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2012 ILLINOIS GOVERNOR’S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM TO DEMONSTRATE “THE POWER OF PEOPLE AND TOURISM”

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and Industry Partners will Host State’s Premier Tourism Education and Networking Forum March 14-16 in Rosemont

CHICAGO - The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Office of Tourism (DCEO/IOT) and the Illinois Council of Convention and Visitor Bureaus will host the 2012 Illinois Governor’s Conference on Tourism starting Wednesday, March 14 through Friday, March 16 at the Rosemont Convention Center in Rosemont. The conference will be attended by more than 500 tourism industry professionals from around the state and feature an impressive array of speakers and panelists showcasing cutting edge ideas for moving the Illinois tourism industry forward. This year’s theme is “The Power of People and Travel.”

DCEO Director Warren Ribley and IOT Deputy Director Jan Kostner will present the annual State of the State of Tourism Address on Thursday, Feb. 15 at 9:00 A.M. Ribley and Kostner will announce the latest statewide tourism initiatives, accomplishments and economic impact numbers. They will discuss the industry’s changing landscape and its vital role in statewide economic development.

Ribley and Kostner will also announce a new international marketing platform for the state, including a new advertising focus and a new website which build on the efforts of Brand USA to attract international visitors to the United States. This will be reflected in the branding for IOT’s summer campaign, “Real America Happens Here.”

Brand USA is a public-private marketing entity that works closely with the travel industry to encourage international travelers to visit the U.S and grow America’s share of the global travel market.

Session highlights include:

. Looking Forward: Challenges and Opportunities with Dr. Lalia Rach, Professor, NYU Tisch Center and Partner, Rach Enterprises.


. Welcome to the United States of America with Chris Perkins, Chief Marketing Officer of Brand USA.
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Eat, Drink & Empower! with Laura Schwartz, White House Strategies founder, speaker, and author.

On Feb. 16, the Conference will conclude by recognizing Illinois' tourism industry leaders with the Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards luncheon. The awards will honor achievements and innovation among industry partners in a variety of categories.

For a complete conference schedule and list of speakers, or to register for the 2012 Illinois Governor’s Conference on Tourism, visit www.ilgovconference.com.

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