



**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact**

Olivia Goethals

[olivia@sgstrategies.com](mailto:olivia@sgstrategies.com) | (309) 502-1991

**Statement: Illinois Council of Convention & Visitor Bureaus Thanks Illinois Legislators & Governor Following Approval of Strong Budget for Tourism**

*\*\*Media interviews available upon request\*\**

The following is a statement from Dave Herrell, Board Chair of the Illinois Council of Convention & Visitor Bureaus (ICCVB) and President and CEO of Visit Quad Cities:

“Tourism is one of Illinois’ largest and most critically important industries, and destination organizations throughout the state continue to drive economic recovery during the most challenging circumstances we’ve ever faced. The approved budget builds on last year’s strong budget for tourism and is another necessary step to providing the stability we need to attract visitors and business to Illinois—which, in turn, brings customers for our local small businesses and economic security for our communities. Visitors are future residents and talent and we must continually invest in tourism and destination marketing to maintain a competitive position.

“ICCVB is grateful to Governor Pritzker, his Administration, and the State Legislature for their continued support as this budget makes clear that funding for tourism and destination marketing efforts by the Illinois Council of Convention & Visitor Bureaus (ICCVB) and its partners is essential to our State’s broader economic recovery. The Governor and legislators have listened to the hard-hit travel & tourism industry and have helped put the industry on the path to economic recovery from COVID-19. This investment is the necessary fuel we need to drive growth now and with urgency. Our elected leaders are listening and have responded.

“In addition to the state’s investment in tourism marketing, the budget includes a combined \$140 million that has been appropriated from the State Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency Fund to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for the Tourism Attraction

Development Grant Program (\$15 million), the Hotel Jobs Recovery Grant Program (\$75 million) and Restaurant Employment and Stabilization Grant Program (\$50 million). This level of support is critical to important sectors and partners that have been decimated by the pandemic. We are especially grateful to our champions, Senate Tourism Committee Chair Sara Feigenholtz and House Tourism Committee Chair Lamont Robinson for their continued leadership. They haven't just supported our requests, they are our strategic partners and understand the value that tourism brings to the entire State of Illinois.

“We have a long road ahead of us but the continued commitment to tourism and the promotion of Illinois is vital to get us back on track and to our pre-pandemic levels. Every \$1 spent on tourism promotion results in \$11 for our state, which is why we need leisure travel, meetings & conventions, group business, and sports tourism to thrive and to stay competitive against other states on a national level and as we compete on a global stage.”

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