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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONFERENCE OFFERS IDEAS ON ATTRACTING TOURISTS

CHARLESTON, IL--Tourism and hotel management professionals and others interested in encouraging tourism and economic development in their communities are invited to a tourism conference at Eastern Illinois University.

"Tourism and the State of Illinois: What's Up, What's Down," is the theme of the fourth annual public policy conference Nov. 18-19, sponsored by EIU and the Board of Governors Universities, the governing board for Eastern, Chicago State, Governors State, Northeastern and Western Illinois Universities.

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"The conference will give attendees an overview of what resources they have at their disposal and offer new ideas on enhancing tourism in the State of Illinois," said Patrick Lenihan, EIU economics professor and conference co-director.

Jan Grayson, director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, and Jerry Preston, president of the Quincy Convention and Visitors Bureau, are among the speakers.

"Of particular interest to individuals in this area will be a panel discussion on developing downstate tourism," said Lenihan, panel moderator.

Panelist Kaye Woodward, acting director of Eastern's Board of Governors Bachelor of Arts Degree Program and associate professor of home economics, will discuss privatization of public lands by presenting a case study of the development of Eagle Creek, a resort in Findlay.

Other panelists include EIU associate professor of economics William Thompson and assistant professor of economics Ali Mosh-tagh who will give a cost-benefit analysis of a small city's tourist bureau in their talk entitled "The Best Kept Secret."

They will discuss the impact tourism bureaus in Terre Haute (IN), Danville (IL), and in towns in southern Illinois have on their communities. Funding and legislative issues will also be covered. Thompson is a member of the Terre Haute City Council.

Another panelist Michael Bowling, senior research economist with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, will cover rural tourism in Illinois and "the infrastructure issue." Bowling, who has been associated with the State's tourism program since 1984, has degrees in city and regional planning and sociology.

Other panel discussion topics by tourism professionals and faculty and administrators at the five Board of Governors Universities range from ethnic tourism and the living city as a tourist attraction to the rediscovery of architecture and early landscape sites as tourist attractions.

The conference fee is \$25 per person. For more information and to register, call Eastern's School of Adult and Continuing Education at (217) 581-5114.