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Ohio Rolls Out New Travel Opportunities for 2009

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Ohio offers travelers the best of all worlds in 2009 with tourism experiences that provide five-star fun that is easy on the budget within about 600 miles of 60 percent of the U.S. population.

“Ohio never ceases to amaze in what it has to offer its visitors,” said Ohio Tourism Director Amir Eylon. “In 2009 alone, we have new thrill rides at the world’s best amusement parks, a new birding site in the midst of a downtown corridor, the first Bruce Springsteen exhibit at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and zoos consistently rated among the top ten in the country adding to their outstanding exhibits.”

Whether you’re a family looking for a fun getaway, or a young professional looking for the hippest neighborhood arts and eateries, Ohio truly has something to fit your palate. Following are just a few highlights of the new travel opportunities that make Ohio too much fun for just one day. For more information, visit www.DiscoverOhio.com.

Family Fun

Digital Video Cameras – Hocking Hills (Available Now)

The Hocking Hills Welcome Center now offer guests the option to borrow an easy-to-use Flip Ultra camcorders to capture their vacation memories, including the sandstone cliffs and waterfalls of the area – absolutely free of charge. Upon returning a camera to the Welcome Center, visitor footage is uploaded and e-mailed to the visitor. And Ohio State Parks charge no admission fee. <http://www.1800hocking.com/>

Polar Frontier, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium – Columbus (Summer 2009)

The 13-acre, \$18 million Polar Frontier is an addition to the zoo’s North American Region and will house polar bears, brown bears, arctic foxes, reindeer and mountain goats. A 75-acre African Savannah is set to open in 2009 as well. And don’t miss the new baby elephant. www.columbuszoo.org

Grange Insurance Audubon Center Opening – Columbus (June 2009)

One of the first centers to bring hands-on conservation and nature-based learning to within a mile of the core of a major American city, this site on Whittier Peninsula of will include native plant demonstration gardens, a natural playground area, an outdoor amphitheater and plenty of eco-friendly programming. <http://www.grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org/About.html>

Sports & Recreation

Clippers to open Huntington Park – Columbus (Open Now)

Situated along Nationwide Boulevard in the Arena District, the new 10,000-seat baseball park is already a hit with Columbus baseball enthusiasts. The state-of-the-art stadium is home to the Columbus Clippers, Triple-A affiliate of the Cleveland Indians, and features a 32-by-18-foot video screen, a children’s play area with dancing fountains, and a sunken field that allows a free view of the action from the sidewalk.

Diamondback – Kings Island (Mason near Cincinnati) (Ready to Ride!)

The tallest, fastest and meanest roller coaster to hit Kings Island unleashes its fury with more than 5,200 feet of steel track. At 230 feet tall, this monster drops straight down and twists and turns through 10 acres of terrain to give you the ultimate thrill, without the venom.

<http://www.kidiamondback.com/>

Ozone Zipline Adventures – Camp Kern in Warren County (North of Cincinnati) (Open Now)

The largest of its kind in the Midwest, this canopy (tree-top) tour will include nine ziplines totaling well over 10,000 feet, reaching heights of 170 feet. Riders will “zip” over and through the Little Miami River Valley and connect to Fort Ancient near outstanding canoeing and bicycle trails.

www.ohioslargestplayground.com/zipline

Cities, Culture & Cuisine

Springsteen Exhibit at Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum – Cleveland (Open Now)

The Museum’s newest exhibit, “From Asbury Park to the Promised Land: The Life and Music of Bruce Springsteen,” showcases the life and memorabilia from the 1999 inductee, including guitars, album covers, stage apparel and scrapbooks in which he wrote song lyrics. The extensive display will run through spring 2010. <http://www.rockhall.org/>

Lincoln Theatre Reopening – Columbus (Open Now)

After a \$12-million restoration, Lincoln Theatre reopens to the public featuring the Jazz Arts Group’s Jazz Academy and numerous performing arts groups. Originally opened in 1928, the theater catered to African-American patrons and performers including many jazz greats including Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Etta James, James Brown, Columbus native Nancy Wilson and three-year-old Sammy Davis Jr., who made his debut there.

http://www.capa.com/columbus/venues/lincoln_about.php

History & Heritage

Warrior Airmen, National Museum of the United States Air Force – Dayton (Open Now)

The oldest and largest military aviation museum in the world unveiled its newest permanent exhibit, “Warrior Airmen,” in January. Representing the Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom operations, the display includes three dioramas with fully dressed and equipped mannequins, a robot investigating an improvised explosive device and compelling first-hand accounts from soldiers. <http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/>

Check DiscoverOhio.com for more exciting getaways close to home and easy on the wallet, and watch for more to come on the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing and Ohioan Neil Armstrong’s historic walk on the moon (July 20, 2009).

Free Ohio Travel Planners and Ohio Calendar of Events can be ordered anytime night or day. Travel counselors are available at 1-800-BUCKEYE to assist callers weekdays from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and weekends 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

About the Ohio Tourism Division

The Ohio Tourism Division is the premier source of information for travelers and media about Ohio’s vibrant tourism experiences, attractions, and economy. Division marketing programs contributed to an estimated \$38 billion in visitor sales in 2007 and 454,000 jobs sustained by visitors to the state. A part of the Ohio Department of Development, the Division’s mission is to promote and celebrate Ohio’s unique travel opportunities and market the state’s outstanding quality of life.