

1st
ANNUAL
AWARDS
ISSUE!

the Best

{ OF THE INDUSTRY }

by JENNY B. DAVIS

ILLINOIS MEETINGS & EVENTS MAGAZINE POLLED THE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE experts in the business—our readers—and asked them to choose the top places, faces and services across the state. From hotels to destination management companies to motivational speakers, the votes are in and we congratulate the worthy recipients. We invite you to share in their success as we honor the winners—and recommend you keep these names handy because they just might be the ticket to your best meeting yet. * Remember: These award winners were not selected by a small team of editors. We included a ballot in the last issue and also posted a ballot on our Web site, then invited readers to vote on who they thought was the best in the industry. So these honors come from your peers. Now take a look at the results ... 



Attraction

» It doesn't get more people-pleasing than **NAVY PIER**, the city's premier lakefront attraction. The only problem may be what to do first. Should you head to the award-winning Children's Museum or the 32,000-square-foot Crystal Gardens? Or perhaps see a show—IMAX or Shakespeare? Then there are restaurants ranging from burgers to fine dining, plus plenty of shops that tempt at every turn. Visitors and locals agree it's hard to resist a ride on the Pier's giant Ferris wheel. (Navy Pier, Chicago, 312.595.5300, www.navypier.com)



Team Building Facility

» For any group that wants to motivate its members by putting them in motion, the **WINDY CITY FIELDHOUSE** is the ideal destination. Not only does it offer 55,000 square feet of raw entertainment space, but its corporate team can present the best ways to use it, drawing on numerous packages that can be customized to fit any need and budget. After all, what builds teamwork better than an obstacle course and Nerf floor hockey? (Windy City Fieldhouse, Chicago, 773.486.7300, www.windy-city-fieldhouse.com)



Boat Cruises + Charters

» Chicago is famous for its picturesque skyline, and one of the best ways to appreciate the full beauty of its visionary architecture is by talking to the water. No one navigates the shores of Lake Michigan quite like **KANAN CRUISES**. Conveniently located at Navy Pier, its private charter vessel—the city's largest—accommodates groups as large as 400 and offers cruises lasting from two to five hours for day or evening events, any time of year. (Kanan Cruises, Chicago, 312.222.0088, www.kanancruises.com)



Holiday Party Venue

» Think of it as a stylish pub for urban professionals. **ROCKIT BAR & GRILL**, located in Chicago's bustling River North neighborhood, combines the rawness of warehouse space—wood beams, exposed brick—with an impressive level of comfort and sophistication embodied by handmade leather chairs, customized pool tables and 50-inch plasma screen TVs. The menu is a distinctive twist on typical bar fare; the bar is stocked and the music is always rockin'. (Rockit Bar & Grill, Chicago, 312.645.6000, www.rockitbarandgrill.com)