**Section 543.400 Criteria for Tourism Attraction Signs**

a) Attraction Categories

In order to be considered for tourism attraction signs, the attraction must fall under one of the categories listed in subsections (a)(1) through (a)(19) of this Section. Additionally, the attraction, except as otherwise provided, must have adequate legal parking; must be open to the public a minimum of 100 days per year; must have drinking water and Americans with Disabilities Act compliant restroom facilities at or near the site; and must have minimum annual attendance consistent with the categories listed as follows.

1) Agri-Tourism Site: An established area where consumers can interact with Illinois agricultural producers for the purpose of tours, education or other rural recreational experiences or to purchase and/or pick pumpkins and other produce directly from the producer. The facility must offer a variety of agri-tourism related entertainment, including, but not limited to, activities such as hayrack rides, farm animals, corn mazes, etc. The facility must offer concessions and restroom facilities, with a minimum annual attendance of 5,000.

2) Amusement Park/Fairgrounds/Recreational and Entertainment Complex: A park, fairground, or recreational and entertainment complex that supplies refreshments and multiple activities of entertainment and recreation, with a minimum annual attendance of 50,000.

3) Antique Shopping Areas: A stand alone facility with a group of at least 40 vendors or 30,000 square feet of space that specializes in the sale of antique items or an area concentrated within a mile radius offering five or more individual antique shops that specialize in the sale of antique items.

4) Arena/Performance Center: A stadium, sports complex, auditorium, civic center, racetrack, convention center or cultural center, with a minimum annual attendance of 50,000.

5) Botanical/Zoological Facility: A collection of unique living plants/animals that are kept and exhibited to the public, with a minimum annual attendance of 25,000. Zoos shall be members of, or accredited by, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association or other similar organization.

6) Brewery: An establishment that manufactures and produces malt liquors, such as beer and ale, on the premises. It must be open to the public offering tours and must offer an organized tasting and/or sampling opportunity for the visitor with an option to purchase. The facility must be accessible with public restrooms and a minimum annual attendance of 5,000.

7) Entertainment/Dining/Shopping District: An area concentrated within a half-mile radius offering a variety of entertainment, dining and shopping venues.

8) Gambling/Wagering Facility: An off-track wagering facility or a riverboat casino authorized and regulated by the State of Illinois.

9) Golf Course: An area of land laid out for golf with a minimum of 9 holes, each including tee, fairway, and putting green, and often one or more natural or artificial hazards and open to the public, with a minimum annual attendance of 15,000. Miniature golf courses, driving ranges, chip-and-putt courses and indoor golf courses are not eligible to participate in the program.

10) Historic Shopping District: A shopping district with a minimum of seven stores in restored structures that is marketed as a historic shopping district or area.

11) Historic Site: A structure, district, or landmark listed by the IHPA as being of historical significance, with an annual minimum attendance of 5,000. State sites maintained by the IHPA, the IDNR, and the Department are exempt from the requirements of this Part. Sites promoting the same historic event or person should be combined as one logo on a sign (i.e., Lincoln Sites, Frank Lloyd Wright Sites).

12) Marina: A sheltered harbor adjacent to a navigable waterway where boats are kept in the water and recreational boating services are provided. This category is considered a seasonal attraction.

13) Museum: An organized and permanent institution, with professional staff, in which works of artistic, historical or scientific value are cared for and exhibited to the public, with a minimum annual attendance of 15,000. Museums shall be members of, or accredited by, the American Association of Museums, the Illinois Association of Museums, the Association of Midwest Museums, or some other similar organization.

14) Orchard: An established area or facility where consumers can purchase or pick fresh Illinois food products directly from Illinois producers, with a minimum annual attendance of 5,000. The facility shall include a general store.

15) River Excursion: A non-gaming riverboat sightseeing excursion, with a minimum annual attendance of 5,000.

16) Shopping Center: A group of stores arranged in one or more buildings with the stores in any one building separated by floor to ceiling partitions and having, in Cook, DuPage and Lake Counties, a minimum of 150 stores and, in all other counties, a minimum of 45 stores.

17) State or National Park/Forest/Wild Life Area: An area designated by a unit of government that provides activities such as fishing, picnicking, hiking, swimming, boating, and sporting events, with a minimum annual attendance of 15,000.

18) Unique Attractions: Areas of special interest that have a minimum annual attendance of 5,000, including, but not limited to:

A) ATV Parks – a park designed to allow visitors to drive All-Terrain Vehicles on a designated surface.

B) Comedy Clubs – open to the public with regularly scheduled performances.

C) Disc Golf – a disc game in which individual players throw a flying disc into a basket/target.

D) Rock Climbing – facilities open to the public with equipment designed to allow visitors to climb rocks.

E) Sky Diving – facilities open to the public allowing the visitor to jump from a plane using certified jumping equipment/gear.

F) Sport Shooting Clubs – facilities open to the public that offer the visitor an opportunity to shoot five stand, skeet, trap or sporting clays.

G) Landmarks that have been internationally or nationally recognized for their uniqueness.

19) Winery: A facility, open to the public with regularly scheduled hours, that holds an Illinois 1st or 2nd Class Winemakers License or an Illinois 1st or 2nd Class Wine Manufacturer License and ferments more than 200 gallons per year and offers educational tours of the Illinois winemaking process in an Illinois winery that is associated with a tasting room and has a minimum annual attendance of 5,000.

b) Ineligible Attractions. Attractions not normally associated with tourism are not eligible. Ineligible attractions include, but are not limited to, furniture and clothing stores, automotive dealerships, garages, drug stores, movie theaters, appliance stores, department stores, schools, houses of worship, real estate offices, auction houses, livestock sales facilities, sand and gravel facilities, and grocery stores.

c) Distance to Tourism Attraction

1) A tourism attraction must be within five road miles of a freeway interchange in Cook County, within ten road miles in DuPage and Lake Counties, and within 30 road miles in all other counties.

2) The distance to each tourism attraction will be measured as the travel distance between the end of the appropriate exit ramp and the tourism attraction. The distance to a tourism attraction on a crossroad will be measured along the centerline of the crossroad from the end of the appropriate exit ramp to the center of the primary entrance to the tourism attraction. Where the tourism attraction is located along an intersecting road, the distance will be measured along the centerline of the crossroad to the centerline of the intersecting road and then measured along the centerline of the intersecting road to the center of the primary entrance to the tourism attraction. Where an entrance serves more than one tourism attraction, the driving distance using the properly marked driving aisles from the entrance to the parking space available for patrons nearest the tourism attraction will be added to the distance measured along the crossroad or intersecting road.

3) If a tourism attraction meets the criteria at more than one interchange on a given freeway, signing will be allowed only from the interchange providing the most direct and best route in each direction. In determining the most direct and best route, the Department will consider all relevant conditions, including the directness of the route, congestion of the route, speed of travel, length of travel, and ease of locating the tourism attraction.

d) Tourism Attraction Signing Priorities

1) Where there may be more tourism attractions eligible for and desiring signing than the number of signs permitted on specific tourism attraction panels, the following point criteria will be used in determining priority for signing. When two or more tourism attractions score identical points, the priority will be based on the distance to the interchange with a closer tourism attraction having priority over a farther tourism attraction. When the Department cannot determine which tourism attraction is closest to the appropriate exit ramp, priority for the available space will be determined by lottery, coin toss, or any other fair and impartial method determined by the Department. The affected tourism attraction will be allowed to witness such action. Because each exit at an interchange is treated separately, a tourism attraction may be eligible to sign from only one direction of travel along a freeway.

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| Annual Attendance: |  |
|  |  |
| Less than 50,000 persons | 10 points |
|  |  |
| 50,000 to 149,999 persons | 20 points |
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| 150,000 to 249,999 persons | 30 points |
|  |  |
| 250,000 persons or more | 35 points |
|  |  |
| Days/Hours of Operation: |  |
|  |  |
| Open a minimum of 100 hours per year | 5 points |
|  |  |
| Open a minimum of 3 days per week, 7 hours per day for less than 6 months per year but for a total of more than 400 hours per year | 10 points |
|  |  |
| Open a minimum of 5 days per week, 7 hours per day for more than 6 months of the year | 20 points |
|  |  |
| Open year-round, except major holidays, a minimum of 7 hours per day | 30 points |
|  |  |
| Distance from interchange: |  |
| (Except Cook, DuPage and Lake Counties) |  |
|  |  |
| 25.1 to 30 miles | 5 points |
|  |  |
| 20.1 to 25 miles | 10 points |
|  |  |
| 15.1 to 20 miles | 15 points |
|  |  |
| 10.1 to 15 miles | 20 points |
|  |  |
| 5.1 to 10 miles | 23 points |
|  |  |
| 5 miles or less | 25 points |
|  |  |
| Distance from interchange: |  |
| (DuPage and Lake Counties Only) |  |
|  |  |
| 9.1 to 10 miles | 5 points |
|  |  |
| 7.1 to 9.0 miles | 10 points |
|  |  |
| 5.1 to 7.0 miles | 15 points |
|  |  |
| 1.1 to 5.0 miles | 20 points |
|  |  |
| 1 mile or less | 25 points |
|  |  |
| Distance from interchange: |  |
| (Cook County Only) |  |
|  |  |
| 4.1 to 5 miles | 10 points |
|  |  |
| 3.1 to 4 miles | 15 points |
|  |  |
| 1.1 to 3.0 miles | 20 points |
|  |  |
| 1 mile or less | 25 points |
|  |  |
| Marketing Plan: |  |
|  |  |
| Attractions not demonstrating any advertising efforts outside a 50 mile radius of the interchange | 0 points |
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| Attractions that advertise outside a 50 mile radius of the interchange on a limited basis with fewer than five advertisement placements per year | 5 points |
|  |  |
| Attractions that advertise on a regular basis to markets outside a 50 mile radius of the interchange and/or conduct public relations efforts to generate visits from persons outside that area | 10 points |
|  |  |

2) An attraction will be guaranteed participation in the program for a minimum of three years from the date of installation of its tourism attraction signs provided it continues to meet the requirements of this Section and is not in arrears in its payments. Following the first three year period, signs for the attraction with the lowest priority on a panel may be removed at the beginning of the billing cycle in favor of another attraction with at least 30% higher priority based on subsection (d)(1) of this Section. This will only apply where the sign panel in question has the maximum number of attraction signs allowed in Section 543.600(a)(2).

3) When a tourism attraction closes temporarily due to remodeling, or due to an act of God, including, but not limited to, fire or flood, the tourism attraction shall notify the Department in writing of the closure. Notification shall be sent to the:

LOGO/Tourism Signing Coordinator

Illinois Department of Transportation

Bureau of Operations

2300 South Dirksen Parkway

Springfield, Illinois 62764

Following the closure, the tourism attraction signs will be removed and returned to the tourism attraction. If the tourism attraction remains closed after six months, the closure shall be considered as permanent and the space will be declared available. In any event, if the allowable closure period extends to the subsequent fiscal year, the annual rental fee for the tourism attraction must be paid for that year or the space will be declared available. If the tourism attraction does not notify the Department in writing of the closure and the Department becomes aware of the closure, the closure shall be considered permanent and the space will be declared available.

4) When a tourism attraction closes permanently, the tourism attraction will lose its signing priority and the space will be declared available. If the tourism attraction reopens and wishes to again take part in the program if a space is available, a new application must be submitted as specified in Section 543.600(a). If the tourism attraction is still eligible for signing under this program, priority will be evaluated among all other eligible tourism attractions desiring signing at the interchange in question.

e) Location of Tourism Attraction

1) Tourism Attraction on the Crossroad

Where a tourism attraction is on the crossroad, it must either be visible to the motorists from the crossroad, or have a sign on the tourism attraction site, visible to the motorists from the crossroad, advising motorists of the appropriate entrance to the attraction.

2) Tourism Attraction not on the Crossroad

A) Where a tourism attraction is not on the crossroad, it must either be visible to the motorists from the crossroad or have a trailblazer sign or signs installed on the crossroad and the road or roads leading to the attraction advising motorists where to turn.

B) Where roads leading from the crossroad to the attraction are State highways, the Department will install trailblazer signs advising motorists where to turn.

C) Where roads leading from the crossroad to the attraction are under local agency jurisdiction, freeway signing will not be provided until legible trailblazer or other signs are installed by, or by permission of, the local agencies, with directional information advising motorists where to turn. It shall be the responsibility of the tourism attraction to arrange with the appropriate local agency for the installation of all signs on roads under the jurisdiction of the local agency.

f) No tourism attraction will be allowed more than one space on an individual tourism attraction panel.

g) Where an attraction is signed from a given freeway on an existing official sign, (see Section 543.200, Definitions, "Official Sign"), other than a business logo sign, it may not be signed on a tourism attraction sign on the same freeway unless it agrees that the Department can remove its name from the official highway sign.

(Source: Amended at 36 Ill. Reg. 7318, effective April 26, 2012)