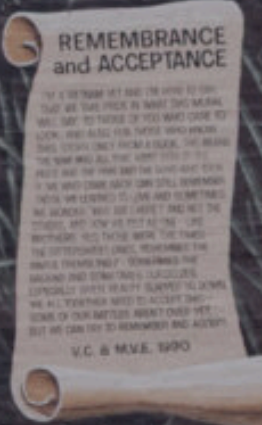




LANDMARKS
ILLINOIS



2025 - 26

ANNUAL
REPORT



www.landmarks.org

A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

By Ron Clewer, Board Chair; Catherine Baker, Board Vice Chair; & Bonnie McDonald, President & CEO

The accomplishments detailed in this annual report reflect the first-year implementation of our five-year Transformational Plan. Its very name signifies our ambition to evolve to deepen our statewide impact. Change on this scale is neither quick nor easy. Innovation is a process requiring thoughtfulness and courage. This year, we laid the foundation for future success: we reviewed and sometimes modified structural aspects of our governance and operations, such as our board composition, committee and staffing structures. We created efficiency tools and a methodology to select projects aligned with our priorities and goals. Board members and staff have solved problems and made challenging decisions together about programs to end and new ones to begin, several of which we are excited to launch next year.

We have tested our ideas, evaluated the results and pivoted based on that knowledge to ensure our work reflects the new mission and vision. We are engaged, and engaging you, in legislative initiatives, support for inclusive planning and landmark designation efforts and deeper partnerships. We are also expanding our knowledge of sustainability, housing and community and economic development. The board and staff are working collaboratively in this process, which we believe will provide exciting opportunities for leadership and growth. We thank our volunteers, staff, donors and partners for their enduring support as we endeavor to move preservation forward. Together, we are shaping preservation into a better solution for the future of our communities.



“Together, we are shaping preservation into a better solution for the future of our communities.”

BY THE NUMBERS

A quick look at our impact this year



**\$106,
528**

AMOUNT OF GRANT FUNDING AWARDED

181

PRESERVATION EFFORTS WE SUPPORTED

174

NEW DONORS CHOSE TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION-DRIVEN WORK

2,117

PEOPLE ATTENDED OUR EVENTS

25

NEW LANDMARKS ILLINOIS MEMBERS

39

PUBLIC & EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS GIVEN BY LI STAFF

131

ILLINOIS COMMUNITIES WE PROVIDED PRESERVATION RESOURCES TO

**20,
816**

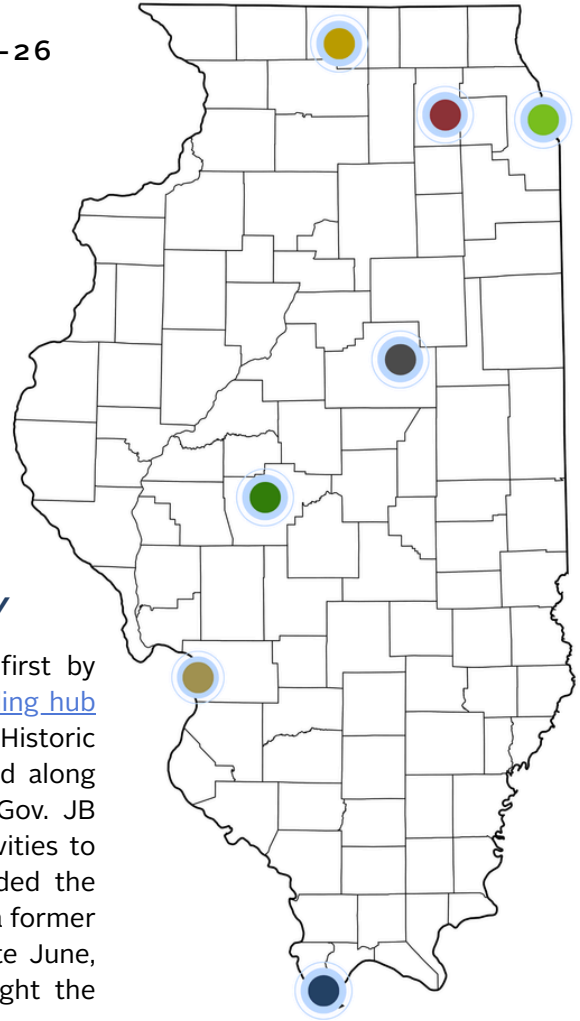
MILES LI STAFF TRAVELED IN SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION

Our impact across Illinois



GRANITE CITY

We've been celebrating the Route 66 Centennial in 2026, first by launching our own page on a [unique Route 66 virtual storytelling hub](#) created by Google Arts & Culture and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Here, we share the inspiring stories to be found along Illinois' stretch of the Mother Road. In February, we joined Gov. JB Pritzker at a press conference announcing the year-long festivities to celebrate the centennial (pictured). Then, in April, we attended the official Illinois centennial [kickoff event at the Old Joliet Prison](#), a former Most Endangered site and significant site of conscience. In late June, we are participating in a special event in Brooklyn to highlight the town's historic ties to Route 66.



CHICAGO

Director of Reinvestment Suzanne Germann helped facilitate a masonry apprenticeship program at the Beautiful Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Englewood. The program was developed in collaboration with the International Masonry Institute and the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers to train future masons and provide the historic church with pro bono restoration work. Landmarks Illinois also awarded the church a \$10,000 grant last year through the [Timuel D. Black, Jr. Grant Program for Chicago's South Side](#) to help address deteriorating limestone.



ST. CHARLES

The Judge William D. Barry House, a [2025 Most Endangered site](#), took a step toward preservation. An agreement between the City of St. Charles, Baker Memorial United Methodist Church and Geneva Heights LLC will prevent the 1844 Greek Revival home from being demolished. Geneva Heights LLC will purchase the property for \$525,000—aided by \$125,000 in city TIF funds—and restore it to historic standards while also supporting efforts to locally landmark the property.



CAIRO

In December, Landmarks Illinois joined partners in Cairo to celebrate the launch of the [Cairo African American Heritage Trail & Oral History Project](#), an initiative led by The Cairo Historical Preservation Project, Inc. (TCHPP) in partnership with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Southern Illinois University Carbondale that honors the overlooked Black history of Illinois' southernmost town. Landmarks Illinois continues its long-term support for preservation efforts in Cairo, including grants to TCHPP to help fund the National Register listing of Ward Chapel AME and to support repair of the Cairo Public Library roof by the Library's Board of Trustees.



MCLEAN

Landmarks Illinois supported multiple preservation projects in McLean. Restoration work on the historic McLean Water Tower progressed in anticipation of the Route 66 Centennial, with the local group, CORE of McLean, repainting the tower in October. A Landmarks Illinois grant helped fund the project. In December, we awarded a [Preservation Heritage Fund grant](#) to the McLean County Historical Society to help hire a woodworking specialist to restore the National Register-listed Miller-Davis Building.



SPRINGFIELD

We joined our partners at AIA for Prairie Grassroots Lobby Day at the state capitol in March to advocate for preservation legislation, including a bill to [increase the Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit annual cap](#) and expand the River Edge Historic Tax Credit Program (RERZ) [to include more communities](#). This year, we also successfully advocated to extend the RERZ through 2028. This vital preservation incentive program was set to expire this year.



ROCKFORD

We helped facilitate multiple pro bono building analyses of Rockford's former [Elks Lodge No. 64](#) this year, as the 2022 Most Endangered site faced ongoing demolition threats. Despite assessments showing that the 113-year-old, culturally significant building could be reused, the City of Rockford decided to tear it down in February. The city also allowed the demolition of another local historic property: [the Briggs Mansion](#). We joined local advocates in calling for the preservation of this Civil War-era mansion. Still, the City of Rockford granted UW Health, the property owner, a demolition permit in April. We remain committed to working with local officials to strengthen preservation ordinances in Rockford.

A look back at our year

JULY 2025



YEAR 1 OF TRANSFORMATIONAL PLAN

We completed our first year under the [Transformational Plan](#), a five-year strategic roadmap to make preservation more accessible, equitable and effective. The plan identifies four priorities for our work: Inclusive Preservation, Community and Economic Development, Housing Access and Climate Change Mitigation. We explained the plan to our members and supporters [at a webinar in September](#), led by President & CEO Bonnie McDonald and Vice Chair Ron Clewer. We are also in the midst of a comprehensive rebrand project to align our visual identity with our Transformational Plan. We expect to launch our new brand in 2027.



CELEBRATING WRIGLEY FIELD'S RESTORATION

In July, 2025, Landmarks Illinois' Real Estate and Building Industries Council and Skyline Council held a [special joint event](#) at Wrigley Field to mark five years since the completion of the ballpark's decade-long restoration. The popular networking event attracted professionals in real estate, architecture, preservation and development for an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of this iconic Chicago Landmark.

AUGUST 2025



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PRO BONO PRESERVATION SERVICES

We helped secure multiple condition assessments at historic sites in Illinois. In Richmond, James Lewan, principal and owner of J28 LLC, and Joshua Freedland of Bulley & Andrews Masonry Restoration conducted an assessment of the village's last surviving historic wooden bridge, a 2023 Most Endangered site (pictured). In Rockford, Brush Architects completed a pro bono condition assessment at the former Elks Lodge #64, a 2022 Most Endangered site. Bulley & Andrews Masonry Restoration analyzed the building's exterior. Free services like this help local advocates assess and plan for future restoration work while strengthening their arguments for preservation.

[MORE NEWS FROM AUGUST](#)

SEPTEMBER 2025



SUPPORTING RESTORATION EFFORTS AT SOUTH SHORE CULTURAL CENTER

We awarded the South Shore Cultural Center Park Advisory Council a \$2,500 grant through our [Timuel D. Black, Jr. Grant Fund for Chicago's South Side](#) to support efforts to restore the South Shore Cultural Center's Outdoor Stage. We included the 126-year-old outdoor theater on our [2025 Endangered list](#) due to years of deterioration and deferred maintenance. The Advisory Council plans to launch a public awareness, engagement and planning project that supports the theater's overall restoration.

[MORE NEWS FROM SEPTEMBER](#)

OCTOBER 2025

PRESERVATION AND POLICY: NAVIGATING THE LATEST FEDERAL ACTIONS

Tuesday, October 28, 2025
12 p.m.



LANDMARKS ILLINOIS TACKLES FEDERAL POLICY ROLLBACK

Landmarks Illinois held a webinar on October 28, 2025, titled "[Preservation and Policy: Navigating the Latest Federal Executive Actions](#)," that discussed how new federal policies are shaping preservation efforts across the state. Landmarks Illinois President & CEO Bonnie McDonald and Regional Advocacy Manager Quinn Adamowski led the webinar. It came following several statements Landmarks Illinois issued during 2025 in reaction to the regressive, harmful and unconscionable acts of the Trump Administration aimed at dismantling the federal preservation program and eliminating access to resources people rely on to preserve places in their communities. See our statements [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

[MORE NEWS FROM OCTOBER](#)

NOVEMBER 2025



2025 PRESERVATION AWARDS

On November 7, 2025, we celebrated the winners of the [2025 Landmarks Illinois Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Awards](#) at a ceremony in Chicago. This year's nine winning projects were located in Belvidere, Charleston, Chicago, Granite City, Millstadt, Tinley Park and Waukegan. [Award-winning projects included](#) the transformation of a vacant school into affordable housing, a former library into a museum, a detailed window restoration and other thoughtful and inspiring revitalizations of Illinois' cultural landmarks. (Photo credit: David T. Kindler)



ENDANGERED TO EMPOWERED IN EAST ST. LOUIS

A coalition of local advocates in East St. Louis successfully secured the 1886 Lincoln School property, a [2024 Most Endangered site](#). In early 2025, coalition members partnered with the Southern Illinois University Architecture program to engage students in developing plans and renderings that explore potential new uses for this important structure. Concurrently, Illinois Sen. Chris Belt championed a \$300,000 appropriation in the state budget to support the building’s rehabilitation. In November, the City of East St. Louis finalized an agreement to transfer rights to the East St. Louis Historical Society, ensuring stewardship of the site as revitalization efforts move forward.

DECEMBER 2025



REINVESTING IN THE SOUTH AND WEST SIDES

A project [supported through the Landmarks Illinois Reinvestment Program](#) marked a major milestone: BandWith Chicago opened its new Performing Arts & Community Hub in the former Loyal Casket Building in East Garfield Park. Director of Reinvestment Suzanne Germann and President & CEO Bonnie McDonald [attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony](#). A month earlier, Plant Chicago, another Reinvestment Program Loan recipient, broke ground on its project to rehabilitate a 1908 firehouse in the Back of the Yards neighborhood.



DUPAGE COUNTY ‘MOST ENDANGERED’ SITE GETS SECOND CHANCE

A plan to preserve the historic Oak Cottage near Naperville, a 2023 Most Endangered site, progressed this year. In December, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) approved an agreement with a private owner to relocate Oak Cottage to an undisclosed property in DuPage County, where it will be used as a residence. Successful advocacy efforts prompted the FPDDC to issue a call for reuse proposals last summer rather than pursue demolition.

[MORE NEWS FROM DECEMBER](#)

JANUARY 2026



WELCOMING OUR PARTNERS IN CHICAGO

In January, members of the Landmarks Illinois team met with our partners from [Latinos in Heritage Conservation](#), a nationwide organization dedicated to preserving Latinx places stories and cultural heritage. Landmarks Illinois is proudly serving as LHC's local partner for its [Congreso: Latinx Heritage Leadership Summit 2026](#), a national gathering taking place in August in Chicago. Landmarks Illinois welcomed LHC at its office to discuss plans for Congreso.



FIGHTING FOR ONE OF GENEVA'S OLDEST BUILDINGS

Regional Advocacy Manager Kendra Parzen [penned an op-ed published in the Daily Herald](#) regarding ongoing attempts to demolish the historic [Alexander Brothers Blacksmith Shop](#) in Geneva. The building's owner has repeatedly failed to properly maintain the historic property – a 2023 Most Endangered site built in the 1840s. In the piece, Parzen argued that if Geneva city officials allowed the owner to tear down the local landmark, it would set a dangerous precedent.

[MORE NEWS FROM JANUARY](#)

FEBRUARY 2026



SPREADING LOVE IN SOUTH CHICAGO

The Skyline Council of Landmarks, in partnership with the Calumet Area Industrial Commission, American Legion South Deering Post #1238 and 10th Ward Ald. Peter Chico's office, held its [annual Valentine's Day event](#) at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Vietnam Veterans Memorial Mural in South Chicago. We [awarded a \\$10,000 grant](#) through the Timuel D. Black, Jr. Grant Fund for Chicago's South Side months earlier to support the restoration of the mural, which is one of the earliest large-scale public memorials honoring those who served in the Vietnam War. (Photo credit: Christian Parker)



EMERGENCY GRANT SUPPORTS DOWNTOWN CULTURAL ANCHOR

We [awarded an emergency grant](#) to the Chicago Loop Synagogue through the Preservation Heritage Fund. The \$5,000 grant helped the architecturally and culturally significant synagogue replace a broken boiler, enabling the congregation to continue providing daily religious services and community cultural programs. (Photo credit: Chicago Loop Synagogue)

[MORE NEWS FROM FEBRUARY](#)

MARCH 2026



800 GUESTS GATHER FOR PRESERVATION FORWARD FUNDRAISER

We returned to The Old Post Office in Chicago on March 12 for the [2026 Preservation Forward event](#), which raised \$611,000 for our mission-driven work. The fundraiser celebrated the 2026 Landmarks Illinois Influencers: BMO Bank N.A., represented by Darrel Hackett, CEO, BMO U.S.; Sunny Fischer, Board Chair, National Public Housing Museum; and Route History Museum, represented by Co-CEOs and Co-Founders Dr. Stacy Grundy and Dr. Gina Lathan.



ADDRESSING EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES IN PRESERVATION

Landmarks Illinois co-hosted a roundtable discussion on March 20 with U.S. Rep. Sean Casten (IL-06) and the Lombard Historical Society at the Sheldon Peck Homestead, a former Underground Railroad stop previously deemed ineligible for inclusion in the National Register despite its significance. A panel, which included LI staff, board members and partners, discussed the systemic barriers in place that prevent places like the homestead from benefiting from National Register listing.

[MORE NEWS FROM MARCH](#)

APRIL 2026



LI TAKES THE TRANSFORMATIONAL PLAN TO TULSA

From April 13-15, Landmarks Illinois Chief Operating Officer Frank Butterfield and Regional Advocacy Manager Quinn Adamowski attended this year's annual Main Street Conference, [Main Street Now 2026](#), in Tulsa. Frank and Quinn joined our partner Illinois Main Street communities to learn about innovative revitalization strategies, share resources and see the power of Route 66 on Main Street. The work of Main Street communities supports the Community and Economic Development priority of our Transformational Plan.

[MORE NEWS FROM APRIL](#)

MAY 2026



A LEGACY OF TRANSFORMATION

On May 15, Landmarks Illinois [announced that President & CEO Bonnie McDonald would resign](#) in July to pursue a 2027 Loeb Fellowship through the Harvard Graduate School of Design. McDonald has led the organization since 2014. During her tenure, she has worked to change the direction and public perception of the preservation movement while making it a more inclusive space. She has focused on building reuse as a systems-level response to climate change, housing, public health and spatial injustice, while bringing her stellar ability to collaborate into all that she does.



A NEW LINCOLN PARK LANDMARK

The former Roger Brown Home & Studio in Lincoln Park was designated as an official Chicago landmark. The property once belonged to Imagist artist Roger Brown, who donated it and its contents to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1996. Last September, SAIC put the property up for sale and marketed it as a potential teardown, prompting Landmarks Illinois to intervene and encourage the city to consider landmark designation.

[MORE NEWS FROM MAY](#)

JUNE 2026



MCDONALD NAMED 'NOTABLE LEADER'

Landmarks Illinois President and CEO Bonnie McDonald was named [Crain's Chicago Business Notable Leader in Architecture, Engineering & Construction](#). The honor, announced June 1, [acknowledges the growing role](#) that preservation and reuse of our built environment play in the future of our communities.



PRESERVING MMBC: A CELEBRATION OF ART, HISTORY AND ADVOCACY

Easements and Advocacy Associate Amber Delgado organized the free event, “Preservation Through Photography: The Story and Legacy of Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church,” held on June 13. The program celebrated the documentary arts and historic preservation, featuring a tour of the historic building, followed by a panel discussion on the church’s legacy and preservation. MMBC is a Chicago Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is in need of preservation resources for ongoing restoration work.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT THIS YEAR!

Photo credits

Cover & Page 2 - Skyline Council of Landmarks held its annual Valentine's Day event at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Vietnam Veterans Memorial Mural in South Chicago. Credit: Marcellus Marsh.

Page 4 - Members of the Illinois Route 66 Centennial Commission, including Landmarks Illinois President & CEO Bonnie McDonald, and Gov. Pritzker. / Members of Landmarks Illinois, Beautiful Zion, the International Masonry Institute and International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers meet at Beautiful Zion Missionary Baptist Church on Feb. 13, 2026. / Judge William D. Barry House. Credit: Paul Morgan

Page 5 - Members of the Landmarks Illinois staff with leaders of the Cairo Oral History Project, Landmarks Board Member Magdalena Novoa Echaurren and Founding President of The Cairo Historical Preservation Project, Inc. Don Patton at the launch of the Cairo African American Heritage Train & Oral History Project in December 2025. / McLean Water Tower. Credit: CORE of McLean. / Regional Advocacy Manager Quinn Adamowski with local advocates and partners from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Trust Community Investment Corporation and Preservation Action in Washington, D.C. in March. / Brush Architects performing a building assessment of Rockford's former Elks Lodge No. 64. Credit: Brush Architects.

Page 6 - Landmarks Illinois Transformational Plan. / Guests gather at Wrigley Field. Credit: David T. Kindler. / James Lewan, principal and owner of J28 LLC, with the assistance of Joshua Freedland of Bulley & Andrews Masonry Restoration conduct an assessment of Richmond Bridge. Left to right: James Lewan of J28 LLC, Richmond Village Administrator Ciro Cetrangolo, Village Trustee Adam Metz, and Bulley & Andrews' director of historic preservation Joshua Freedland.

Page 7 - South Shore Cultural Center's Outdoor Stage. Credit: Paul Morgan. / Screenshot from Landmarks Illinois October 2025 webinar, “Preservation and Policy: Navigating the Latest Federal Executive Actions.” / Representatives from the Pui Tak Center and the Chinese Christian Union Church, recipients of a 2025 Landmarks Illinois Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation, at the 2026 award ceremony. Credit: David T. Kindler

Page 8 - Landmarks Illinois Regional Advocacy Manager Quinn Adamowski with representatives from the East St. Louis Historical Society, Emma Wilson King Foundation and the House of Miles in East St. Louis. / Ribbon-cutting ceremony at BandWith Chicago's new Performing Arts & Community Hub. / Oak Cottage in DuPage County.

Page 9 - Landmarks Illinois staff with Latinos in Heritage Conservation staff in Chicago in January 2026. Credit: Raffaella Hartman. / Alexander Brothers Blacksmith Shop. / Emily Sajdak, Chair of the Skyline Council, at the Valentine's Day event on February 14, 2026. Credit: Marcellus Marsh. / Chicago Loop Synagogue. Credit: Chicago Loop Synagogue.

Page 10 - The 2026 Landmarks Illinois Influencers at Preservation Forward. Left to right: Darrel Hackett, CEO, BMO U.S.; Sunny Fischer, Board Chair, National Public Housing Museum; and Route History Museum Co-CEOs and Co-Founders Dr. Stacy Grundy and Dr. Gina Lathan. Credit: David T. Kindler. / Panel discussion at the Sheldon Peck Homestead in March 2026. Left to right: Sara Phalen, Landmarks Illinois Board Member and Director of the West Chicago City Museum and member of the Illinois America 250 Commission; Amber Delgado, Easements and Advocacy Associate; Kendra Parzen, Advocacy Manager; Congressperson Sean Casten and Alison Costanzo, Executive Director of the Lombard Historical Society. / Illinois attendees at the Opening Plenary at the Main Street conference.

Page 11 - Bonnie McDonald. Credit: Katrina Wittkamp. / Roger Brown Home & Studio. / Bonnie McDonald. Credit: David T. Kindler

Page 12 - Deborah Lielas, Barbara Wooten & Shirley Wooten of MMBC, John Cramer, and Amber Delgado at Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church in September 2025.

Landmarks Illinois Staff

Quinn Adamowski	<i>Regional Advocacy Manager</i>
Frank Butterfield	<i>Chief Operating Officer</i>
Lauren Dalton	<i>Marketing & Communications Manager</i>
Amber Delgado	<i>Easements & Advocacy Associate</i>
Suzanne Germann	<i>Director of Reinvestment</i>
Kenna Hogan	<i>Development Assistant</i>
Kaitlyn McAvoy	<i>Director of Communications</i>
Bonnie McDonald	<i>President & CEO</i>
Kendra Parzen	<i>Advocacy Manager</i>
Nicole Rakers	<i>Director of Development</i>
Alma Rebronja	<i>Director of Events</i>

Landmarks Illinois Board of Directors

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Catherine Baker, FAIA	<i>Vice Chair</i>
Jean Follett	<i>Secretary</i>
Terri Salas	<i>Treasurer</i>
Mariah DiGrino	<i>Outside Pro Bono Counsel</i>
Bonnie McDonald	<i>President & Ceo</i>

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Allison Toonen-Talamo	Rabbi Rob Thomas
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Jackie Taylor Holsten	
Cheryl Johnson	
Lisa Yun Lee	



WELCOMING DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT NICOLE RAKERS

Landmarks Illinois welcomed Nicole Rakers to the team in November to lead the organization’s fundraising efforts. Nicole is a dynamic fundraising professional with over a decade of experience helping nonprofit organizations raise the funds needed to advance their missions. Landmarks Illinois is excited to have Nicole’s expertise and focused attention to continue providing meaningful donor engagement. Visit our staff webpage at landmarks.org/staff to learn more about Nicole.



www.landmarks.org
