CHICAGO
SUN-TIMES

State unveils major marketing push for Hispanic tourists

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Hispanics are a growing force in the Chicago metropolitan area, and the Illinois Bureau of Tourism wants a bigger slice of their tourism dollars.

This month, the state is unveiling its biggest marketing push ever to attract Hispanics to Illinois tourism destinations. The theme of the campaign, "Illinois Aqui y Ahora," developed by the San Jose Group in Chicago, roughly mirrors the general market effort for the upcoming summer travel season from BBDO/Chicago, which uses the tagline "Illinois Right Here. Right Now."

Maribel Chacon, San Jose's director of client services, said information gleaned from focus groups made up of Chicago area Hispanic residents clearly indicated the preferred language in which to receive tourism information is Spanish.

"Hispanics usually feel more comfortable getting their information in Spanish, and it makes it easier to communicate that information to other generations within the household who might not speak English," explained Chacon.

According to the newest census data, the state's Hispanic population is 1,530,262, a 62 percent increase over the 904,449 counted in the 1990 census.

For the first time, the state's Hispanic tourism campaign will include radio spots to increase reach and frequency in the expanding Hispanic community. Another first is a dedicated phone line (866 291-AHORA) where callers can reach live Spanish-speaking operators who have information about Illinois tourism destinations.

Yet another first in the Hispanic marketing effort this year is a new Web site, *www.aquiyahora.net*, that includes a photo gallery, facts about Illinois, a state map and a list of brochures in English and Spanish.

Tourism destinations are romantic, theme parks, sporting activities, outdoors and festivals.

"Paquetes en Illinois" brochures aimed at the Hispanic market break Illinois tourism destination into five categories: romantic, theme parks, sporting activities, the great outdoors and fairs and festivals. The only category that seems to be missing is historic sites.

Separately, Gov. Ryan yesterday said consumer spending on travel and tourism in Illinois hit a record of more than $23 billion in 2000.

The tourism industry accounted for nearly 294,000 jobs in Illinois with a total payroll of $7.26 billion. Tax generated from tourism-related expenditures increased by 6.5 percent in 2000 to $4.28 billion. Illinois reportedly welcomed more than 80 million domestic visitors in 2000, a 4.7 percent increase over 1999.

New Slack Barshinger logo

Slack Barshinger, a growing Chicago business-to-business marketing firm, has introduced a new corporate logo better suited to the Internet age. The new logo features an icon SB executives believe helps communicate the corporate mission. Slack Barshinger had not updated its corporate identity since the early 1990s, when the Internet was not the dominant communication force it is today. Slack Barshinger has put an amusing story about the development of the new identity on its Web site *www.slackbarshinger.com/logo*.

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THE SAN JOSE GROUP

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

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Publication: Chicago Sun-Times
Date: June 5, 2001
Author: Lewis Lazare
Section: FINANCIAL
Edition: LATE SPORTS FINAL
Page: 51
Word Count: 475

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Illinois' slogan in ads targeted at Spanish-speaking tourists translates to ``Illinois Right Here. Right Now." Tourism destinations are romantic, theme parks, sporting activities, outdoors and festivals.

George L. San Jose, president & chief creative officer of The San Jose Group, a multicultural advertising agency.