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New Schedule and Educational Opportunities Highlight 2013 Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism

Romeoville, IL, February 20, 2103 – 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 2013 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism, from Wednesday, February 27th through Friday, March 1st. For the second consecutive year, the Conference Chairman is Bob Navarro, PhD., President/CEO of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). With online registration closing Friday, he urges owners and staff of destinations and attractions across the Heritage Corridor region to register online by Friday, February 22, or on-site at the event) for this information-packed Conference.

"The Governor's Tourism Conference is a great one-stop shop for travel professionals, " said Navarro. He hopes that owners, operators and staff of hotels, restaurants and attractions will take advantage of the opportunities to network and to learn about the latest trends in the travel industry. "We've planned the Travel & Tourism Conference in a way that offers the best information to boost their business," said Navarro. He added, "We really want a great representation from our terrific partners, and encourage members to register online and take part in this valuable event."

Local tourism promoters will be participating in the Conference, including City of Joliet Deputy Manager Ben Benson, Joliet City Center Partnership's Richard Frederickson, Kelly Klobucher of Hegeler Carus Mansion, Ottawa's Julie Johnson, and Kathy Casstevens of Starved Rock Lodge and Conference Center, as well as Conference Chairman Bob Navarro and Mary Beth DeGrush, Heritage Corridor CVB Vice President.

The Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism has several exciting new changes this year:

- On the evening of February 27th, the achievements and innovation among industry partners in a variety of categories will be honored with the Illinois Excellence in Tourism Awards Ceremony & Dinner.

- The conference will end with an emphasis on education this year with 11 fun and informative tracks: Arts/Culture/Heritage, Culinary, CVB's, Destination Best Practices, Hotel, Integrating Website Search & Social Media, International, Marketing, Media, Sales and Special Markets.

More than 500 tourism industry professionals from around the state will attend the conference that features a remarkable assortment of speakers and panelists showcasing leading edge ideas for moving the Illinois tourism industry forward.

Illinois Governor Pat Quinn will help kick-off the 2013 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism with an appearance on Wednesday, February 27, at the Rosemont Convention Center in

Rosemont, IL. IOT Deputy Director Jen Hoelzle will present the annual State of the State of Tourism Address on Thursday, February 28th at 12:00 p.m. Hoelzle will announce the latest statewide tourism initiatives, accomplishments and economic impact numbers and discuss the industry's changing landscape and its vital role in statewide economic development.

Session highlights include:

- The Power of Partnership with Chris Thompson, President/CEO of Brand USA
- Crossing the Generational Divide: Leveraging the Power of Generations for Your Strategic Advantage with Jason Dorsey, Chief Strategy Officer for The Center for Generational Kinetics
- Marketing to Changing Demographics and How Changing Demographics Affect Your Business with Kelly McDonald, President of McDonald Marketing
- Youtility: How Smart Organizations Sell More by Selling Less with Jay Baer, President of Convince and Convert

For a complete conference schedule and list of speakers, or to register for the 2013 Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism, visit www.ilgovconference.com. The Heritage Corridor CVB generates economic impact among the communities and counties along the historic Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor. For information about the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), its members and activities, call 800.926.CANAL (2262) or go to www.heritagecorridorcvb.com.

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