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## TOURISM: A day in the Falls

Visitors from Illinois fly in for one day through NFTA-coordinated program

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Much of what members of the Spickler family knew about Niagara Falls was based on what they saw on television or in movies.

On Thursday, the family of four from Rockford, Ill., got a chance to get an up-close look at the Falls as part of a one-day, whirlwind sightseeing adventure that included plans for a trip on the Maid of the Mist and a visit to the Cave of the Winds.

"Niagara Falls sounded like one of those places you should see at least once — like the Grand Canyon," said Linda Spickler, who was joined on the trip by her husband, Mike, their daughter, Stephanie and their son, Alec.

The Spicklers were among 131 passengers who arrived Thursday morning on an MD-80 airplane at the Niagara Falls International Airport. From there, the group of visitors was taken by Rainbow Transportation tour buses to Niagara Falls State Park. Members of the day-trip crowd were then free to spend a few hours exploring downtown and seeing sights on both sides of the border before returning to the Falls airport at 8 p.m. to catch the flight home.

The day-trip visit is the second in a series of such trips that are being coordinated by the Niagara Falls Transportation Authority and the Rockford Transportation Authority which operates the Chicago Rockford International Airport, a small facility just outside of Chicago.

Roxie Berger, an associate of the Rockford Airport who accompanied the group on the trip, said Niagara Falls is one of several day-trip destinations offered to Rockford residents. She added that it is also one of the most popular, noting that the first day trip to Niagara Falls sold out in less 18 hours and tickets for Thursday's flight were gone in one day. The authority has already scheduled another flight to the Falls for Aug. 10.

"It's everyone's dream to see Niagara Falls," she said.