



Illinois Office Of Tourism Celebrates Tourism Industry - Great Rivers And Routes Wins Multiple Awards

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CHICAGO -The 2022 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism kicked off Monday, Dec. 5, at Navy Pier in Chicago, with the 2022 Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards ceremony honoring Illinois tourism leaders' contributions to the industry. Governor JB Pritzker attended the event to address conference attendees prior to the awards ceremony.

“It is an incredible honor to celebrate and recognize our state’s tourism industry leaders and innovators who work incredibly hard each day to make Illinois a premier travel destination,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Their tourism marketing efforts have made an impact in their communities, reinvigorating local economies, and putting a spotlight on what makes Illinois an exceptional destination. As tourists gear up for a busy holiday travel season, we’re ready to welcome visitors near and far to experience everything Illinois has to offer, boosting our hospitality industry and bringing revenue to Illinois businesses.”

“The winners of the Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards reflect the resilience, creativity, and passion of Illinois’ dynamic tourism industry,” said Sylvia I. Garcia, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO). “Under Governor Pritzker’s leadership, we have awarded an unprecedented level of grant funding to support tourism recovery and we remain focused on supporting the tourism sector, driving economic development, and bringing our communities together.”

The Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards were presented to honor the most successful tourism marketing and advertising initiatives, from convention and visitor bureaus (CVBs) and tourism destinations to attractions and innovators throughout the state who make Illinois shine.

Travel and tourism professionals from across the industry judged submissions in nine categories, ranging from best public relations and social media marketing campaigns to best event or festival, with one exceptional entry receiving best of show.

Each category contained a Budget A for organizations with annual operating budgets of \$750,000 and above, and Budget B for organizations with budgets under \$750,000.

Illinois Excellence in Tourism Award winners:

- **Best Niche Targeting Budget A** – Galena Country Tourism, #AmazingForAll Pride Series
- **Best Niche Targeting Budget B** – Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, Looking for Lincoln Summer Fun on Route 66!
- **Best Social Media Marketing Budget A** – Choose Chicago, St. Patrick's Day in Chicago
- **Best Social Media Marketing Budget A** – Visit Lake County, Spooks & Spirits Lake County, Illinois Autumn Celebration
- **Best Social Media Marketing Budget B** – Galesburg Tourism & Visitors Bureau, Stop on the Scenic Drive
- **Best Branding Initiative Budget A** – Galena Country Tourism, Forever Original

- **Best Branding Initiative Budget B** – Heritage Oaks Golf Club on behalf of a5 Branding & Digital
- **Best Cooperative Partnership Budget A** – Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau of Southwest Illinois, The Last 100 Miles of Route 66
- **Best Cooperative Partnership Budget B** – DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau, The Out and About App
- **Best Event or Festival Budget A** – ILLINOISouth Tourism, The NASCAR Cup Series Comes to ILLINOISouth!
- **Best Event or Festival Budget B** – Greater Freeport Partnership, Pretzel City Brewfest
- **Best Website Budget A** – Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau of Southwest Illinois, Great Rivers & Routes
- **Best Website Budget B** – Heritage Harbor Ottawa, Live Your Best Life
- **Best Tourism Marketing Budget A** – Choose Chicago, 2021 Summer Campaign: Seize Your Summer
- **Best Tourism Marketing Budget B** – Art Institute of Chicago, Obama Portraits at the Art Institute of Chicago
- **Best Printed Collateral Budget A** – Visit Champaign County, Champaign County Area Experience Guide
- **Best Printed Collateral Budget B** – Naturally McHenry County, Naturally McHenry County Insider Guide
- **Best PR Campaign Budget A** – Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau of Southwest Illinois, The Eagles Are Coming
- **Best PR Campaign Budget B** – Skydeck Chicago, Skydeck Chicago: A Street to Sky Transformation
- **Best of Show** (highest score across all categories) - ILLINOISouth Tourism

This year's Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards program was presented by the Illinois Office of Tourism. The 2022 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism is underway in Chicago, Dec. 5-7, at Navy Pier. The annual conference brings hundreds of Illinois industry leaders, travel experts and visionaries together to explore the latest industry trends and insights that contribute to Illinois tourism, one of the leading economic drivers in the state.

To download photos from Monday's awards ceremony, [click here](#).

To view the conference press release [click here](#).

For a complete conference schedule and full list of speakers at the 2022 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism, visit www.ilgovconference.com/schedule/