Galena. These videos can be seen at [EnjoyIllinois.com/Illinois-Made](http://EnjoyIllinois.com/Illinois-Made).

Travel and tourism drives significant contributions to Illinois' economy. In 2015, Illinois welcomed more than 111.1 million visitors, which generated more than \$37.2 billion in travel expenditures for the state.

The success of state tourism each year couldn't be accomplished without help from hospitality and tourism partners and stakeholders across the state. A special Excellence in Tourism Awards Dinner on Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup> recognized their efforts. Below is a list of the winners:

- Best Leisure Collateral Budget A – Visit Galena
- Best Leisure Collateral Budget B – Great Rivers Country
- Best Social Media Marketing Budget A – Shedd Aquarium
- Best Social Media Marketing Budget B – Ottawa Visitors Center
- Best Cooperative Partnership Budget A – Visit Lake County
- Best Cooperative Partnership Budget B – Galesburg Area CVB
- Best Branding Initiative Budget A – Rockford Area CVB
- Best Branding Initiative Budget B – Promote Woodstock
- Best Website Budget A – Galena/Jo Daviess County CVB
- Best Visitors Publication Budget A – Greater St. Charles CVB
- Best Visitors Publication Budget B – Visit McHenry County
- Best Event or Festival Budget A – TIE: Visit Galena and Navy Pier
- Best Event or Festival Budget B – City of Waterloo
- Best Tourism Marketing Budget A – TIE: Navy Pier and Rockford Area CVB
- Best Tourism Marketing Budget B – Ottawa Visitors Center
- Best of Show – Shedd Aquarium
- Friend of Tourism Award Recipients – Justin Blandford and Roger Carmack

Other highlights from the conference included the annual “State of the State of Tourism” address, during which Jobe highlighted domestic and international marketing initiatives from the past year, and officially announced the new ad campaign and website as part of a review of planned tourism marketing initiatives for the year ahead.

To review a complete conference schedule and list of speakers from this year's conference, visit [www.ilgovconference.com](http://www.ilgovconference.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*