



Illinois
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OFFICE OF TOURISM
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**ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE BRINGS BIG TOURISM NEWS
& BUSINESS TO SPRINGFIELD**

A colossal, 300 lb. Eli's Cheesecake in the shape of the State Capitol punctuates a day of big announcements for Illinois Tourism

Springfield, Ill., March 20, 2017 – During Monday's press conference at the annual Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism, State Tourism Director Cory Jobe made an exciting announcement about Illinois Made, a program launched in 2016 to spotlight and celebrate the makers, artisans and craftspeople of Illinois. The campaign will be ramping up to a global scale, with Chicago-based Eli's Cheesecake becoming the newest Illinois Made maker and first global participant.

To mark the occasion, Jobe, alongside Eli's Cheesecake President, Marc Schulman, rolled out a **300 lb. Illinois Made-inspired Eli's Honest Abe Apple-Topped Original Plain Cheesecake**, created in the mold of the State Capitol and made with these Illinois Made ingredients: Nielsen-Massey Vanilla and wild flower honey harvested by student beekeepers from the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences. Now entering its second year, Illinois Made will go global with these uniquely Illinois businesses that have grown from humble beginnings to international acclaim

"We're excited to take Illinois Made to the next level in 2017," said Cory Jobe, Director of the Illinois Office of Tourism. "It is just one example of how Illinois Tourism plans to reach new audiences and bring in even more visitors in the year ahead."

In its inaugural year, the Illinois Made program has grown to feature more than eighty makers around the state. Through an ongoing video series, dozens of different businesses have been highlighted around the state. Altogether, the program aims to encourage consumers to learn about, engage and interact with local businesses that are inspired by state pride.

Travel and tourism drives significant contributions to Illinois' economy. In 2015, Illinois welcomed more than 111.1 million visitors and generated more than \$37.2 billion in travel expenditures for the state. Similarly, this year's Illinois Governor's Conference is expected to be an economic boon for the city of Springfield. Over the next three days, hundreds of conference attendees will visit local shops, bars, and restaurants. With record-breaking hotel room night bookings, this year's Illinois Governor's Conference is expected to generate a large increase in local revenue for the Springfield economy.

More about the transition to the global market will be announced in the coming months.

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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.