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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Heritage Corridor Destinations Announces Strong 2024 Tourism Impact Across the Region**

Joliet, IL – Heritage Corridor Destinations has released its 2024 tourism impact report, which showcases the vital role that visitors play in driving the economy, creating jobs, and supporting communities and businesses across the region.

According to the report from Tourism Economics, tourism in the Heritage Corridor continues to thrive, delivering significant economic benefits in 2024:

- Visitors spent \$1.6 billion on attractions, dining, lodging, shopping, and experiences throughout the Heritage Corridor
- More than 12,300 jobs supported by tourism-related activity
- Nearly \$458 million in wages generated for workers across the region
- \$93.7 million in state tax revenue generated by visitor spending
- More than \$55.9 million in local tax revenue supporting community services, up 2.8% from 2023

“These numbers tell a powerful story about the strength and value of tourism in our region,” said Robert Navarro, President and CEO of Heritage Corridor Destinations. “Every visitor who dines in our restaurants, stays in our hotels, and explores our communities is directly supporting local jobs, strengthening small businesses, and generating tax revenue that helps improve quality of life for residents. Tourism is not just about travel – it’s about building stronger, more vibrant communities.”

Beyond delivering economic impact, Heritage Corridor Destinations actively invests in tourism growth and promotion across the state. In the past year, the organization:

- Managed more than \$2.1 million in grant funds for tourism marketing, promotion, and development projects
- Executed winter (Flock to the Rock) and summer (Appetite for Adventure) campaigns for LaSalle County, producing new, digital, video, and print creative assets to attract visitors year-round
- Partnered with the Joliet Area Historical Museum, Wilmington Park District, and City of Wilmington to launch The Landing Pad, a new retail souvenir shop in Wilmington
- Continued collaboration with the Canal Corridor Association to expand digital and print passports promoting I&M Canal Towns
- Published and distributed more than 100,000 travel guides featuring the I&M Canal Towns, Starved Rock Country/LaSalle County, and The First Hundred Miles of Route 66 in Illinois
- Operated the Starved Rock Country Welcome Center & Illinois Made Gift Shoppe in LaSalle County, open daily and featuring Illinois-made items along with promotional materials from local partners
- Marketed The First Hundred Miles of Route 66 year-round through print, digital campaigns, trade shows, and tourism events