



Illinois
Department of Commerce

& Economic Opportunity

OFFICE OF TOURISM

Bruce Rauner, Governor

June 26, 2018

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

I had the great honor of speaking on the stage of the historic Egyptian Theatre on May 11, 2017 to celebrate National Travel & Tourism Week. It is easy to see why the Egyptian is one of the biggest attractions in DeKalb County.

Recently, in celebration of the State Bicentennial, the Egyptian Theatre was named one of Illinois's top 20 architectural treasures. This is a well-deserved distinction. Visitors come to visit the unique attractions and experiences we offer; like the Egyptian Theatre. One of only seven remaining in the United States and the only one East of the Rocky Mountains, the Egyptian is a special asset in the State of Illinois.

I announced earlier this month that visitors spent a record-breaking \$39.5 billion in Illinois in 2017, according to the U.S. Travel Association. That's an increase of \$1.1 billion or 3% from 2016. The county breakdown will be announced later this summer. But, DeKalb County has seen an increase in visitor spending every year since 2009 and plays an important role in state tourism numbers.

The Illinois tourism industry supported 335,500 jobs in 2017. Visitor outlays for goods and services generated \$2.95 billion in state and local tax revenue. Tourist spending saves the average Illinois household over \$1,300 in taxes each year.

This is why continued investment into tourism is great for Illinois and all of our communities. Attractions like the historic Egyptian Theatre are what make our communities unique and special for residents and visitors alike. The DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau does a wonderful job of promoting the events at the Egyptian Theatre. This helps attract the 60-70% of patrons from outside DeKalb County that attend touring shows at the Egyptian Theatre.

I encourage you to approve the Egyptian Theatre funding request for TIF funds to install air-conditioning so they can be open year-round. The Illinois Office of Tourism supports the Egyptian Theatre's efforts for #ItsTimeFor12Months.

Sincerely,

Cory M. Jobe
Director
Illinois Office of Tourism