



The Soul of Illinois

For Immediate Release

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NOTED CELEBRITIES JOIN ILLINOIS TOURISM IN PROMOTING “MY ILLINOIS”

CHICAGO, IL –Travelers aren’t the only ones talking about Illinois, some noted celebrities are as well. Actors Harry Lennix and LisaRaye; former Chicago Bears player, Mike Singletary; Grammy award-winning vocalist, Chaka Khan; jazz legend Ramsey Lewis and history-maker Bill Norwood are encouraging travelers everywhere to visit *their* Illinois.

As part of the “Soul of Illinois” program launched earlier this year by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Tourism (IBOT), these native Illinois newsmakers will be featured on the “Soul of Illinois” Web site, www.soulfulillinois.com, touting Illinois as an ideal travel destination for African-Americans by highlighting what they love most about their home state.

Lennix, who stars in the hit new series *Commander in Chief*, is the most recent addition to the slate of celebrities to be featured in the campaign. He joins LisaRaye, star of the UPN comedy *All of Us*; R&B legend Chaka Khan; Mike Singletary, former Chicago Bears linebacker and current San Francisco 49ers assistant head coach and linebacker coach; famed jazz musician Ramsey Lewis and Bill Norwood, who made history as the first African-American pilot and captain at United Airlines, which is headquartered in Illinois.

According to IBOT Deputy Director Jan Kostner, “The personalities featured in this campaign have made notable achievements in their respective industries. We are excited about having them join our effort to promote Illinois.”

The “My Illinois” campaign is part of a multi-year, integrated program to promote the rich ethnic, cultural and historical diversity of Illinois to the \$4.8 billion African-American travel market. IBOT is targeting this growing travel segment which, according to the Travel Industry Association of America, is outpacing the overall U.S. travel market segment by 2 percent.

“We feel privileged to offer visitors a chance to see Illinois through the experiences of some of the state’s most recognized natives. I can’t think of a more winning combination than our attractive destination, coupled by this impressive star power,” concluded Kostner.

For more information about Illinois destinations and attractions, visit www.soulfulillinois.com or call **1-800-2CONNECT**.