



PRESS RELEASE

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### Tourism to Williamson County Helping to Drive Economic Growth for Illinois

Williamson County generated \$138.63 million in travel expenditures and \$3.22 million in local tax revenue

**Marion, IL** – Today, the Illinois Office of Tourism announced domestic and international travel expenditures reached \$37.9 billion in 2016 – a \$571 million increase from 2015. This follows the state’s record-breaking domestic Illinois tourism figures released in May, which highlighted an increase of one million travelers to the state in 2016.

Williamson County contributed to Illinois’ robust economic domestic growth, to the tune of \$138.63 million in travel expenditures (a 4% increase) and \$3.22 million in local tax revenue (a 8.8% increase). Additionally, the tourism industry created 10,000 new jobs across the state.

“One of the beautiful things about Illinois is the variety of experiences you can enjoy across the state – whether you’re looking for family-friendly activities, outdoor adventure, delicious food or an amazing road trip,” said Cory Jobe, Director of the Illinois Office of Tourism. “By bringing new money to our stores, hotels and attractions, visitors have the power to create a tangible economic impact for our communities. Our success as a state depends on each county doing their part to promote the diverse ways visitors can experience their own amazing moments in Illinois.”

According to Shannon D. Johnson (CEO of visitSI) Williamson County has a lot to be proud of and has an exciting future ahead as work continues developing the region and impacting local communities. “Visitors have had a positive economic impact in our communities due to the variety of activities, attractions, and events we have to offer. Whether you’re traveling to the area for the Miss Illinois Pageant, a scenic adventure through Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge or a concert featuring a world famous recording artist, Williamson County is host to a variety of opportunities for all.”

Fast facts about Illinois Tourism in 2016:

- Every \$1 invested in Illinois tourism generates \$9 in economic impact
- Illinois welcomed 110 million domestic visitors (an additional one million visitors over 2015)



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- Of Illinois' 110 million domestic visitors, 17% were for business and 83% for leisure
- In the past 10 years, domestic travel to Illinois has increased by 19 million visitors
- Domestic travelers spent nearly \$35.1 billion in Illinois during 2016, a 1.8% increase over 2015
  - In 2016, domestic travelers to Illinois generated \$2.6 billion in state and local tax revenue, an increase of \$122 million over 2015
- Length of stay per visitor increased by 3%, surpassing the US average of 2.4%

These numbers, provided by the U.S. Travel Association, are preliminary numbers only. Final visitor statistics will be made available later this year.

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*The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents.*



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