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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES A COMBINED TOURISM ORGANIZATION TO ATTRACT 50 MILLION VISITORS TO CHICAGO

Streamlined Organization will Save \$1.3 Million that will be Reinvested in National and International Marketing Campaigns to Draw Visitors

Mayor Emanuel today launched a new tourism organization for the city of Chicago, with the goal of attracting 50 million visitors per year by 2020 and resulting in nearly \$4 billion a year in additional annual revenues for Chicago's economy. By combining the efforts of the current Chicago Convention & Tourism Bureau and the Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture, the new organization will save \$1.3 million in administrative costs that will be reinvested in national and international marketing campaigns.

"This new organization will allow us to focus all of the city's efforts to attract visitors for business, pleasure, and culture," said Mayor Emanuel. "By coordinating our efforts and establishing clear, measurable goals, we will show the world that Chicago is the best place to visit."

The Chicago Convention & Tourism Bureau (CCTB) will join forces with the tourism-focused portion of the Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture (COTC) to form the new organization. CCTB CEO and President Don Welsh will be CEO and President of the new organization.

"Mayor Emanuel's decision to streamline Chicago's tourism marketing strategy makes strong financial and logistical sense," said Welsh. "Our ultimate goal is to make Chicago the premier destination for domestic and international business and leisure travelers. Today's decision will help the City more cost effectively advance and achieve this vision."



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The new organization will promote Chicago as a leading global destination and will ensure that while in Chicago, visitors enjoy the city's vibrant cultural offerings, numerous attractions, and diverse neighborhoods to the fullest extent.

As a result of the increase in visitors, tax revenues are expected to increase anywhere from \$250 to \$300 million per year while visitor spending is expected to increase by \$3.6 billion to \$14.7 billion annually.

Research done by CCTB and COTC indicates that the additional 10 million annual visitors will bring \$3.6 billion in revenue to Chicago for three reasons: an increase in international visitors, an increase in regional visitors who stay longer, and an increase in hotel occupancy rates.

"Chicago is an international pioneer in the field of cultural tourism and is a city that uses cutting edge technology to offer extreme service to visitors," said Dorothy Coyle, Executive Director of the Chicago Office of Tourism and Culture. "Growth in tourism will benefit communities across Chicago as visitors participate in tours, dining and shopping in one of the most diverse cities in the world."

In addition to the goal of 50 million visitors per year by 2020, the City has set a goal to move into the top five cities for overseas visitation (Chicago currently ranks 10th in the nation); and a preliminary goal of expanding Chicago's market share among overseas visitors to the United States to 6 percent, from the 4.3 percent where it currently stands.

The economic benefits of a healthy tourism industry are vast, including job creation, improved retail, restaurant, cultural attraction and hotel commerce – all contributing to increased tax revenue, according to Welsh. At the current rate of 40 million visitors annually, Chicago's visitor industry supports 124,000 jobs, \$11.1 billion in direct spending and \$616 million in tax revenues.

The joint work of the agencies will begin immediately, in anticipation of a formal launch this summer.

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