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Visitors to state increase by 5 percent, generating $29.3 billion for economy

CHICAGO – June 20, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today announced that Illinois' tourism industry generated $29.3 billion in revenue in 2010, an increase of more than $2.2 billion as visitor spending continued to provide a strong economic impact for the state, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs.

"The gains we experienced in 2010 clearly show that the tourism industry continues to play a critical role in our state's ongoing economic recovery," said Governor Quinn. "With our world-class destinations and accessible locations, more people from around the world are coming to Illinois and staying longer, which is creating new jobs and bringing additional revenue throughout the state."

The economic impact of tourism in Illinois has grown by more than $3 billion during the past five years. Additionally, the travel industry generated 287,500 jobs in Illinois in 2010, directly and indirectly supporting one in 10 jobs in the state. On average, visitors spend nearly $80 million with Illinois businesses every day.

State and local tax revenues from tourism totaled more than $2 billion in 2010, an increase of $93.5 million. The total tourism tax revenue (federal, state and local) saves the average Illinois household more than $1,000 in taxes each year.

Illinois hosted nearly 84.7 million visitors in 2010, according to D. K. Shifflet & Associates. This

is up 5 percent from 2009. Both business and leisure travel saw increases in visitor volume, with leisure travel up 6 percent and business travel up 2.5 percent. Overnight leisure travel to the state was up 13.8 percent, increasing market share by 11 percent in this category and ranking Illinois 10th in the U.S.

Chicago was relatively flat in visitor volume, down less than one percent, drawing 38.11 million visitors. Business travel was up 4.9 percent while leisure travel was down 2.9 percent. Both overnight business and leisure travel increased 8.9 percent and 7.4 percent, respectively.

“Chicago’s economic vitality is driven by its visitor industry, which generates more than $11 billion in direct spending, $616 million in tax revenue, and sustains more than 124,000 jobs for our city’s economy,” said Don Welsh, President and CEO, Chicago Convention & Tourism Bureau. “It is essential that Chicago continues to grow as a preeminent convention destination as well as a premier choice for visitors from around the globe. Success requires thoughtful branding, messaging, and coordination of the entire visitor experience – efforts in which the CCTB plays a critical role.”

Dorothy Coyle, Executive Director of Chicago’s Office of Tourism and Culture, said she is pleased with Chicago’s tourism numbers.

"We are very encouraged that overnight leisure travel to Chicago has increased 7.4 percent, outpacing the U.S. average of 6.6 percent," Coyle said. "Visitors continue to be drawn to Chicago as a premier leisure destination that offers great value. Hundreds of free events and one-of-a-kind attractions keep visitors coming back and lengthening their stay."

Visitor volume outside the City of Chicago was up 10.8%, with leisure travel leading the way with an increase of 13.3%. Overnight leisure travel outside of Chicago was up 22.3%

Illinois maintained its ranking as the 7th most popular state for overseas visitors to the U.S. in 2010, hosting 1,186,000 such visitors, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Tourism Industries. The City of Chicago, the 10th most popular U.S. city for overseas visitors, hosted 1,134,000 international visitors in 2010, a 2 percent increase over 2009 arrivals.

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