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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Illinois Byways Partner with Office of Tourism and Department of Transportation for Scenic Byway Week**

**2013 Illinois Byway Week scheduled for October 5-12, 2013**

October 3, 2013 - The seven nationally designated Scenic Byways in Illinois – Great River Road, Illinois Lincoln Highway, Historic National Road, Historic Route 66, Illinois River Road, Meeting of the Great Rivers and Ohio River Scenic Byway – are partnering with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Illinois Office of Tourism (IOT) to promote the 2013 Illinois Byway Week October 5-12, 2013.

“The Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway, recently named Midwest Living Magazine’s Top 25 Ultimate Fall Drives, is the perfect drive to experience not only fall color, but unique communities and seasonal events happening over the next few weeks”, said Anaise Berry, Byway Director.

“We’re excited to continue our partnership with the Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois’ seven scenic byways,” said Jen Hoelzle, deputy director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism. “Illinois’ Scenic Byways provide an incredible opportunity for travelers to experience first-hand the scenery, history, cultural attractions and the people that make an Illinois road trip so memorable.”

As a result of the strong partnership between IDOT, IOT and the seven Illinois Scenic Byways, both residents and visitors are more aware of the treasures that await them in the great state of Illinois. The many stories and experiences along the roads are unique to Illinois – from the power and natural beauty of the mighty Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to the authentic cultural and historic experiences along all seven of the Byways. Byways offer unique experiences to both the domestic and international visitors who travel them, while providing vital economic opportunities for communities and businesses along them. International visitors to Illinois are also on the rise thanks to Illinois travel officials realizing the potential and creating international promotional strategies.

Since the inception of the National Scenic Byway Program in 1995, Illinois Byways have leveraged \$20 million in federal funds into \$25 million for tourism development and promotion projects. In 2012, Illinois hosted a record 99 million domestic visitors who spent \$31 billion and generated state and local tax revenues of \$2.3 billion. Tourism also creates jobs; in 2012, 5000 new travel industry jobs were added in Illinois. For each dollar spent on tourism development



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and promotion, the state of Illinois receives a significant amount of tax dollars in return at the local lodging facilities, shops, gas stations, restaurants and other small businesses.

“We are proud of the strong partnership we have with the Illinois Byway Alliance and Illinois Office of Tourism,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider. “Our hope is when travelers are considering their next trip, one of our many scenic treasures will make their list. We are confident travelers will be enlightened by the rich history and culture our scenic byways have to offer.”

To learn more about the many events taking place during Illinois Scenic Byway Week, visit [www.illinoisbyways.org](http://www.illinoisbyways.org) for links to each of Illinois’ Byways. For more information about the Illinois River Road, visit [www.illinoisriverroad.org](http://www.illinoisriverroad.org).

The Illinois River Road was designated a National Scenic Byway in 2005 by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, which recognizes roads having outstanding archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. It stretches 291 miles alongside the Illinois River from Ottawa to Havana and is notable for its natural and historic qualities. The Byway covers ten counties including Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, LaSalle, Bureau, Putnam, Marshall, Stark, Fulton, and Mason. The Byway has six gateway communities including Ottawa, Princeton, Peoria, Pekin, Canton, and Havana.

If you have questions or would like more information please contact Byway Director Anaise Berry at 309-256-8170 or [aberry@illinoisriverroad.org](mailto:aberry@illinoisriverroad.org). The Illinois River Road is a program of the North Central Illinois Council of Governments in Ottawa, Illinois.

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